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BIBLE<sup>®</sup>**


**Volume 2**

**Acts - Colossians**

**King James Version**

“Woe is unto me, if I  
preach not the gospel”

(1 Cor. 9:16)

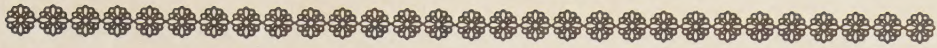


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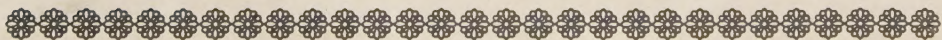
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VOLUME 2  
*Acts—Colossians*

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**VOLUME 2**  
*Acts—Colossians*

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**NEW TESTAMENT**

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**Leadership Ministries Worldwide**  
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To all the men and women of the world  
who preach and teach the Gospel of our  
Lord Jesus Christ  
and  
To the Mercy and Grace of God.



- Demonstrated to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. 1:7)
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"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:3-4)



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is written for God's people to use  
in their study and teaching of God's Holy Word.



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### MISCELLANEOUS ABBREVIATIONS

|         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| &       | = | And                                    |
| Arg.    | = | Argument                               |
| Bckgrd. | = | Background                             |
| Bc.     | = | Because                                |
| Circ.   | = | Circumstance                           |
| Concl.  | = | Conclusion                             |
| Cp.     | = | Compare                                |
| Ct.     | = | Contrast                               |
| Dif.    | = | Different                              |
| e.g.    | = | For example                            |
| Et.     | = | Eternal                                |
| F.      | = | Following                              |
| Govt.   | = | Government                             |
| Id.     | = | Identity or Identification             |
| Illust. | = | Illustration                           |
| K.      | = | Kingdom, K. of God, K. of Heaven, etc. |
| No.     | = | Number                                 |
| N.T.    | = | New Testament                          |
| O.T.    | = | Old Testament                          |
| Pt.     | = | Point                                  |
| Quest.  | = | Question                               |
| Rel.    | = | Religion                               |
| Resp.   | = | Responsibility                         |
| Rev.    | = | Revelation                             |
| Rgt.    | = | Righteousness                          |
| Thru    | = | Through                                |
| V.      | = | Verse                                  |
| Vs.     | = | Verses                                 |
| Vs.     | = | Versus                                 |

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**First:** Glance at the **Subject Heading**. Think about it for a moment. **Then:** Glance at the **Subject Heading** & the **Major Points** together.

**Now:** Glance at both the **Major Points** & **Subpoints** while reading the Scripture. Note how the points are beside the applicable verse—simply stating what the Scripture is saying—in Outline form.

**Finally:** Read the **Commentary**. **KEY:** Note that the *major point numbers* in the outline match those in the commentary.

## MATTHEW 6:1-4

### CHAPTER 6

#### K. The Right Motive for Giving,<sup>DS1</sup> 6:1-4

- ① **Alms—doing good & giving**
  - a. Warning: Do not seek recognition
  - b. The reason: God will not reward
- 2 **The wrong motive**
  - a. Giving for recognition
  - b. Characteristic of

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of **A**hem: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.  
2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the

hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.  
3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:  
4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

- hypocrites
- c. Reward: Recognition by men only
- B**
- 3 **The right motive**
  - a. Giving unconsciously
  - b. Giving quietly—privately—secretly
- 4 **The reasons**
  - a. Father sees in secret
  - b. Father rewards openly

## DIVISION IV

### THE TEACHINGS OF THE MESSIAH TO HIS DISCIPLES: THE GREAT SERMON ON THE MOUNT, 5:1-7:29

#### K. The Right Motive for Giving, 6:1-4

(6:1-4) **Introduction—Motive:** what a man does matters greatly to God. God expects men to be kind and to do good in the world: to help others both through personal involvement and through giving generously and sacrificially.

But there is something else that God expects, something of critical importance: God expects a man to have *the right motive*. Just why a man does good and shows kindness matters greatly to God. It matters so much that a person's eternal fate is determined by his motive. Because of this, Christ warns us about right and wrong motives.

1. Alms—doing good and giving (v.1).
2. The wrong motive (v.2).
3. The right motive (v.3-4).
4. The reason (v.4).

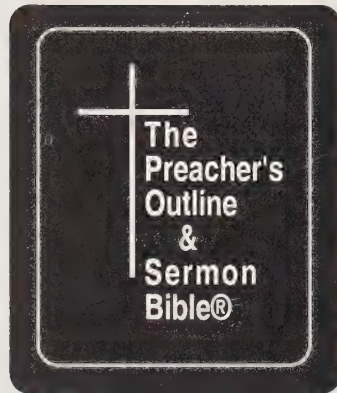
① (6:1) **Alms—Service—Giving:** there is the giving of alms—doing good and giving to others. The word “alms” means righteous acts; giving in order to meet the needs of the poor. To the Jew, giving alms and righteousness meant the same thing. Giving alms was the **C**reatest thing a Jew could do; it was the first act of religion. It was considered to be the very embodiment of righteousness **C**so much so that the two words began to be used synonymously. Giving alms merited and assured one of righteousness and salvation. (See note 5—Mt.5:6.) Christ warned there is great danger in giving and doing alms. Take heed and guard yourself. Do not give for recognition, or you will lose your reward.

**Thought 1.** There are two important lessons in this verse.

- 1) Man must guard and be alert to the deception **D** of giving and doing good before men. A person's heart can be deceived. The sin creeps up on man; it is insidious and subtle. It will keep a person from receiving anything from God.
- 2) A person must give alms and do good. It is a duty of the Christian. In this passage alone Christ says four times, “Do alms.”

**E**

“But all their works they do for to be seen of men” (Mt.23:5).  
“Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts” (Lk.20:46).



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*Woe is unto me, if I  
preach not the gospel*

”

(1 Cor. 9:16)

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# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## INTRODUCTION

**AUTHOR:** Luke (see the Gospel of Luke, Introduction, Author).

**DATE:** uncertain. Around A.D. 62.

The book was definitely written before the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) but after Paul's mission tours and imprisonment in Rome. This alone would place the writing during some year in the 60's. The author of *Acts* was an eyewitness of many of the accounts. A casual reading reveals what seems to be an up-to-the-minute account with the author remembering great detail, names, and even atmosphere. He was definitely a companion of Paul, joining him on his second mission tour (see note—Acts 16:10. Cp. Acts 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16.) There is also a clear view of Rome; however there is no evidence of the persecution and hostility of Domitian (81-96 A.D.) nor of the impending fall of Jerusalem (70 A.D.). These facts seem to point to *Acts* being written in the early 60's, perhaps in 62 A.D.

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** Theophilus, a Gentile convert (Acts 1:1). The Gospel of Luke was also addressed to him personally. (See note, *Theophilus*—Acts 1:1.)

**PURPOSE:** to show how the church grew through the witness of believers “both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

This is Luke's great aim. He shows how the church in Jerusalem was persecuted and how believers were forced to scatter throughout the whole world (Acts 8:1). He shows how the church moved out from Jerusalem, and in less than thirty-five years captured the very capital of the world, Rome itself. In brief, he shows how the expansion of Christianity took place.

### SPECIAL FEATURES:

1. *Acts* is “The Acts of Peter and Paul” or “The Acts of Two Apostolic Men.” The present title, “The Acts of the Apostles,” is not original; it was given in the second century. It is really an inaccurate title, for only four apostles are mentioned: Peter, Paul, James and John. James is mentioned only once (Acts 12:2), and John is seen only as an unspeaking companion of Peter (Acts 3:4; 4:1, 13). In the early chapters, the book centers around Peter, the apostle to the Jews (Chapters 1-9). The later chapters center around Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Chapters 10-28; cp. Gal.2:7).

2. *Acts* is “The Acts of Jesus' Continued Ministry.” Originally the Gospel of Luke and the book of *Acts* were probably one volume. The words of the first verse, “All that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach,” show clearly that Luke considers the letter to be a mere continuation of Jesus' ministry.

3. *Acts* is “The Acts of Triumphant Faith.” The picture of *Acts* is far different from the picture of the disciples' defeat over the death of Christ. It is far different from their uncertainty and apprehension and powerlessness even after the resurrection. With the coming of the Holy Spirit, the picture is that of great boldness and power.

⇒ There is the courage to stand before crowds and fearlessly proclaim the very message for which they had previously been hunted down.

⇒ There is the unquivering boldness to face authorities and imprisonment for the cause of the faith (Acts 4:1f; 5:17f).

⇒ There is the great authority to execute spiritual justice (Acts 5:1f).

⇒ There is the triumphant spirit to suffer martyrdom with a forgiving spirit (Acts 7:54f). Every chapter, every paragraph is a triumph of faith. Paul's words provide a forceful summary: “Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me” (Acts 27:27).

4. *Acts* is “The Acts of the Scattered Church.” A quick glance at the outline clearly shows this. (See also *Purpose*.)

5. *Acts* is “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” The Gospel of Luke concentrates upon the ministry of Jesus in the “days of His flesh,” and *Acts* continues that ministry through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit appears more than fifty times in *Acts*. He is the moving force in the expansion of the church. He baptizes, infills, and leads believers in their daily lives and witness for the Lord Jesus. (Most if not all the references to the Holy Spirit in *Acts* are given here.)

⇒ Jesus gave commandments through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2).

⇒ Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5).

⇒ Jesus says that the Holy Spirit is to bring power to the believer and enable him to live and witness for Him (Acts 1:8).

⇒ The Holy Spirit prophesied Judas' betrayal and death through David (Acts 1:16).

⇒ The Holy Spirit filled the Jewish disciples at Pentecost and enabled them to speak in different tongues or languages (Acts 2:4, 6, 8-11).

⇒ The Holy Spirit's coming was the fulfillment of God's promise in Joel (Acts 2:17).

⇒ The bold and courageous witness of the Pentecostal believers was the result of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon them (Acts 2:33).

⇒ The Holy Spirit is promised to those who repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38).

⇒ Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, defended himself before the High Priest (Acts 4:8).

⇒ Believers prayed and were filled with the Holy Spirit. They then spoke the Word of God boldly (Acts 4:31).

⇒ Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and were judged (Acts 5:3).

⇒ Ananias and Sapphira tempted the Spirit of the Lord together (Acts 5:9).

⇒ The Holy Spirit Himself is a witness to the Gospel, and He is given to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32).

- ⇒ The fullness of the Holy Spirit is a qualification for ministry (Acts 6:3).
- ⇒ Stephen was a man full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5).
- ⇒ Unbelievers (Stephen's persecutors) were accused by Stephen of always resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51).
- ⇒ Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, saw heaven itself while being martyred (Acts 7:55).
- ⇒ Samaritan believers, half-Jew and half-Gentile, received the Holy Spirit through prayer and laying on of hands (Acts 8:15, 17-19).
- ⇒ Simon, a sorcerer, tried to buy the Holy Spirit and His power (Acts 8:19).
- ⇒ The Spirit instructed Philip to go and witness to an Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 18:29).
- ⇒ The Spirit of the Lord caught Philip and took him away (Acts 8:39).
- ⇒ Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17).
- ⇒ The first century churches walked in the comfort of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31).
- ⇒ The testimony of Peter: God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power (Acts 10:38).
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles (Cornelius) as Peter preached (Acts 10:44).
- ⇒ Jewish believers were amazed that the Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles (Acts 10:45).
- ⇒ Gentiles were said to have received the Spirit "just like Jewish believers" (Acts 10:47).
- ⇒ Peter, in defending his witness to Cornelius, said that the Spirit told him to go to Cornelius (Acts 11:12).
- ⇒ Peter said that while he preached to Cornelius the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentile audience (Acts 11:15).
- ⇒ Peter said that he then remembered the promise of Jesus to baptize believers with the Spirit (Acts 11:16).
- ⇒ Barnabas was a man full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:24).
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit separated Barnabas and Paul for missionary work (Acts 13:2).
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit sent Barnabas and Paul forth on their mission (Acts 13:4).
- ⇒ Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, cast blindness upon a false prophet (Acts 13:9).
- ⇒ The disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52).
- ⇒ Peter, before the Jerusalem Council, recounted the Gentile's receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:8).
- ⇒ Church leaders said that the Holy Spirit led them in making a major decision at the great Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:28).
- ⇒ Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia (Acts 16:6).
- ⇒ Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go to Bithynia (Acts 16:7).
- ⇒ Apollos was fervent in the Spirit (Acts 18:25).
- ⇒ The Ephesian believers received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2, 6).
- ⇒ Paul felt compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem (Acts 20:22).
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit informed Paul that persecution awaited him in every city (Acts 20:23).
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit is said to have chosen the Ephesian elders to be overseers (Acts 20:28).
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit told Paul not to go to Jerusalem—through Agabus the prophet (Acts 21:11).
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit spoke by Isaiah the prophet (Acts 28:25).

## OUTLINE OF ACTS

**THE PREACHER'S OUTLINE & SERMON BIBLE™** is *unique*. It differs from all other Study Bibles & Sermon Resource Materials in that every Passage and Subject is outlined right beside the Scripture. When you choose any *Subject* below and turn to the reference, you have not only the Scripture, but you discover the Scripture and Subject *already outlined for you—verse by verse*.

*For a quick example*, choose one of the subjects below and turn over to the Scripture, and you will find this marvelous help for faster, easier, and more accurate use.

*In addition, every point* of the Scripture and Subject is *fully developed in a Commentary with supporting Scripture* at the bottom of the page. Again, this arrangement makes sermon preparation much easier and faster.

*Note something else*: The Subjects of Acts have titles that are both Biblical and *practical*. The practical titles sometimes have more appeal to people. This *benefit* is clearly seen for use on billboards, bulletins, church newsletters, etc.

*A suggestion*: For the quickest overview of Acts, first read *all the major titles* (I, II, III, etc.), then come back and read the subtitles.

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## OUTLINE OF ACTS

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# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## CHAPTER 1

### I. THE GREAT DAYS OF EXPECTATION, 1:1-26

#### A. Jesus' Ministry on Earth, 1:1-5

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3 To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

### 3 Jesus' death & resurrection

a. Proof 1: Showed Himself alive

b. Proof 2: Many proofs, seen for forty days<sup>DS1</sup>

### 4 Jesus' promise of the kingdom

### 5 Jesus' promise of the Spirit

a. The disciples had to "wait"

b. The disciples had to hear the promise

c. Then, the disciples were to be baptized with the Spirit

- 1 Luke wrote to Theophilus—reminded him of Jesus' ministry
- 2 Jesus' work & teaching
  - a. Until He ascended
  - b. Thru the Holy Spirit
  - c. Gave commandments to His chosen servants

## DIVISION I

### THE GREAT DAYS OF EXPECTATION, 1:1-26

#### A. Jesus' Ministry on Earth, 1:1-5

(1:1-5) **Introduction:** note the words "former treatise" or book. Luke was referring back to his gospel. He was now writing to the same man to whom he had written his gospel, Theophilus. He was reminding Theophilus that in his gospel he had covered the life and the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth. Note the word "began." Jesus' life and work on earth was only the beginning. Although He is in heaven, He *continues* to work and minister through the presence of the Spirit in the hearts and lives of believers. The book of Acts could well be called...

- the acts (works and teachings) of believers; or
- the acts (works and teachings) of Christ; or
- the acts (works and teachings) of the Holy Spirit.

Very briefly, Luke was saying that the life of Jesus Christ continues on. The book of Acts is the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ. Verses 1-5 are a summary of the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth, a summary of the ministry of Christ covered in Acts.

1. Luke wrote to Theophilus—reminded him of the gospel, that is, of Jesus' ministry (v.1).
2. Jesus' work and teaching (v.1-2).
3. Jesus' death and resurrection (v.3).
4. Jesus' promise of the kingdom (v.3).
5. Jesus' promise of the Spirit (v.4-5).

**1** (1:1) **Theophilus:** Luke wrote to Theophilus, reminding him of the former gospel which he had written, the gospel which covered the life and ministry of Jesus.

Who is Theophilus? We are not told, but note several facts.

1. Theophilus is called "most excellent Theophilus" in the *Gospel of Luke* (Lk.1:3). The words, "most excellent Theophilus," are a title of rank and honor. It is the same title used of Felix and Festus, two high ranking Roman officials (Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:27). Theophilus must have been a Roman official of high rank.

2. Theophilus was a personal friend of Luke, close enough to correspond with Luke about the Lord Jesus. He was either a man interested in knowing the truth about Christ or else a new convert who needed to be grounded in Christ. Perhaps Luke himself had led Theophilus to Christ.

Note: Luke did not address Theophilus as "most excellent" in Acts. The title is dropped. Why? There are three possibilities.

- a. Luke and Theophilus were close friends, close enough to be on a first name basis.
- b. Theophilus had either retired or been removed from office between the writing of Luke and Acts.
- c. Theophilus, having grown in Christ, had grown so loving and humble he did not want his title used among his Christian friends, not in times of personal communication and fellowship.

**Thought 1:** There is a great lesson in this thought, a lesson on love and humility so needed by the world and among God's people (cp. Mt.23:7-12).

3. Theophilus lived outside Palestine, somewhere away from Luke.
4. Theophilus was a man of education and culture. His title and the fact that the Gospel of Luke and Acts are addressed to him point toward his being educated and cultured.
5. The name Theophilus means "beloved by God" or "the friend of God."

**Thought 1.** Theophilus was a man who sought to grow and mature in the Lord. Imagine! Luke and Acts were written to him! Two of the greatest books ever written! And why? Because he had such a deep hunger to know the Lord, to learn all he could about the Lord. What a legacy and testimony—to be known as a man who so hungered

to know the Lord that God had two of the greatest books ever written addressed to him! May we all develop a hunger to learn all we can about the Lord and Savior of the universe.

**2** (1:1-2) **Jesus Christ, Ministry:** Jesus' ministry on earth began with His work and teaching. Note the subject of this first chapter, "The Great Days of Expectation." The works and teachings of Christ launched these days. Jesus Christ brought the greatest expectation to earth imaginable to man; in fact, He brought the only hope man has of surviving...

- of conquering the sin and shame of the earth: its hatred, killing, maiming, selfishness, bitterness, division.
- of conquering the death and hell of man's destiny: his dread, fear, insecurity, ignorance, and baseless hope of what lies beyond the grave.

As stated, Jesus Christ brought the only hope man has of surviving. He taught men how to live together in peace and how they should live before God. Note three significant things.

1. Christ worked and taught until He was "taken up," that is, until He ascended back into heaven. He was faithful, using all He had for God until His life upon earth was completed.

**Thought 1.** The believer is to use his gifts for God until he enters heaven. There is no retirement from seeking to reach a world sunk so desperately in need.

"Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (Jn.4:35).

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (Jn.9:4).

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor.4:2).

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor.6:20).

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pt.4:10).

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" (2 Tim.1:6).

"Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy" (2 Tim.1:4).

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl.9:10).

2. Christ worked and taught "through the Holy Spirit." While He was on earth in the flesh, Christ was totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit. He had to surrender Himself and to make Himself available to the Spirit.

**Thought 1.** Just think! If Christ was so dependent upon the Spirit of God, how much more are we! How much more do we need to make ourselves available to Him, available for His gifts and power!

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Ro.8:5).

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Ro.8:13).

"Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph.5:18).

"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (1 Jn.2:27).

3. Christ gave and taught His commandments to those whom He had *chosen*, His apostles. He taught throngs of people, but He zeroed in on the apostles. His whole mission depended upon them. They were to be the first who would carry His message to the world after His departure. If they failed, his mission would fail; if they succeeded, His mission would succeed. He had to concentrate upon them; to drill His commandments into them so that they in turn could teach His commandments.

**Thought 1.** Note a critical fact: every believer is the chosen servant of God to carry on the mission of Christ. Every believer is to be proclaiming the glorious message of hope to a world lost and doomed to death.

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim.2:2).

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt.28:19-20).

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (Jn.20:21).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

**3** (1:3) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** Jesus' ministry on earth was climaxed in His passion and resurrection (cp. Acts

17:3; 26:23). The word “passion” (pathein) means suffering; it refers to the sufferings or death of Christ. His death and resurrection assured the salvation of man.

⇒ By death He paid the penalty for man’s sin.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).

⇒ By arising from the dead He conquered death for man and now makes available a new life of power for the believer.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:4).

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” (1 Cor.15:20-23).

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).

“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:19-20).

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph.2:4-10).

Note the two proofs of salvation.

1. Jesus showed (paristemi), presented Himself alive. There are ten resurrection appearances of Jesus recorded in the New Testament (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:3). However, there were apparently many more that are not recorded (cp. Jn.20:30-31; 21:25).

2. Jesus gave many infallible proofs of His resurrection. (See note—Acts 10:40-41 for more discussion.)

- a. The word “proofs” (tekmeriois) means positive proof; infallible proof; convincing proof; sure signs and ways.
- b. The infallible, positive proofs and appearances went on for *forty days*.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:3) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** Jesus appeared at least ten times after His resurrection before He ascended into heaven. There were apparently many more appearances not recorded (cp. Jn.20:30-31; 21:25).

1. He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mk.16:9-11; Jn.20:11-18).
2. He appeared to the women running to tell the disciples about the empty tomb (Mt.28:8-10).
3. He appeared to Peter, probably to assure him of his restoration (Lk.24:34; 1 Cor.15:5).
4. He appeared to the two Emmaus disciples sometime in the early evening (Mk.16:12; Lk.24:13-42).
5. He appeared to the disciples with Thomas absent (Mk.16:14; Lk.24:36-43; Jn.20:19-25).
6. One week later, He appeared to the disciples who had gone fishing (Jn.20).
7. He appeared to 500 believers (1 Cor.15:6).
8. He appeared to the apostles (Mt.28:16-20; Mk.16:15-18).
9. He appeared to James, the Lord’s half-brother (1 Cor.15:7).
10. He appeared to the believers at His ascension (Mk.16:19-20; Lk.24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12).

It should be remembered that since Jesus’ ascension He has appeared at least two other times.

1. He appeared to Stephen at his martyrdom (Acts 7:55-56).
2. He appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3f).

**4** (1:3) **Kingdom of God:** Jesus’ ministry on earth was to proclaim the great hope of man, the promise of the Kingdom of God. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Mt.19:23-24 for discussion.) Note: the Kingdom of God is the focus of His message even after His resurrection. Man’s only hope for survival is the Kingdom of God.

**5** (1:4-5) **Holy Spirit:** Jesus’ ministry on earth was to proclaim the great promise to believers, the promise of the Holy Spirit. God knew and Christ proclaimed that no man could live and witness for God, not “in the arm of the flesh.” No man or group of men were powerful enough to live for God or to convince others of the *foolishness of the gospel*...

- that love is more powerful than might.
- that God’s Son actually came to earth as a man.
- that God’s Son died but was raised from the dead, conquering death.
- that the cross is the way men are saved from sin, death and hell.

## ACTS 1:1-5

- that man can be *born again*, literally born again and made into a new creature by *believing* in Jesus.
- that man can live forever by being born again through belief in Jesus.

Christ knew that man needed a supernatural power, the power of God Himself. He knew that the very presence of God's Spirit had to *enter into* the very heart of man and...

- impart the divine nature of God (2 Pt.1:4).
- recreate his being completely (2 Cor.5:17; Eph.4:23-24; Col.3:9-10).
- live within his body, giving the believer the power to control his life for God and to courageously proclaim the gospel to a world that would consider it foolishness and often react in violence.

In these two verses, Christ is sharing how the apostles (and all succeeding believers) are to receive the Holy Spirit in all His fullness and power.

1. They are to “*wait* for the promise of the Father,” *wait in prayer* for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
  - a. Note the phrase “the promise of the Father.” The idea is that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the *supreme gift* of God to the believer. The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God Himself, and God promises to give His Spirit to the believer.

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Mt.3:11).

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).

“But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Lk.24:49).

“Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest” (Is.32:15).

“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring” (Is.44:3).

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28).

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD” (Zech.2:10. See Deeper Study # 1—Acts 2:1-4.)

- b. The believer must *wait* in prayer to receive the Holy Spirit. *Waiting, centering, and focusing* one's attention upon God is another way of saying believing, trusting, and focusing one's life upon God. If a person will *wait* upon God—if he will learn to *wait* more and more—he will...
  - gain more and more awareness and consciousness of the Spirit's presence and power.
  - gain more and more knowledge of the Spirit Himself, how He lives and works within the believer's heart and life.
  - learn how to surrender more and more of his life to the Spirit's control and witness.
  - experience more and more of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23. Note: the fruit of the Spirit is borne only as the believer is *filled* with the Spirit. Being filled is a command. Believers are not automatically filled. Too many believers walk around in the flesh, totally unconscious of the Spirit's presence and will.)

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Lk.11:13).  
“Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph.5:18).

2. Believers have to hear about the promise of the Spirit before they can receive Him. A believer cannot sit with a wandering or preoccupied mind and be filled with the Spirit of God; he cannot expect to be filled with the presence of God and never center his mind upon the things of God. The believer has to hear and focus his attention upon, hunger and thirst for the things of God. He has to center his life upon God's Spirit in order to receive the promise of the Spirit.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:5-6).

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor.2:12).

3. Then, believers will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Note: this baptism is not water baptism, not the kind of water baptism John used. It is the baptism brought by Christ Himself, the immersion of the believer into the Spirit of God and of the Spirit into the believer. (Cp. Mt.3:11. See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:1-4 for discussion.)

(See outline and notes—Jn.14:15-26; 16:7-15; cp. Ro.8:1-17 for the person and Work of the Holy Spirit. Christ clearly outlined both His Person and Work.)

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| <p><b>1 The disciples came together again</b><br/> <b>2 Scene 1: Jesus promised the kingdom</b><br/><br/> <b>3 Scene 2: Jesus assigned the believer's great task—the great commission<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/>         a. Their equipping: the Power of the Holy Spirit</p> | <p><b>B. Jesus' Last Day on Earth, 1:6-11</b><br/><br/>         6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?<br/>         7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.<br/>         8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and</p> | <p>unto the uttermost part of the earth.<br/>         9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.<br/>         10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;<br/>         11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.</p> | <p>b. Their task: Witnessing<br/>         c. Their method<br/> <b>4 Scene 3: Jesus ascended before the disciples' very eyes</b><br/><br/> <b>5 Scene 4: The prophecy of Jesus' return</b></p> |
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**DIVISION I**

**THE GREAT DAYS OF EXPECTATION, 1:1-26**

**B. Jesus' Last Day on Earth, 1:6-11**

(1:6-11) **Introduction:** this was Jesus' last day on earth. What He did is a most powerful and critical message for believers.

1. The disciples came together again (v.6).
2. Scene 1: Jesus promised the kingdom (v.6-7).
3. Scene 2: Jesus assigned the believer's great task - the great commission (v.8).
4. Scene 3: Jesus ascended before the disciples' very eyes (v.9).
5. Scene 4: the prophecy of Jesus' return (v.10-11).

**1** (1:6) **Jesus Christ, Last Day:** the disciples came together again. This is apparently a different occasion, a specific time planned by Christ when He would ascend back into heaven. He must have arranged for the apostles to gather all the disciples together (over five hundred) at one location. What He had to announce would be a momentous occasion (cp. 1 Cor.15:6).

**2** (1:6-7) **Believers, Duty:** the first scene. Jesus promised the kingdom. Picture the scene: over five hundred disciples stood in some remote spot, probably on the top of a mountain. They surrounded Christ. One of the disciples asked Christ a revealing question: "Was He now going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Was that the reason He had called everyone together, the reason for His stressing the importance of the meeting so much?"

The revealing thing is this: the disciples were still thinking in terms of an earthly, physical Messiah, of a physical and material rule and reign for themselves and their nation, Israel. (See outline and DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.1:18; 18:1-2 for more discussion. Also see Index—*Messiah*.)

We must always remember this: Christ *is going to set up His kingdom on earth*. There is a future aspect to His kingdom as well as a present rule and reign in human hearts. His rule and reign will be done on earth. The Lord's prayer assures this (cp. Mt.6:10). Christ promised the apostles they would sit upon thrones judging the people of Israel. He also promised believers they would receive a hundredfold and rule over the world. (See outline and notes—Mt.19:27-30; Lk.16:10-12; Rev.14:13; 21:24-27 for more discussion.) But the concern of the believer is not to be a reward, not to be a carnal craving for...

- position and influence
- authority and power
- money and possessions
- recognition and prestige
- rule and reign
- the material and physical

The believer's concern is to be service and ministry, proclaiming the glorious salvation of Christ and meeting the cry of a world buried in desperate needs. Christ is direct, rebuking those who wish to pry into the timing of the Lord's return and the setting up of His kingdom upon earth. Christ had said that even He did not know when He was to return and set up the kingdom. He rebuked the question...

- "It is not for you to know."
- "The Father hath put [the times] in His own power."

**Thought 1.** Believers are not to be focusing upon prophecy and the setting of dates. They are not to be craving for release from this world and for the heavenly positions of authority. What believers are to do is to look for Jesus' return and long for heaven. But even this—even the love of Jesus' return—is not to get in the way of the believer's task, the task Christ discusses in the next point. What is the task? It is the task of witnessing. Believers are to focus upon witnessing, upon sharing the glorious gospel of salvation with the world.

“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mk.13:32).

“Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter” (Jn.13:7).

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (Jn.16:12).

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Cor.13:12).

“And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon” (Rev.5:3).

**3** (1:8) **Witnessing—Great Commission—Holy Spirit—Power:** the second scene. Jesus assigned the believer’s great task—the great commission. Note three significant points.

1. The believer’s equipping power was to be the Holy Spirit. The disciples had asked about the kingdom, the positions of leadership and authority Christ had promised. The point is critical and to be noted with all diligence. They were to receive power, but not the power of this earth, not the power of...

- position
- supervision
- wealth
- recognition
- fame
- politics

Their power was to be spiritual and supernatural. It was to be *the very power...*

- of God Himself,
- of the Supreme Being of the universe,
- of His presence,
- of His Spirit

God’s very own Spirit was to dwell within the heart and life of the believer. No greater power could ever be possessed by anyone. This is clearly seen: once the early disciples experienced the coming of God’s Spirit into their being, they *never again asked* about earthly power. Experiencing the presence and power of God within their lives was the summit, the supreme experience of their lives. Nothing else was ever needed. It is this for which the human heart craves, and once God’s Spirit truly dwells within a person, that person is supremely fulfilled and satisfied. Nothing else can ever satisfy—not position or authority, recognition or fame—not if the person has truly received the Spirit of God into his heart and life.

The point is this: the believer is given a task by God, a mission to carry out on earth. The believer does not have the power to carry out that task. The power of God Himself, of His Spirit, is needed. Therefore, Christ promises, “Ye shall receive power *after* the Holy Spirit is come upon you.” Both the Spirit of God and His power are promised. But note a critical point: the Holy Spirit comes upon believers as an *equipping power*. The major purpose for His coming is to *equip* the believer to carry out his task for God.

2. The believer’s task is the great task of witnessing for God. The disciples had asked about the coming of the kingdom, just when the kingdom would come. When would believers be gathered and cloistered together in the fellowship and worship of God, free from worldly injustices and sin? Again, Christ had promised the kingdom, a day when He would gather all believers together in perfect fellowship and service of God. He promised a day when believers would be freed from the world, from its sin and shame, death and hell. But again, note: now is *not the time* to be cloistered together...

- in heaven.
- in the eternal kingdom of God.
- in Christian societies.
- in the church.

Now is *not the time* for believers to be revelling in the love and fellowship, the enjoyment and comfort of each other. This is the point Christ is making, a critical point. It *is time* for...

- WITNESSING
- BEING WITNESSES TO CHRIST

Witnessing to Christ, sharing the glorious salvation in Him, is the great task of the believer. This is understandable, clearly seen, for no greater truth exists in all the universe. Man can now live forever; man can now be delivered from sin, death, and hell. Just think about it! The perfect cure for...

- sin has been secured.
- death is known.
- hell now exists.

There is no reason for the world—no reason for any person—to suffer any longer under the weight and bondage of...

- selfishness and hoarding
- inadequate supply and hunger
- bitterness and hatred
- killing and maiming
- war and power
- insecurity and low self-esteem
- emptiness and loneliness
- guilt and shame
- fear and anguish
- ignorance and the unknown

(God have mercy upon all who know the cure and keep silent! No greater indictment against a person exists.)

Now note several points.

a. The word “you”: it is the believer who is to witness. It is the believer who knows the cure, the truth of salvation.

- b. The words “unto me”: Christ is the message, not a man’s ideas, not even the idea of religion. “Christ crucified” is the believer’s testimony (1 Cor.1:23. Cp. 1 Cor.1:18, 24; Gal.6:14.)
- c. The word “witness” (Greek, *martures*): this is the same word as martyr. The believer is to be so committed to reaching men that he is ready to die as a martyr if need be. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:8 for verses on witnessing.)
- d. The word “witness”: this is not a command. Rather, it is a natural result of the Holy Spirit within a person. So is power. The Lord says very simply that a Spirit-filled person has power and becomes a witness for Him throughout the world. This is important, for it makes power and witnessing trademarks of Christian believers. A genuine believer possesses both the Spirit and power in his life and becomes by nature a witness for the Lord.

3. The believer’s method: Jesus gives the method that the believer is to follow in his witness and for the spread of the gospel.

- a. The believer is to witness where he is (Jerusalem) and move progressively outward (Judaea and Samaria) until he is having a part in reaching the uttermost part of the earth.  
Every believer...
  - is to go as far as he can personally go.
  - is to give as sacrificially as he can for others to go.
  - is to use and support every means he can to reach the world.
- b. The believer is to witness where he is first, see to it that Christ is well known throughout his home and community before moving on. But once Christ is well known, the believer is to move out, ever pressing outward from where he is. His first witness is to be...
  - in Jerusalem: where he is, his home and local community. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.9:4 for more discussion.)
  - in all Judaea: other communities and areas and cities and states. Note the words “all Judaea.”
  - in Samaria: other states and provinces where people are antagonistic. There was bitter hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. Yet Christ tells His witnesses to carry the message of salvation even to their enemies. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Samaritans*—Lk.10:33.)
  - to the uttermost part of the earth: to the unknown countries and regions of the world.

A critical point is this: the believer is to see that each area receives the message of Christ. He is to stay there before reaching out. But once the area knows the message, the message is to be carried out into another area.

**Thought 1.** What a difference world evangelization would experience if each believer would simply do what Christ says.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:8) **Witnessing:** the word “witness” in the book of Acts is forceful, revealing the duty of the believer.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:32).

“And with many other words did he testify [witness] and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40).

“And [you] killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses” (Acts 3:15).

“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32).

“And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans” (Acts 8:25).

“And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:39-43).

“And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people” (Acts 13:31).

“Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands” (Acts 14:3).

“And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified [witnessed] to the Jews that Jesus was Christ” (Acts 18:5).

“Testifying [witnessing] both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my

life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify [witness] the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:21-24).

“For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard” (Acts 22:15).

“And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony [witness] concerning me” (Acts 22:18).

“And when the blood of thy martyr [witness] Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him” (Acts 22:20).

“And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome” (Acts 23:11).

“But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16).

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts 26:22).

“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified [witnessed] the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening” (Acts 28:23).

**4** (1:9) **Jesus Christ, Ascension:** the third scene. Jesus’ ascended before the disciples’ very eyes. Note Jesus’ last words on earth (Acts 1:8). His concern was reaching the world for God. Now note what happened. Immediately after speaking the words, the most dramatic event began to happen. Jesus Christ began to slowly arise from the earth, ascending ever upward toward the sky above. The disciples were shocked and spellbound, gazing at the spectacular sight. They were beholding one of the most dramatic and phenomenal events ever experienced:

⇒ the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

⇒ the return of God’s Son into heaven, into the spiritual world and dimension of being.

Note the words “beheld” (v.9, *bleponton*) and “while they looked stedfastly” (*atenizontes esan*). The Lord ascended somewhat slowly in a dramatic, spectacular fashion. Why depart in this way? For the sake of the disciples. There are several significant reasons why they needed such a dramatic departure. (See note, *Jesus Christ, Exaltation—Acts 2:33-36* for more discussion.)

1. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce His final departure. Since His resurrection He had been appearing and disappearing spontaneously, at will, as though by thought or light. This departure was to be final. He would never return again, not as He had been doing. Therefore this departure needed to be different; it needed to be impressed and enforced in the minds and consciences of the disciples once and for all.

2. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce His claim upon the disciples. This was the last time He would have to confirm His claims while on earth. He wanted the disciples to have additional confirmation, a most dramatic confirmation that He was exactly whom He claimed to be. By actually ascending upward He was proclaiming seven glorious truths beyond all question.

a. He is the ascended Lord. (See *DEEPER STUDY # 2—Lord—Acts 2:36.*)

b. He is the ascended Mediator between God and man. (See notes—*Jn.10:7-8; 12:44-46; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1,2,3—14:6; notes—14:13-14; 1 Tim.2:3-7. Cp. Heb.8:6; 9:15; 12:24.*)

c. He is the ascended Advocate of man before God. (The word “advocate” [*parakleton*] is the very same word used for the Holy Spirit, the Comforter [*parakletos*]. See *DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.14:16* for meaning. Cp. *Jn.14:26; 15:26; 16:7.*)

⇒ The Holy Spirit is God’s Advocate on earth with men.

⇒ Jesus Christ is man’s Advocate with God. (See note—*1 Jn.2:1-2.*)

d. He is the ascended Son of God, the One who came “out of” heaven to earth to save man (see notes—*Jn.3:31; 3:32-34; 6:33; 7:25-31; DEEPER STUDY # 2—8:23; note—Heb.7:25.*)

e. He is the ascended High Priest of God who makes reconciliation for the sins of men (*Heb.2:17-18. Cp. 1 Jn.2:1-2.*)

f. He is the ascended High Priest who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities and delivers and succors us through all trials (*Heb.2:15-16. Cp. Ro.8:31-39; Heb.2:17-18.*)

g. He is the ascended Christ (Messiah) who makes intercession for us (*Ro.8:34; cp. 8:31-39.*)

3. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce His return to earth, that it shall take place exactly as He said. (See note—*Acts 1:10-11* for discussion.)

4. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce that the disciples were not to be standing around “gazing up into heaven.” They were to get to the business at hand. They were to return to the upper room and...

• “wait” and pray for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

• move out witnessing to a world lost and reeling in desperate need.

“So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (*Mk.16:19.*)

“And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven” (*Lk.24:51.*)

“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up: and a cloud received him out of their sight” (*Acts 1:9.*)

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession” (*Heb.4:14.*)

**“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb.9:24).**

**“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and power being made subject unto him” (1 Pt.3:22).**

**5** (1:10-11) **Jesus Christ, Ascension; Exaltation; Return:** the fourth scene. There was the prophecy of Jesus’ return. Note that God had two men appear, standing by the disciples. They were dressed in white clothing which is the color of angels’ clothing (cp. Mt.28:3; Jn.20:12). These two messengers from God said three significant things about Jesus’ return.

1. This “same Jesus” shall return just as He left. He shall not return in some strange way, in a way that He might be unrecognized and missed. He shall return in the clouds of heaven and every eye shall “see Him” (Rev.1:7).

Note exactly what Scripture says about how Christ ascended.

⇒ Acts 1:9 says a cloud received (hupelaben) Him. The Greek word literally means took, lifted, supported Him.

⇒ Luke 24:51 says He was “carried up” (anephereto) into heaven. The Greek means borne up, taken up.

⇒ Acts 1:2; 1:11; 1 Tim.3:16 says He was “received up” (anelempthe).

The point is this: it is as though the cloud *received and took* (hupelaben) Him. The cloud was apparently the Shekinah glory (see note 2—Jn.1:14). Christ had said He would return to earth in the clouds of heaven (Mt.24:30; 26:64; Mk.13:26; cp. Rev.1:7). Seeing such a dramatic ascension confirmed for the disciples (and for us) that Jesus’ promise of returning to earth will take place just as He said.

2. This “same Jesus” is the One who will come back. He will not be different, either in Person or in attitude. He will be the same.

⇒ He will be the *same Jesus*, the same Lord and Savior, the same One who came to earth to save men.

⇒ He will be the *same Jesus* in attitude, still loving and caring for those who follow Him.

⇒ He will be the *same Jesus* who promised to return and receive believers unto Himself that they may be with Him where He is (Jn.14:2-3).

**“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Mt.16:27).**

**“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Mt.24:27).**

**“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt.25:31-32).**

**“Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Mt.26:64).**

**“Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not” (Lk.12:40).**

**“And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory” (Lk.21:27).**

**“Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).**

**“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor.4:5).**

**“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Th.5:2).**

**“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim.4:1).**

**“For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb.10:37).**

**“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (Jas.5:8).**

**“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14-15).**

**“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” (Rev.16:15).**

3. This *same Jesus* who will return is the One who ascended into heaven. The Jesus in heaven is the same Jesus the disciples knew—the One who was their Lord and Savior; the One who came to earth to be their close companion, their Advocate, their Mediator, their Representative before God. Therefore when He returns, He will be coming back to receive all believers unto Himself. He will be coming back that we may all be where He is (Jn.14:2-3).

**“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn.14:2-3).**

**“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Th.4:16-18).**

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| <p><b>1 The essentials to choosing church leaders</b></p> <p>a. Essential 1: To obey Jesus—they returned to Jerusalem</p> <p>b. Essential 2: To center around the appointed leaders</p> <p>1) All eleven apostles were present</p> <p>2) Met where the apostles were staying</p> <p>c. Essential 3: To continue in one accord<sup>DS1,2</sup></p> <p>d. Essential 4: To pray steadfastly</p> <p>e. Essential 5: To have an appointed leader (Peter) who <i>willingly</i> leads</p> <p>f. Essential 6: To heed the leader</p> <p><b>2 The need for church leaders: Judas' fate &amp; empty office</b></p> <p>a. His betrayal: A <i>guide</i> for evil vs. a <i>guide</i> for good</p> <p>b. His call by Jesus: To serve in the ministry</p> <p>c. His greed</p> <p>d. His death: Despair &amp;</p> | <p><b>C. Judas' Fate and Replacement: Choosing Church Leaders, 1:12-26</b></p> <p>12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.</p> <p>13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.</p> <p>14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.</p> <p>15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty.)</p> <p>16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.</p> <p>17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.</p> <p>18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of</p> | <p>iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.</p> <p>19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.</p> <p>20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take.</p> <p>21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,</p> <p>22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.</p> <p>23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.</p> <p>24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen,</p> <p>25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.</p> <p>26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with eleven apostles.</p> | <p>suicide</p> <p>e. His legacy</p> <p>f. His terrible fate: An eternal loss</p> <p><b>3 The choosing of church leaders: The replacement for Judas</b></p> <p>a. Leaders must be associates: Proven over a long period of time</p> <p>b. Leaders must know the Lord Jesus personally: Have a personal knowledge of Him—be a witness of His resurrection power</p> <p>c. Leaders &amp; their appointment require prayer</p> <p>1) God alone knows the heart</p> <p>2) God alone chooses</p> <p>d. Leaders &amp; their appointment require congregational consultation<sup>DS3</sup></p> |
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**DIVISION I**

**THE GREAT DAYS OF EXPECTATION, 1:1-26**

**C. Judas' Fate and Replacement: Choosing Church Leaders, 1:12-26**

(1:12-26) **Introduction:** this is an instructive passage on choosing church leaders.

1. The essentials to choosing church leaders (v.12-15).
2. The need for church leaders: Judas' fate and empty office (v.16-20).
3. The choosing of church leaders: the replacement for Judas (v.21-26).

**1** (1:12-15) **Leaders, Church:** the essentials to choosing church leaders. There are six essentials seen in this passage.

1. Essential 1: to obey Jesus. The disciples had just witnessed the ascension on the mount of Olives (see **DEEPER STUDY # 1, Mount of Olives—Lk.21:37**). They now obeyed Christ by returning to Jerusalem. And note: their obedience took tremendous courage, for Jerusalem was the very center of opposition against Christ. They were risking their lives to obey Christ. It would have been much easier to go elsewhere and wait upon and serve God there. But Christ had made His will known and the disciples had committed their lives to obeying Him.

**Thought 1.** In choosing church leaders, believers have to be in the will of God; they must do the will of God. They cannot know who God's choice for a leader is unless they are obeying Him. Disobedient and carnal believers end up with disobedient and carnal leaders, that is, with leaders who are fleshy and worldly. They know little if anything about God, His will, and the true spiritual matters of the church and its mission.

2. Essential 2: to center around the appointed leaders. Note that all eleven of the apostles were present, and they were even meeting in the upper room where the apostles were staying. The building was large, for there were over 120 disciples gathering there (v. 15). (See DEEPER STUDY # 4—Mk.3:16-19 for a discussion on each of the twelve apostles for more information.)

**Thought 1.** Leaders appointed by Christ are to be *the leaders* of the church, and believers must be centered around them if they wish God's presence and blessings. Too often however, too many turn to other leaders, leaders less godly, less spiritual and less mission-, evangelistic-, and ministry-minded. The result is a dead, formal, self-centered, or worldly and socially minded church. (Note: there is a huge difference between being ministry-minded and social-minded. The difference is the same as the great gulf between the spirit and the world itself.)

- ⇒ Being ministry-minded means reaching out to help people both socially and spiritually, leading people to an evangelistic encounter, to a personal relationship with Christ as well as meeting their physical and social needs.
- ⇒ Being social-minded means reaching out to help people with *little* if any attention given to evangelism. A social gospel seldom stresses the need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The church must *have and follow spiritual leaders*, leaders chosen and appointed by God, if the church is to be a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Essential 3: to continue in one accord (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:14). The disciples were in the upper room for one reason: to seek and wait upon the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

**Thought 1.** Believers must be of one spirit and mind, focusing their thoughts and concentrating as strongly as they can upon the same purpose. They have one purpose in mind, to seek God for the promise of His Spirit and His presence.

4. Essential 4: to pray steadfastly (proskarterountes). The word is strong. They continued, persevered, endured, persisted, stuck to praying. For what? For the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They would not cease or stop praying. God's very special presence and power, His very own Spirit and power, had been promised to them; and they were not going to stop praying until God baptized them in His Spirit and presence. (What a lesson for us!)

5. Essential 5: to have a leader who willingly leads. Peter had failed his Lord and failed Him in a terrible way, tragically denying Him. He had emotionally dropped into the dregs of despair and anguish (see note—Mt.26:69-75). He could have easily remained defeated, allowing the glances and criticisms of the believers to keep him down, never serving his Lord again. But note: he had gotten up off the ground of despair and defeatism: He was standing forth, willingly serving Christ *exactly* where Christ had originally appointed him to serve. Peter's sin and the public's criticism were not keeping him away from his Lord, nor from serving his Lord. He had failed and failed miserably, but the Lord in His unbelievable mercy and grace had forgiven him and lifted him up, and now the Lord was ready to use Peter as originally planned.

**Thought 1.** Note that Peter willingly stepped forth. He did not step forth by constraint nor out of fear. Compare what he later said to the leaders of the church.

**“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pt.5:1-3).**

6. Essential 6: to heed what the leader says. All 120 believers listened and gave heed to Peter's leadership. No leader could lead unless the people were *willing* to follow. God's presence and blessings depended upon the believers following the leader God had given them.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:14) **One Accord** (homothumadon): the same mind or spirit; oneness of mind and heart. It means to be one in spirit and purpose. *Homos* means same and *thumos* means spirit or mind. The believers, all 120 of them in the upper room, were of the same spirit, of the same mind. The idea is they were after the same thing, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They were focusing and concentrating their thoughts and energies upon seeking God for the promise of His Spirit.

The word is used only eleven times in Scripture, ten of those times are found in Acts, one is found in Romans.

- ⇒ One accord in prayer (Acts 1:14; 4:24).
- ⇒ One accord in one place (Acts 2:1).
- ⇒ One accord in daily worship and the Lord's supper (Acts 2:46; 5:12).
- ⇒ One accord in obedience (Acts 8:6).
- ⇒ One accord in a business meeting (Acts 15:25).
- ⇒ One accord is needed to glorify God (Ro.15:6).

The phrase “one accord” is also used to refer to the unity of unbelievers and enemies of the gospel (Acts 7:57; 12:20; 18:12; 19:29).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(1:14) **Jesus Christ, Family:** note who was present in the upper room.

1. The eleven apostles.
2. The women, probably including the wives of the apostles and the other women who followed Jesus Christ (Lk.8:2-3; Mt.27:55; 27:61; 28:9f; Mk.15:40, 47; 16:1; Lk.23:49, 55; 24:1).
3. Mary, the mother of Jesus.
4. The brothers of Jesus: James, Joseph (Joses), Simon, and Judas (Mt.13:55; Mk.6:3). Before the resurrection they rejected Jesus' claims, but after His resurrection they became believers. James was given a personal appearance and revelation by the risen Lord (1 Cor.15:7). He became the pastor of the great church in Jerusalem.

**2** (1:16-20) **Leaders, Church:** the need for church leaders—Judas' fate and empty office. The church had an empty office because one of its leaders had died a tragic death. And note, Judas had been a leader; he had held one of the highest positions, that of being treasurer for the Lord Himself. (See note—Jn.12:4-8.)

Peter briefly covered why the office in the church was to be filled.

1. Judas had betrayed Christ, had actually become the *guide* for Jesus' enemies (cp. Mt.26:47f; Lk.22:47; Jn.18:2f). He should have guided people to receive Christ; instead, he had guided them to reject and deny Him and to remove Christ from the scene.

2. Judas had been called by Christ to serve in the ministry. He had been given a part in the ministry. He had been *numbered* and counted by all as being an apostle and a leader among God's people. Yet, he had somehow refused God's grace—the grace that truly *saved* and *sanctified*, that caused a person to diligently believe and seek God, to truly follow and live for Him.

**Thought 1.** Unless a person is truly saved and sanctified, he is not acceptable to God. It is not enough...

- to claim and profess God.
- to hold an official office in the church, even the highest of offices.
- to be a minister or leader.
- to be an associate with other believers.
- to be a faithful church member.
- to be active in ministering.

3. Judas had given his heart over to greed, selling Christ for thirty pieces of silver. (See notes—Mt.26:15.)

4. Judas had died a terrible death: he had hanged himself in despair. (The rope had broken and he had fallen head first. His body had just burst open. The picture is given in descriptive terms to match the terrible deed of betraying Christ.)

5. Judas' legacy is tragic. Everyone, even the reader, knows the terrible legacy of Judas' life, the legacy of betrayal. Betraying Christ is the most terrible legacy a man can ever have. (This stands as a warning that must be heeded by all.)

6. Judas' terrible fate was an eternal loss. This verse is a quote from Ps.69:25; 109:8 (cp. Ps.41:9; Zech.11:12).

Note two things:

- a. The phrase "his habitation" (*he epaulis autou*) is descriptive. It means a farm house or a place for sheep such as a pasture or sheep-yard. The idea is that Judas would never again be allowed to be the farmer (husbandman) or shepherd for God.
- b. The word "bishopric" (*episkopen*) means overseership. It is the word from which the office of bishop is taken. The idea is that Judas' office of *overseeing* the flock of God was to be filled by another person. Judas had lost his ministry completely.

**Thought 1.** What happened to Judas serves as a warning to every Christian leader. Judas had every opportunity imaginable, even that of brushing shoulders with the Lord Jesus day by day, yet he deserted Christ.

**"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim.1:19).**

**"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim.4:1).**

**"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb.3:12).**

**"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Pt.3:17).**

**3** (1:21-26) **Leaders:** the choosing of church leaders—the replacement for Judas.

1. Leaders must be associates; they must be in fellowship with other believers over a long period of time. Peter definitely said they must not be novices; they must not be new believers not yet grounded in the faith. People must not be chosen to be leaders until they are mature in the Lord and have proven to be genuine.

**"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim.3:6).**

2. Leaders must know the Lord Jesus personally. They must have personal knowledge of Jesus Christ—be a witness of His resurrection power. A leader...

- must not only know about Jesus, but know Jesus.

- must not only profess Jesus, but possess Jesus.
- must not only believe Jesus lived, but know Jesus lives.
- must not only read the story of Jesus, but live the life of Jesus.
- must not only walk after a religion of Jesus, but follow Jesus, the risen Lord Himself.
- must not only be willing to lead others, but be leading others already (no matter how few).
- must not only talk about witnessing, but witness.
- must not only want the resurrected power of God, but already know the power of God.

Note the two names put forth and nominated. They were men highly esteemed by the earliest believers. Nothing else is known about them.

**“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Is.43:10).**

**“And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mk.3:14).**

3. Leaders must be appointed through prayer. God must be sought for two very clear, but often neglected reasons.
  - a. God alone knows the human heart. A person’s heart cannot be truly known by others. Only God can see within. Men can be fooled; and that fact was perfectly clear, for Judas had deceived the early believers, drastically so. It was perfectly clear they could choose a counterfeit, a carnal believer. They had to seek God, for He alone knew what was in the heart of man (Jn.2:24-25).
  - b. God alone had the right to choose. The church, the office, the mission was His. God alone knew whom He wanted to fill the office. They had to ask in order to find out God’s will.

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15).**

**“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:2-3).**

**Thought 1.** Note the strong lesson on prayer in this fact. God’s will cannot be known apart from seeking to know His will.

**“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mk.11:24).**

**“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight” (1 Jn.3:22).**

**“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer.29:13).**

4. Leaders are to be appointed by the congregation, not by the leaders themselves. It was not just the eleven apostles who chose the twelfth apostle. What Peter and the 120 disciples did is clear. Peter called for nominations (v.21), the whole group cast their lots and voted for whom they thought God wanted. It was a congregational or democratic process.

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(1:26) **Lots:** just what was involved in “casting lots” is not really known. It was a method allowed in the Old Testament for making decisions under God’s guidance (Lev.16:8; Num.26:55; Pr.16:33). It seems that everyone either wrote his choice down, or else the choices were written just once and placed in a vase, shaken up (much like dice), and then one was picked out. Despite the chance involved, this must be remembered: every name placed in the vase was qualified in the eyes of the church. Therefore, any one of the nominations was capable of serving as a leader. However, by casting lots, there was great trust that God would overrule the lots, seeing that His choice was picked.

| CHAPTER 2   |  |  |
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| <p><b>1 There was God's providence</b><sup>DS2,3</sup></p> <p><b>2 There was man obeying</b></p> <p><b>3 There was the spirit of being in one accord</b></p> <p><b>4 There was the Spirit's infilling</b></p> <p>a. As a mighty sound—as the rushing of a “mighty” wind</p> <p>b. As fire—as split tongues that sat upon each believer</p> <p>c. The results</p> <p>1) All were filled with the Spirit</p> <p>2) All spoke in other tongues<sup>DS4</sup>—witnessing</p> <p><b>5 There was witnessing—devout men heard the Word</b></p> | <p><b>II. THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60</b></p> <p><b>A. The Day of Pentecost and The Coming of the Holy Spirit: The Church is Born,</b><sup>DS1</sup> <b>2:1-13</b></p> <p>And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.</p> <p>2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.</p> <p>3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.</p> <p>4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.</p> <p>5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.</p> <p>6 Now when this was noised</p> | <p>abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.</p> <p>7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?</p> <p>8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?</p> <p>9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the part of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,</p> <p>11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.</p> <p>12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?</p> <p>13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.</p> <p>a. Heard in their “own language”</p> <p>b. Heard in their “own tongue”</p> <p>c. Heard in “our tongues”</p> <p>d. Heard about the works of God</p> <p><b>6 There were different reactions</b></p> <p>a. Some were attracted &amp; sought meaning</p> <p>b. Some mocked</p> |

**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**A. The Day of Pentecost and The Coming of the Holy Spirit: The Church is Born, 2:1-13**

(2:1-13) **Introduction:** the Day of Pentecost was one of the most phenomenal and important events in all of history. There are several reasons why the event was so important.

- ⇒ It was “the coming of the Holy Spirit.”
  - ⇒ It was the birth of the church.
  - ⇒ It was the corporate filling of the Holy Spirit, of the body of believers with the promised presence of Christ (Jn.14:16-18).
  - ⇒ It was the personal filling of the individual believer by the Holy Spirit.
  - ⇒ It was the Presence and Power of God coming upon believers, gifting and equipping them to proclaim the glorious message of salvation to men.
1. There was God's providence (v.1).
  2. There was man obeying (v.1).
  3. There was the spirit of being in one accord (v.1).
  4. There was the Spirit's infilling (v.2-4).
  5. There was witnessing—devout men heard the Word (v.5-11).
  6. There were different reactions (v.12-13).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(2:1-4) **Holy Spirit—Pentecost:** the disciples had been deliberately prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the Bible the revelation of the Spirit had been step by step, that is, progressive.

Prophecy shows this clearly.

1. Joel prophesied, “It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh...” (Joel 2:28-29).
2. John the Baptist said, “I baptize with water, but He shall baptize with [en, in] the Holy Spirit” (Mt.3:11; Lk.3:16).
3. In the early part of Jesus' ministry, He had said that believers were to be “born again...by the Spirit” (Jn.3:3-4; cp. 1 Jn.5:1).
4. During His ministry, Jesus taught that men were to receive the Holy Spirit by prayer (Lk.11:13).
5. In the Upper Room, Jesus identified the Holy Spirit as a Person (Jn.14:15-26), and He outlined the work of the Spirit with both unbelievers and believers (Jn.16:7-15). Significantly, He revealed that He was praying to the Father for the Comforter to come and abide with the disciples (Jn.14:16-17).

6. After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus appeared to His disciples in the Upper Room. There He symbolically breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (Jn.20:22). But He insisted they not begin their ministry until they experienced the Spirit actually coming upon them with power (Lk.24:49; Acts 1:8).

7. Right before Jesus was to ascend into heaven, He said, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5).

8. Then, ten days after Jesus' ascension and after much prayer, the Holy Spirit came upon and filled the whole body of believers at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

There are two events of the Holy Spirit's coming that seem to hold historical significance. These two particular events are very, very special to the church, for both Jewish and Gentile believers were clearly seen to be in God's historical plan. Both Jew and Gentile were baptized by the Holy Spirit, that is, placed into the body of Christ, His Church.

1. At Pentecost: the disciples were "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4).
  - a. This was in fulfillment of the prophecy by Joel. The Spirit was *poured out* upon the believers (Acts 2:16).
  - b. This was in fulfillment of the prophesies by Jesus and John. The Spirit *baptized*, that is, immersed the believers with His own presence (Acts 1:5; 10:44-48; cp. 11:15-16, esp. 16).
2. At Cornelius' house: the Holy Spirit "fell," was "poured out," and was "received" by the Gentile believers (Acts 10:44-47).
  - a. Peter said to the Jews who came with him, "These received the Holy Spirit *as well as we*" (Acts 10:47).
  - b. Peter reported the event to the Jerusalem Church: "The Holy Spirit fell on them, *as on us at the beginning*. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water: but 'ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 11:15-16).
  - c. Peter used the experience to support Paul before the great Jerusalem Council:

**"God...[gave] them the Holy Spirit even as He did unto us" (Acts 15:8).**

In all three instances the idea conveyed is that of an event just like *their own* experience. It is as though Peter pointed to a Gentile Pentecost or at least an extension of Pentecost in Acts 2 to include the Gentiles.

Note two other facts:

1. At Pentecost, the account uses the word *filled*, not *baptized*.
2. At Cornelius' house, the account says the Holy Spirit *fell*, was *poured out*, and *received*. But in reporting the experience to the Jerusalem Church, Peter used the word *baptized*. He said the Gentile believers were "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:16) "as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). This clearly says that although the word *baptized* is not used in the Pentecost experience, the disciples were baptized or immersed with the Spirit's presence at Pentecost. The words *filled*, *received*, *poured*, *baptized*, and *fell upon* are all used interchangeably to describe the Spirit's presence coming into a believer's life. (If believers would heed this, it would eliminate many of the arguments that arise over terminology.)

Other than these two events Acts records only four other times that the Holy Spirit came upon believers.

1. A little prayer band in Jerusalem was "filled" with the Holy Spirit (cp. Acts 4:8).
2. The Samaritans (half-Jews, half-Gentiles) "received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15-17).
3. Paul was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17).
4. The disciples of John experienced "the Spirit coming on them" (Acts 19:6).

One other fact is important. Other than Pentecost and Cornelius' house, the word *baptize* is used in connection with the Holy Spirit only once in the rest of the New Testament. That one reference is 1 Cor.12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." That is, the Holy Spirit takes all believers and baptizes or immerses, places, and positions them into the body of Christ—into the church, the universal church.

In conclusion, what does all this mean?

1. When a man grasps the gospel and believes, really believes, the Holy Spirit enters his life. He *comes upon*, *falls upon*, *pours*, *fills*, *baptizes* (immerses) Himself into the life of the believer. This is a personal *experience*. This act of the Spirit takes place in the life of the believer. The believer *experiences* the Spirit coming into his life. The believer receives the Spirit *experientially*.
2. When a man grasps the gospel and believes, really believes, the Holy Spirit takes him and *baptizes* or immerses, and places him into the body of Christ, which is God's Church. The believer does not feel or experience this act. It is an act of God that takes place in heaven. The believer is *counted* as a child of God. He is *counted* as a member of the body, of the church. This is a *position*, not an experience, which the believer feels. It happens once-for-all. The believer is adopted as a child of God—irrevocably. It is an eternal *position*, an eternal sonship (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Gal.4:5-6). The believer becomes a member of God's Church—positionally (1 Cor.12:13).
3. After a man is saved, he is to "keep on being filled with the Spirit"—day by day (Eph.5:18; cp. Jn.14:21, the word "manifest"). The early believers were continually filled (Acts 4:8, 31).

**1** (2:1) **Feast of Pentecost—God, Providence of:** there was God's providence. The Feast of Pentecost needs to be understood in order to see God's providence at work. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the Passover. It was also known as the "Day of the First Fruits" (Num.28:26), or the "Feast of Weeks" (Ex.34:22), or the "Feast of Harvest."

Pentecost was a glorious day of celebration, a day when the people were to heap praise and thanksgiving upon God. There were three particular reasons for which they were to thank God.

1. The harvest of the fields. Note the very name of the Feast says that it is a celebration of the "First Fruits." It was celebrated when the first fruits of the harvest began to come in, which was around the first of June. It actually opened the harvest season.

2. The Exodus, the deliverance of the nation Israel from Egyptian bondage (Dt.16:12). The people were to thank God for the day he delivered them out of slavery.

3. The giving of the law upon Mt. Sinai (Ex.19-20). This was the day the people were constituted as a nation, as the great nation of Israel. They were to live as God's very own people upon earth. They were to thank God for Himself and for His law, the rules and principles He had given to govern their lives and nation. It is important to note that the Jews figured the law had been given to Moses fifty days after the Exodus.

Now note the providence of God, how all three events were fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit.

1. When "Pentecost was fully come" the first fruits were born—the church itself and the first harvest of souls. The new beginning, that is, the filling of the Holy Spirit, began fifty days after Jesus' death and resurrection (Acts 2:4).

2. The coming of the Holy Spirit had a very specific purpose. The Holy Spirit was to live and work within the heart of man, to deliver and free him from the enslavements of this world—from sin, death, and hell. The Holy Spirit came to set man at liberty even as God had delivered the Jews out of Egyptian slavery (2 Cor.3:17; cp. Jn.16:8-11).

3. The coming of the Holy Spirit was two things.

a. It was the birth of the church, the new people of God. People who truly came to God were now to be sealed and known by the presence of the Holy Spirit, by His very presence within their hearts and lives.

**"Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor.1:21-22).**

**"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph.1:13-14).**

**"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph.4:30).**

b. It was the institution of the new law, the new rule and principle of God. Man is now to be guided by the Spirit who empowers him to live right and to serve Christ.

**"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jn.14:26).**

**"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (Jn.16:13).**

**"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Ro.8:14).**

**"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor.2:14).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(2:1) **Feasts, Jewish:** there were three major Feasts celebrated by the Jews. Each had been instituted by God to celebrate significant events in both the daily life and history of the people and their nation. But God also had something else in mind as well, the coming of His Son and the birth of His followers. Therefore each of the Feasts find their fulfillment in Christ and His Church.

1. There was the "Feast of the Passover." It was a week of giving thanks...

- for God's deliverance out of bondage and slavery, looking back to their forefathers' slavery under Egypt.

The Passover Feast was fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ. Christ was the "Lamb of God" who was to die for the sins of the world. He and His death had been symbolized in the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb. (See notes—Mt.26:17-30; Lk.22:7-23 for more discussion.)

2. There was the "Feast of the First Fruits." It was a day of giving thanks...

- for the birth and growth of the new crops, the reaping of the first fruits of the earth.
- for the birth of their nation at Mt. Sinai.

This Feast was fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the day when the church was born and the first of God's new people were reaped. (See note—Acts 2:1 for more discussion.)

3. There was the "Feast of Tabernacles." It was a week of giving thanks...

- for the end and completion of the harvest season, the journey of toil and struggle experienced in gathering the harvest.
- for the end of their nation's wilderness wanderings under Moses.

The "Feast of Tabernacles" is yet to be fulfilled. It will be fulfilled when our Lord returns. The Feast will symbolize our joy, liberty, and victory through the wilderness wanderings of life and the glorious provision of God, that of living and serving eternally in His wonderful presence (Zech.14:16). (See Outline note 1—Jn.7:37 for more discussion.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(2:1) **Power:** Jesus had instructed the disciples to "tarry" in Jerusalem until they were endued with power (Lk.24:49).

**2** (2:1) **Obedience:** there was man obeying. Note: the believers were in "one place," in the city of Jerusalem precisely where Christ told them to go and wait upon the coming of the Holy Spirit. They were obedient—obedient despite the great danger the Jerusalem authorities posed to them. (See note—Acts 1:12-15 for discussion.)

**Thought 1.** One thing is absolutely essential if a believer wants to receive the fulness of God's Spirit: *obedience*. The believer must obey Christ and follow His instructions.

**“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:15-17).**

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).**

**3** (2:1) Unity: there was the spirit of being in one accord. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *One Accord*—Acts 1:14 for discussion.)

**4** (2:2-4) **Holy Spirit—Pentecost:** there was the Spirit's infilling. Note the word “suddenly.” The Holy Spirit came suddenly, abruptly, unexpectedly, the kind of abrupt happening that jolts and startles a person. God was dramatizing the supernatural and precious significance of the event.

1. There was a mighty sound that filled the room.

- a. The sound was from heaven, that is, from God. It came from God's activity, not from the activity of natural causes upon earth. It was supernatural. God created sound for this very special occasion.
- b. The sound was like the rushing of a *mighty* wind. It was not wind, but a sound like the deafening roar or blast of a strong wind (cp. a hurricane, tornado, or gale).
- c. The sound filled *all the house*, that is, it was localized upon the house where they were *sitting*. Why? There are at least three reasons.
  - ⇒ First, people needed to be startled and alarmed, attracted to gather from all over Jerusalem, seeking to know what had happened. An audience needed to be gathered for the first preaching of the gospel.
  - ⇒ Second, the mighty power of the Spirit needed to be symbolized and dramatized for the disciples. They needed strong confidence instilled within them in order to stand and preach the gospel before the very persons who had crucified the Lord and who had hunted them down as accomplices.
  - ⇒ Third, the disciples would learn how Christ wanted them to preach the gospel. The presence of the Holy Spirit upon them would either bring people flocking from all over, asking what had happened or lead them to the people whom they were to reach.

2. There was the appearance of cloven tongues (*diamerizomenai*). The Greek means a tongue that was cloven, that is, parting asunder. The idea is that a single tongue appeared and then began to split and divide itself, resting upon each of the disciples.

- a. The tongues were not fire, but *like fire*; that is, they only looked like fire. They were a brilliant, luminous, fire-like substance created by God to dramatize the moment of the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples.
- b. The tongue of fire that first appeared symbolized the presence of the Holy Spirit which was to dwell in the midst of God's people as a whole. When He began to divide into many tongues of fire and to rest upon each believer, He was symbolizing that He was to dwell within each believer as well as within the whole body of believers. (See notes—1 Cor.3:16-17; 1 Cor.6:19-20.)

Note the words, “It [He] sat” (*ekathisen*). The word is singular, not plural. Scripture does not say “they sat,” but He, the Holy Spirit Himself, was descending and resting upon *each* of the disciples. They were not receiving “tongues of fire” but the Spirit of God.

Note also that the Spirit appeared in the form of a tongue of fire. The tongue symbolizes the instrument of speaking and preaching and sharing the gospel. The Holy Spirit was to be the burning power of the tongue, of the convicting message to be proclaimed.

3. There were the results which were twofold.

a. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:1-4 for more discussion.)

First, both the body (church) and each individual believer were filled. They were “all filled” with the presence and power of the Spirit—all of them corporately and each of them individually. It was both a corporate and a personal, individual infilling. Each believer had been commanded to wait for the baptism of the Spirit, and each one was to be so filled with His presence and power. It was a command to the individual believer as well as to the corporate body. Each one was to experience and know His grace and power and fruit (Gal.5:22-23).

**Thought 1.** A critical point is often ignored and neglected. The command to be filled with the Spirit is still God's command to every believer, both individually and corporately (the church).

**“Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph.5:18).**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

**Thought 2.** How neglectful the church is! Ignoring and neglecting the command “[to seek to] be filled with the Spirit.” How many churches actually meet together to pray and wait for the filling of God's Spirit?

**“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Lk.11:13).**

Second, the disciples were given the gifts of the Spirit to carry on the work of the ministry upon earth. This fact is not mentioned here, although it is certainly to be demonstrated in the preaching and witnessing about to take place. The giving of the Spirit's gifts is covered in Ephesians.

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men....And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:8, 11-12).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his might power [Holy Spirit], Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:19-20).

- b. The disciples began to speak with other tongues (see DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Tongues—Acts 2:4*).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 4

(2:4) **Tongues—Holy Spirit:** what is meant by “other tongues” *here*? Note two things.

1. “Other tongues” definitely means foreign languages (cp. verse 6-13). The disciples were supernaturally witnessing and preaching in the languages of the different nationalities gathering together. Scripture is so clear about this that there can be no reasonable doubt without really twisting the Word of God.

2. “Other tongues” could also mean the *tongues* or ecstatic utterance covered in 1 Corinthians; that is, it could have been what is commonly called the *heavenly* or *prayer language* (1 Cor.14:2, 14. See outlines and notes—1 Cor.14:1-40 for discussion on *Tongues*.) An ecstatic worship could be taking place while the disciples were experiencing the infilling of the Holy Spirit. There seems to be some time between the moments of infilling and the crowds arriving to see what caused the explosive sound or noise (v.2). And there can be no doubt that the disciples were flooded with joy, an ecstatic worshipful joy. They now knew the most wonderful things...

- Christ was in them, His Spirit had actually entered into their hearts and lives. Their wonderful Lord had returned to them just as He had said He would.
- They were filled with a deep sense of His presence and power, His concern and love for the world, His courage and drive to share the great news of the glorious gospel.

One thing needs to be noted, however: the words “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” They spoke in tongues “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” This may indicate a clear difference from the gift of tongues in 1 Cor.14, a clear difference in this sense:

- ⇒ All gifts once bestowed by the Spirit are thereafter exercised by the believer as the believer wills to use them. In fact, in order to be faithful, the believer *has* to use his gifts as need or as opportunity arises. This is clear from 1 Cor.14:28-33.
- ⇒ The gift of tongues here in Acts 2 says that the gift was supernaturally exercised by the Spirit, not by the individual believer.

**5** (2:5-11) **Witnessing:** there was witnessing—devout men heard the Word. Witnessing is also a result of being filled with the Spirit. Note several things.

1. Devout men, Jewish pilgrims who had come from *all over the world*, had returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the “Feast of the First Fruits.” The word “devout” (eulabeis) means reverent, worshipful, careful. It means persons who handle spiritual matters carefully.

2. The words “when this was noised abroad” seems to be saying it was the news of the disciples’ behavior that brought the crowd together. But the Greek says, “When this sound was heard” (genomenes tes phones tantes). It was apparently the sound of the thunderous blast caused by God that brought the people rushing to the scene.

3. The crowd heard an amazing thing—the disciples supernaturally speaking in their own tongue (dialect, language) (cp. v.6, 8, 11).

4. The number of dialects and languages spoken included most of those from the known areas of the world at that time. Luke’s purpose in giving the list seems to stress that people from all over the world were present for Christ to save and to send back to their native lands as servants of His, servants to proclaim the message of the glorious gospel.

5. What the crowd heard in their native languages was “the wonderful works of God,” the personal witness of the gospel, the very things Peter was about to preach to the whole crowd (v.14-40).

**Thought 1.** Note how the groundwork for preaching is first laid by personal witnessing. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Witnessing—Acts 1:8* for Scripture.)

**6** (2:12-13) **Gospel, Reaction to:** there were different reactions. All were amazed (existanto) and astonished, marvelling at what was happening. There was a twofold reaction.

1. Some were attracted (dieporounto), perplexed and wondering, at a loss as to what was happening. But they were attracted to seek meaning in it all.

2. Others simply mocked, accusing the disciples of being drunk. (Just imagine the ecstatic joy flooding their hearts for them to behave in a way to cause such a charge! Where is the infilling of such joy today?)

“For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor.6:2).

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| <p><b>1 Infilled believers</b><br/> a. An explanation required</p> <p>b. Not under the influence of man-made, induced excitement</p> <p>c. Experiencing the fulfillment of Scripture</p> <p><b>2 These are the last days, the days of God's last work on earth</b><br/> a. The days of the great outpouring of God's Spirit</p> | <p><b>B. The First Sermon (Part I): The Gospel Message, 2:14-24</b></p> <p>14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:</p> <p>15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.</p> <p>16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;</p> <p>17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:</p> <p>18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:</p> | <p>19 And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:</p> <p>20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:</p> <p>21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.</p> <p>22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:</p> <p>23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:</p> <p>24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.</p> | <p>b. The days of terrible judgment at the end—the Day of the Lord<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p>c. The days of great salvation</p> <p><b>3 This is the day of God's Savior: Jesus of Nazareth</b><br/> a. His life: Approved by God</p> <p>b. His death<sup>DS2</sup><br/> 1) Planned by God<sup>DS3</sup><br/> 2) Due to man's wickedness</p> <p>c. His resurrection: Ended the agony of death<sup>DS4</sup></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**B. The First Sermon (Part I): The Gospel Message, 2:14-24**

(2:14-24) **Introduction:** this is the first sermon ever preached in the new church age, after Jesus' ascension and Pentecost, that is, after the coming of the Holy Spirit. If men would preach what is preached here, what a difference would exist in men's lives, in the church, and in world history. (Because of its length and the time limit placed on preachers in the churches of so many industrialized societies, the message preached by Peter is split into three studies.)

1. Infilled believers (v.14-16).
2. These are the last days, the days of God's last work on earth (v.17-21).
3. This is the day of God's Savior: Jesus of Nazareth (v.22-24).

**1** (2:14-16) **Holy Spirit, Infilling:** the believers were infilled. The disciples were so full of the Holy Spirit, so full of God's presence and joy, they could only...

- act excited.
- speak about the wonderful works of God (cp. Acts 2:11).
- express joy and rejoicing in what God had done.
- demonstrate absolute confidence, assurance, and conviction of God's presence and eternal salvation.
- bear testimony to all who would listen.

1. Such behavior required an explanation. It was not common behavior, not among a people who lived in a world of trial and uncertainty, struggle and survival, pain and hurt, suffering and death; a people who knew their world was such, but who evaded the fact and did all they could to escape the reality of it.

⇒ A person who demonstrated absolute confidence, assurance, and conviction of God's presence and of eternal salvation had to explain himself.

- a. Some in the world were amazed at such behavior and wished to know what it meant. An answer was required (cp. Acts 2:12).
- b. Others mocked, jokingly suggesting that such behavior *was crazy and foolish*, just like the behavior of a drunken man; and they, too, were due an answer (cp. Acts 2:13).

2. A spirit-filled person is not under the influence of a man-made, induced excitement. Peter stood to his feet *with the eleven* other apostles: they all stood before the thousands who had gathered (v.41). Peter spoke at the top of his voice. Note the authority and forcefulness of Peter! What a difference the Spirit had made in this man—the man who had been so *up and down* in following Jesus:

- ⇒ "Be this known."
- ⇒ "Hearken to my words."
- ⇒ "It is but the third hour [9 a.m.] of the day."

Peter declared that they were not deluded; they were not acting and speaking *foolish* things like a drunken man. What was happening was just what Scripture predicted. It was the work of God, just what God had promised to man. It was the glorious gospel (good news) promised by God.

**2** (2:17-21) **Last Days—God, Work of:** these are the last days, the days of God’s last work on earth. Standing there before the throng of thousands, Peter declared:

- ⇒ Today, this day, the great prophecy of Joel begins to be fulfilled (Joel 2:28-32).
- ⇒ Today, this day, begins the *last days* of earth’s history.
- ⇒ Today, this day, begins the *last days* of God’s work on earth.
- ⇒ Today, this day, begins the *last days*, the final age of God’s plan for human history.
- ⇒ Today, this day, begins the *last days*, the dispensation of God’s grace (the church), the age of the gospel.

**Thought 1.** In the Scripture, the “*last days*” mean all the above. The *last days* began when Christ came to earth and they will end when Christ returns to earth. Note: we are already 2000 years into the last days.

1. The last days include the great outpouring of God’s Spirit.

a. The word “pour” (ekcheo) means to pour out, to pour forth, to shed forth. It means that God gives His Spirit...

- to  *dwell in* the believer (Jn.14:17; 1 Cor.6:19-20).
- to  *abide with* the believer forever (Jn.14:16).
- to abundantly fill, to overflow the believer (Eph.5:18).
- to give very special  *manifestations* of Christ to the believer (Jn.14:21).

b. God pours out His Spirit upon  *all flesh*...

- upon sons and daughters.
- upon young men and old men.
- upon His slaves, servants, and handmaidens.

The point is this: God’s Spirit shows no discrimination. The Spirit of God is available to all: male and female, young and old, slave and free, rich and poor.

c. God pours out His Spirit with very special gifts...

- the gift of prophecy: proclaiming and predicting the truth (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Cor.14:3). Note this gift is given to both men and women. This was part of the Scriptural promise.
- the gift of seeing visions, especially among young men. The Greek word “visions” (horaseis) means appearance (Rev.4:3) or an ecstatic revelation (Rev.9:17). In Scripture the Greek word is used for both what a man can envision (see, imagine, think, cause to appear) within his own mind and what is given him by God through a special revelation (Rev.9:17).
- the gift of dreaming dreams, especially among older men. The idea is that a dream is given by God.

**Thought 1.** Note a crucial fact: history has shown and Scripture warns that spiritual gifts are often misused and abused, tragically and destructively so. (See outline and notes—1 Cor.12-14.)

1) We must guard against accepting every dream and vision as being of God. God’s Word is the revelation of God. What God wants to reveal to us is therein. We must stand upon God’s Word and measure every vision and dream by God’s Word.

2) A study of the visions and dreams in the Book of Acts shows that everyone of them had to do with witnessing, with reaching people for Christ. Not a single dream or vision had to do with  *personal edification* or with  *boasting self to be spiritually superior*.

d. God pours out His Spirit only upon His servants and upon His handmaidens. This is the emphasis of this verse, the reason for repeating what has just been said. Note that the verse is a summary statement: no one receives God’s Spirit, no one, not until they become His servant or His handmaiden.

e. God gifts His servants and His handmaidens with one very special gift—the gift of prophecy. Again, the point is primary, to stress what is so important. The gift of prophecy, of proclaiming that God’s very own Son has come into the world to save sinners, is the primary gift of God’s Spirit. Every one of God’s servants and handmaidens are gifted to prophesy.

**Thought 1.** Note the devastating blow to the ego of  *professionalism* and to the practice of so many of us.

1) So many of us leave proclamation, that is, witnessing, up to others, using the flimsy excuse that we are not capable nor gifted to witness.

2) Too many enjoy the prestige of a  *professional gift* and a  *professional ministry*, minimizing the lay ministry and the layman’s gift to proclaim Christ. And although there are  *measures* or degrees of gifts, the great need of the hour is for every believer to proclaim the living Lord.

2. The last days include the days of terrible judgment at the end—the Day of the Lord (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:19-20).

3. The last days include the days of great salvation. Throughout the last days, during the whole period, man can be saved by doing two simple things:

⇒ He has to  *call*: to sense the  *need* to be saved.

⇒ He has to call upon “the name of the Lord”: to know and believe that Jesus is the Lord and to be ready to submit to His Lordship, to serve Him as Lord.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ro.10:13).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(2:19-20) **Day of the Lord (Jehovah):** in the simplest of terms, the Day of the Lord is the Day when Christ returns to execute judgment upon the earth. It is a definite Day that is coming upon earth, and note: it is coming at the end of the *last days*, at the end of the present age. (See outlines and notes—Mt.24:1-25:46 for more discussion.) Note two points.

1. The Day of the Lord is to be characterized by several things.
  - a. *Wonders* (terata): marvels, signs, happenings, portents in heaven above, that is, in outer space; happenings and marvels that point to something unusual about to happen.
  - b. *Signs* (semeia): events and happenings on earth given by God to warn that the end is at hand.
  - c. *Blood and fire and vapor of smoke*: terrible bloodshed and explosive fire that causes...
    - mushrooming vapors of smoke
    - the sun to be turned into darkness and blotted out
    - the moon to be turned into a blood red

**Thought 1.** It is thought-provoking when we consider how closely the language resembles atomic warfare.

2. The events to happen in the Day of the Lord (as revealed by the whole of Scripture) seem to be fourfold. Note: no attempt whatsoever is made to put these events in any specific order. There are two reasons for this.

- ⇒ There are so many divergent opinions.
- ⇒ More importantly, Scripture does not give a complete list of last events.

Throughout Scripture, four events are discussed as happening in the Day of the Lord: the return of Christ, terrible tribulation, judgment, and the remaking of earth.

- a. A terrible period of tribulation (7 years). This includes the last half of the period known as the great tribulation (3 1/2 years). This is the fulfillment of Daniel’s “seventieth week” (Dan.9:27). (See outline and notes—Mt.24:15-28.)
- b. The return of Christ as sovereign Lord. He shall rule and reign in glory upon earth (the Millennial reign of God’s Son, Rev.20:4-6).
- c. The resurrection and final judgment of all. This includes...
  - ⇒ men who are described as sheep and goats (Mt.25:31-46; Rev.20:11-15).
  - ⇒ the Beast or the antichrist, the false prophet, and their followers (Rev.19:11-21).
  - ⇒ Satan and his angels (Rev.20:10).
- d. The destruction and remaking of the earth and heavens (2 Pt.3:3-15; Rev.21:1; cp. Is.65:17; 66:22).

**3** (2:22-24) **Jesus Christ, Death; Resurrection:** this is the day of God’s Savior, Jesus of Nazareth. Peter drove the thrust of his message home. He shouted out: “Hear these words”...

- the “last days” have been launched by Jesus of Nazareth.

1. “Jesus of Nazareth...approved of God.” The word “approved” (apodengmenon) means to point out, display, show, attest, accredit, sanction, certify, endorse. God put His stamp of approval upon Jesus, demonstrating and showing to all men that Jesus is *perfectly acceptable* to Him. Jesus of Nazareth had God’s *approval*, His *perfect acceptance*.

There is proof of this, the proof of His miracles and wonders and signs.

- a. They were the works of God, the kind of works that only God could do. God Himself was working through Jesus of Nazareth.
- b. The works were done (through Christ) “in the midst of you,” in the very presence of people. They were not done in secret. God attested and demonstrated to the world that He was working through Christ. The miracles, wonders, and signs were done both *for* the sake of the world and *before* the world.
- c. “You yourselves also know” this. Man knows, for God has clearly shown that Jesus is approved by Him. The evidence abounds in the lives of those who have *truly* followed Christ down through the centuries, in the presence of the living Lord who has dwelt *within* their very being.

2. The death of Jesus of Nazareth was planned by God *due to man’s wickedness* (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Jesus Christ, Death*—Acts 2:23 for discussion).

3. The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth ended the agony of death (see DEEPER STUDY # 4—Acts 2:24 for discussion).

### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(2:23) **Jesus Christ, Death:** this verse is saying a most significant thing. Jesus’ death was planned by God *due to man’s wickedness*. God planned Jesus’ death, planned for Him to die upon the cross, but He planned it *because of man’s wickedness*. Note two points.

1. Jesus was crucified and slain by wicked hands. Men are sinful, wicked, depraved, and selfish.
  - ⇒ They want to go their own way.
  - ⇒ They want to do their own thing.
  - ⇒ They want to control their own lives.

Therefore, they rebel and fight against God, against surrendering to God, against...

- following God's way.
- doing God's thing.
- allowing God to control their lives.

It was this corruptible nature of man that rebelled against God's Son and crucified Him.

2. The "foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God" saved man. God knew man, what was in man (cp. Jn.2:23-24). He knew exactly what men would do to His Son. He knew they would kill His Son. But in the counsel and advice of His knowledge—in consideration of all the possibilities—God knew something else as well: the way of death, the way of the cross was the best way to save men. And being God, He was bound to choose the best way. So God determined to use the best way possible, the death of His Son to save the world. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2,3—Acts 2:23; notes—Mt.17:22; 17:23; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—20:18 for more discussion.)

**"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:14-16).**

**"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Ro.5:6).**

**"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro.5:8).**

**"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal.1:4).**

**"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb.9:28).**

**"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pt.2:24).**

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pt.3:18).**

Another way to say the same thing is that God foresaw sin even before the creation of man; so He, in love, planned beforehand that Christ should die for sinners.

**"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (Jn.17:24).**

**"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph.1:4).**

**"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pt.1:20).**

**"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev.13:8).**

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(2:23) **Foreknowledge—Predestination—Determinate Counsel—Jesus Christ, Death:** the word "foreknowledge" (prognosis) means to see before; to know beforehand; to see and know the future; to foreordain.

God is God; therefore He sees the future. No matter how far a person looks into the future, God sees it. God knows...

- exactly what *will* happen, every single event and its consequences.
- exactly what *could* happen (but will not), every single possibility and its consequences.

Therefore God knows...

- exactly what man *will* do, every single act and its consequences.
- exactly what man *could* do (but will not), every single possibility and its consequences.

God is God. He is eternal and omniscient (knowing all). He knows the past, the present and the future. And note: He knows it all eternally, forever. God knew...

- every event of world history before the *foundation of the world*.
- every event of a person's life before the *foundation of the world* (cp. Eph.1:4).

Now in light of this, a question arises that is extremely important. If God knew all the terrible consequences of evil and death that would enter and overtake the world, if He knew the world would even kill His Son, why did He go ahead and create the world? Why did He not choose another way to do things? In the simplest terms possible, there are at least two reasons.

1. God wanted a creature, a being with free will. God created man because God willed to have the *presence* of a being who could *freely choose*...

- to love and worship Him.
- to obey and fellowship with Him.
- to serve and reign with Him.

In His foreknowledge, God knew that some would choose Him and some would reject Him. But He was willing to face...

- the pain and hurt to His heart,
- the abuse and shame to His person,
- the rejection and rebellion against His will.

God was willing to face all this in order that some might know His glorious mercy and grace and experience all the glory of Himself and heaven. (See outline and note—Ro.9:22-24; Eph.1:5-6; 2:7 for more discussion.)

2. God did not choose another way to create and deal with man...

- because the way God created man was the best way: perfect, in a perfect environment, with free choice and will, and in perfect fellowship with God (cp. Gen.2:16-17).
- because the way God deals with man is the best way: in love, in the mercy and grace of His Son. Love is the greatest force on earth. It is the very nature of God Himself (1 Jn.4:8). Love will change and transform, help and give, win and conquer when nothing else will. Love will cause a person to reach out and help another and even cause a person to sacrifice his life quicker than any other force on earth (Jn.3:16; 15:13; Ro.5:8).

Note one other point that is critical, a point that stresses the glorious love and care of God: it is the determinate counsel of God (cp. Acts 2:23).

The word “determinate” (horismenei) means predetermined, appointed, decreed, ordained, planned, purposed. It is a plan set within bounds, within a certain boundary. It is a purpose that is set, marked out, determined, decreed to happen.

The word “counsel” (boulei) means to advise, counsel, design, will; to give a piece of advice. It carries the force of being willed and determined. Since God knows exactly what *would* happen in every situation, He plans for the best thing to happen. God takes counsel, puts all things under advisement and chooses the best way.

We may not understand some things that happen nor why they happen the way they do. We may think something else or some other way would have been better. But we must remember two things.

1. We cannot see into the future. No man can. We cannot know what would have happened if another way had been chosen. We cannot know what would have happened...

- to us.
- to others.
- to the world.

In every situation or event there are many other things that could have taken place. This is true of every situation, whether we call it *good or bad*. Think for a moment.

- ⇒ What would have taken place if the situation had been replaced by some other happening?
- ⇒ What would have taken place if another way had been chosen?
- ⇒ What and how much would be changed for the worse eventually, if not now?

We cannot know. But we can know this: God knows, for He deals with the future as well as the present. God deals with eternity, with the whole view. Therefore, another situation, another way could have changed things for the worse. Simply stated...

- God knows the future, everything that could happen as well as what is best and should happen.
- God takes counsel, purposes, determines, plans and chooses the best thing to happen.

2. We who love God and are called according to His purpose know that all things work together for good. How do we know? Because we *do* love God and *are called* according to His purpose.

God knew that we would say “Yes” to Jesus, that we would love and follow Him. Therefore, God called us.

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).**

Note why we are predestinated. This is the key: “that he [God’s Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren.” God has determined that Jesus will have many brothers, many who will live and fellowship with Him as the first Person, the preeminent Person throughout the universe.

This is the reason God chooses the very best events and the very best way for us. It is the reason He works all things out for good for believers. God knows all the possibilities; therefore, He is able to take counsel and determine, to plan the very best for us. *Believe and trust the glorious truth.*

**“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor.2:9).**

**“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Ro.11:33-36).**

**“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).**

**“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Ph.1:6).**

**“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!” (Ps.31:19).**

**A STUDY OF SOME SCRIPTURES DEALING WITH GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE AND DETERMINATE COUNSEL**

(A study giving comfort and security—God is in control.)

1. The Scripture dealing with God's foreknowledge.

a. God's foreknowledge concerns Christ.

**"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).**

**"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pt.1:20).**

b. God's foreknowledge concerns believers.

**"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (1 Pt.1:2).**

**"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn [preeminent Person] among many brethren" (Ro.8:28-29).**

(Note: These two verses actually show that God acts or predestines on the basis of His foreknowledge, of His counsel.)

c. God's foreknowledge concerns Israel.

**"God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot [know] ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel" (Ro.11:2).**

2. The Scripture dealing with God's determination. (See Master Subject Index *Predestination* for more discussion.)

a. God's determination concerns Christ.

**"And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!" (Lk.22:22).**

**"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).**

**"And declared [determined, marked, planned] to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Ro.1:4).**

**"And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained [determined, appointed] of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts 10:42).**

**"Because he hath appointed [determined, appointed] a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).**

b. God's determination concerns salvation and security for believers.

**"Again, he limiteth [determines, sets, appoints, plans] a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb.4:7; cp. 2 Tim.1:9; Heb.13:8).**

3. The Scripture dealing with God's counsel.

a. God's counsel concerns Christ.

**"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).**

**"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28).**

b. God's counsel concerns believers and salvation.

**"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will [counsel] of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption" (Acts 13:36).**

**"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph.1:11).**

**"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath" (Heb.6:17).**

- c. God's counsel concerns God's plan for the world.

**"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).**

- d. God's counsel concerns those who reject Him.

**"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Lk.7:30).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 4

(2:24) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** this is a great verse dealing with the resurrection of Christ. Note three points.

1. God raised up Christ. God knew that the very best way to save man from death was through the resurrection of His own Son from the dead (see DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Foreknowledge*—Acts 2:23 for discussion).

2. The resurrection of Christ "loosed the pains of death." The word "pains" (*odinas*) means birth pangs. For the unbeliever, there is great pain in death, pain such as that experienced by a woman in giving birth. But man no longer has to suffer the pain of death nor fear suffering through it. Christ has conquered and abolished death, made it completely harmless. Death is actually the most glorious and joyful experience for the believer, an experience that simply explodes human imagination. (Cp. Jn.5:24; Heb.2:14-15.)

3. It was impossible for death to hold Christ. Why? There are several significant reasons.

- a. There was God's foreknowledge and determinate counsel. God knew that the way of the cross and resurrection was the very best way to save the world. Therefore, nothing could stop God from following through with the death and resurrection of His Son. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2,3—Acts 2:23 for more discussion. Cp. Acts 2:25-28.)
- b. Jesus was approved by God. He had God's approval, sanction, accreditation, endorsement. Jesus Christ was perfectly acceptable to God (see note—Acts 2:22-24 for discussion).
- c. Jesus' resurrection was foretold by Scripture, and Scripture must be fulfilled (see note—Mt.17:23 for all the verses in the New Testament).
- d. Jesus was *Life* itself. He possesses the very *being, essence, quality, substance, and energy* of life. He is *The Life*, Life itself; therefore, He is the source of all life. All life finds its source in the energy and being of Christ Himself. Therefore, being Life, death could not engulf Him any more than darkness can engulf light. (See notes—Jn.1:4-5; DEEPER STUDY # 2—1:4; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—10:10; DEEPER STUDY # 1—17:2-3. Cp. Jn.14:6.)
- e. Jesus was sinless. Death exists or happens because everything is short of perfection—short of what it should be—short of *God's glory*. This is true of man. Man dies because he has "sinned and come short of God's glory" (Ro.3:23). Sin is...
  - being short.
  - missing the mark.
  - transgressing God's glory.

And it is sin that causes death. Therefore Jesus Christ, being sinless, did not have to die. He died because He *willed* to die for man.

The point is this: Jesus was sinless and perfect and righteous (Jn.8:46; 2 Cor.5:21; Heb.4:15; 7:26; 1 Pt.1:9; 2:22). He was the Ideal Man, the Sinless Man, the Perfect Man—the Ideal Pattern for all other men. Therefore, when He died for men, He died as the Ideal Man or the Ideal Pattern. And death cannot hold the Ideal Man, for the Ideal Man came short in nothing. He was not short in life; therefore, He was destined to live forever. He was Perfect Life and Perfect Man. As the Scripture says, "It was not possible that He should be held by it [death]." (Cp. Ro.1:4.)

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| <p><b>1 Proof 1: The prophecy of David—The prophecy concerned Jesus</b><br/> a. Jesus' daily life<br/> 1) He had God's constant presence<br/> 2) He rejoiced &amp; praised God<br/> 3) He rested in hope &amp; trust<br/> b. Jesus' conviction: God's Deliverance<br/> 1) Not left in hell<sup>DS1</sup><br/> 2) Not see corruption<br/> c. Jesus' revelation: The path of life—God's presence</p> <p><b>2 Proof 2: Peter's testimony</b><br/> a. David's prophecy could not refer to David</p> <p>b. The prophecy referred to Jesus: His resurrection</p> | <p><b>C. The First Sermon (Part II): Proofs of the Resurrection, 2:25-36</b></p> <p>25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:<br/> 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:<br/> 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.<br/> 28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.<br/> 29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.<br/> 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to</p> | <p>him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;<br/> 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.<br/> 32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.<br/> 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.<br/> 34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,<br/> 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.<br/> 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.</p> | <p>1) Raised to reign with God<br/> 2) Raised to deliver His soul from hell<br/> 3) Raised to deliver His flesh from corruption</p> <p><b>3 Proof 3: The eye-witnesses—the disciples</b></p> <p><b>4 Proof 4: The exaltation &amp; the ascension of Jesus into heaven</b><br/> a. Jesus was raised to be exalted<br/> b. David prophesied the Lord's exaltation<br/> c. Jesus was made both Lord<sup>DS2</sup> &amp; Messiah</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**C. The First Sermon (Part II): Proofs of the Resurrection, 2:25-36**

(2:25-36) **Introduction:** the first sermon ever preached after Pentecost was preached by Peter. He focused on the proofs of the resurrection.

1. Proof 1: the prophecy of David—the prophecy concerned Jesus (v.25-28).
2. Proof 2: Peter's testimony (v.29-31).
3. Proof 3: the eye-witnesses—the disciples (v.32).
4. Proof 4: the exaltation and the ascension of Jesus into heaven (v.33-36).

**1** (2:25-28) **Jesus Christ, Work:** proof 1—the prophecy of David concerned Jesus. Peter said that “David [spoke] concerning Christ” (Ps.16:8-11). What David said was a prophecy of the Lord's experience upon earth (v.25-28).

1. David's prophecy concerned Jesus' daily experience or life.
  - a. Jesus experienced God's constant presence and power.
    - ⇒ Jesus always saw God before His face. Jesus looked and kept His gaze upon God. He thought upon God, focused His mind and attention upon God. He concentrated and stayed His mind upon Him. The idea is that Jesus always practiced and was always conscious of God's presence—“captivating every thought” (cp. 2 Cor.10:5).
    - ⇒ Jesus always had God on His right hand, that He should not be moved. God was right there as an advocate and as a protector and defender. God was a provider looking after Christ, strengthening, guiding, upholding, seeing that He was not moved nor shaken. The picture is that of a defender in court or of a soldier on the battlefield standing at a person's right hand, protecting, looking after, and providing for his welfare. (Cp. Ps. 109:31 for this picture.)

“The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand” (Ps.121:5; cp. Ps.121:1-8).

“For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not: I will help thee” (Is.41:13).

- b. Jesus' heart rejoiced and His tongue praised God. Such a consciousness of God's presence was bound to cause...
  - the heart to rejoice (euphranthe): to be joyful and full of euphoria, full of God's presence and glory.
  - the tongue to be glad (egalliasato): to leap for joy and break forth with praise and song.
- c. Jesus' flesh rested in hope. The phrase “shall rest” (kataskenosei) means *shall tabernacle* or pitch a tent. Jesus' *flesh* rested, tabernacled, pitched its tent, encamped and made its abode upon hope—the hope of

conquering death, of being resurrected. Hope of living forever was the basis and foundation of Jesus' life, that for which He lived. He focused His whole life and being upon the hope of the glorious resurrection (cp. Paul's testimony—Ph.3:7-16, esp. v.11).

2. David's prophecy concerned Jesus' conviction that He could be delivered from death. Note several points.
  - a. The word "leave" (egkateleipo). A soul can be utterly forsaken and abandoned, doomed permanently in hell. But Christ was absolutely sure that His soul would not be left and abandoned in hell.
  - b. The word "hell" (hades). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:27 for discussion.) Christ said emphatically that His soul would not be left in hades, that is, in the realm of the dead. He would arise and live forever.
  - c. The word "corruption" (diaphtheiro). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:27 for discussion.)
  - d. The title Jesus used of Himself, "[God's] Holy One." Jesus was holy, righteous, and pure. He was without sin and totally devoted to God. He was perfectly acceptable to God. Therefore God was bound to raise Him, to keep His flesh from being destroyed and lying in corruption.

**"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor.5:21).**

**"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb.4:15).**

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

**"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pt.1:19).**

**"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pt.2:22).**

3. David's prophecy concerned Jesus' revelation, His revealing the way of life and God's presence. The Hebrew original reads "the path of life." This is a marvelous declaration, a declaration that reveals the most glorious truth. God revealed the *path of life* to Christ, and Christ reveals it to us. The path of life, the way to escape death is to live in the countenance and presence of God. God will never abandon a man, never allow a man to see corruption if that man lives and walks in His presence.

Jesus knew the path: it was God's presence. Note: He was full of the joy of God's presence. (So should we be.)

**"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn.14:6).**

**"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps.16:11).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(2:27) **Hell** (Greek, *Hades*; Hebrew, *Sheol*): the Greek word used here is Hades. Jesus revealed that *Hades* is the other world, that is, the unseen world, the spiritual dimension of being (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Lk.16:23). Jesus said that Hades (the other world) was divided into two huge areas or sections. The two areas are separated by a great gulf that is impassable (Lk.16:26). One area is the place of sorrow (Lk.16:23-24, 28), and the other area is the place of paradise where believers go. To say that one is dead is to say that one is in hades or in the other world.

Note a critical fact: the other world or the spiritual dimension of being does exist. Denying hell does not change the fact that hades exists. There are two areas or places in the other world: paradise and hell—the place of glory and the place of torment. And Christ says both actually exist. (Cp. Lk.16:22-23, see outline and notes—Lk.16:19-31; see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Lk.16:23; DEEPER STUDY # 4—16:24; notes—23:40-43; Eph.4:8-10; DEEPER STUDY # 4—Lk.16:24; DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Pt.3:19-20.)

The context of what Jesus said in David's prophecy needs to be noted.

1. The word "leave" (egkateleipo) means to leave behind, to utterly forsake and abandon. It is a strong word indicating a permanent state. A soul can be utterly forsaken and abandoned and doomed permanently in hell.

2. The word "corruption" (diaphtheiro) means to decay, deteriorate, putrify, destroy, perish. In no place does Christ promise a *new body* to the unbeliever, to the unsaved and lost. A person's body and flesh can be destroyed forever. (This is a fact seldom pointed out.)

**"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal.6:8).**

**"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen.3:19).**

**"I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister" (Job 17:14).**

**"They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them" (Job 21:26).**

**"Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust" (Ps.104:29; cp. Eccl.3:20; 12:7).**

**2** (2:29-31) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** proof 2—Peter's testimony. Peter was forceful: the words of David could not refer to himself. David was dead and buried. It was even known where his grave was, on Mt. Zion where most of Israel's kings were buried.

But there is something significant about David. He was a prophet of God, and God had revealed to him that the Messiah would come through his line. The Messiah would be one of his descendants and sit upon his throne (Ps.132:11; cp. Ps.89:3-4, 35-37; 2 Sam.7:16). Therefore, what David was doing was predicting the resurrection of Christ. The prophecy referred to Jesus and His resurrection.

Note: Peter's declaration of the prophecy. He gave the three reasons why God raised up Christ. These are the same reasons He will resurrect believers.

1. Christ was raised to reign with God.
2. Christ was raised to deliver His soul from hell (cp. v.27).
3. Christ was raised to deliver His flesh from corruption (cp. v.27). (The believer's body is to be raised from the grave and made into a new body. See note—Mt.22:31-32; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.21:1; notes—1 Cor.15:35-49; 15:50-58 for discussion. Also see *Resurrection*—Subject Index for more discussion.)

**3** (2:32) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** proof 3—the eye-witnesses to the resurrection were the disciples. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Jesus Christ, Resurrection*—Acts 1:3 for discussion.)

**4** (2:33-36) **Jesus Christ, Exaltation:** proof 4—the exaltation and the ascension of Jesus into heaven. Note three points. (See note, *Jesus Christ, Ascension*—Acts 1:9 for more discussion.)

1. Jesus was raised to be exalted. His resurrection involved the exaltation.
  - ⇒ To be raised is for the purpose of exaltation.
  - ⇒ To be raised is being exalted to the very presence of God.
  - ⇒ To be raised and given eternal life is a state of exaltation.
  - ⇒ To be raised means to be exalted.

Note the words “the right hand of God.” This is a position by the side of God, a place of honor, glory, authority, dominion, and rulership (cp. Acts 5:31). Christ has been raised to sit by the right hand of God in such a position.

And note: Christ, who is the obedient Son of God and the exalted Lord, has received what God had promised Him, the Holy Spirit. The exalted Christ has the presence of God, the Holy Spirit, to shed forth (excheen, pour forth) upon us all. This is what “you now see and hear,” the glorious presence and energy of the Holy Spirit, of the very Spirit and presence of God Himself. (Cp. Jn.15:26; 16:7.)

**Thought 1.** The believer's heart should shout “hallelujah, praise ye the Lord.” Christ has sent the great promise and gift of the Spirit!

2. David prophesied the Lord's exaltation (cp. Ps.110:1). David could not have been speaking of himself, for he never arose from the dead, nor has he ever been exalted. David was prophesying that God (Jehovah) had spoken to *David's Lord* (Messiah), promising that the Lord would sit on God's right hand. And the Lord would reign until God subjected all the Lord's foes. The picture of the footstool is that of complete triumph and victory over all the enemies of Christ, both human and spiritual.

3. Peter declared emphatically: Jesus is both Lord and Messiah. “Let all...know assuredly” (asphalos). The word is emphatic. It means without any doubt whatsoever, with perfect assurance and certainty. Know that...

- Jesus is Lord (v.33).
- Jesus is Messiah (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.1:18).
- Jesus whom ye crucified (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Jesus Christ, Death*—Acts 2:23 for discussion).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(2:36) **Lord** (Greek, *Kurion*; Hebrew *Adonai*): the Greek word for Lord is used to refer to men such as rulers and to the Lord Jesus Christ. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ph.2:11 for more discussion.) In reference to the resurrected and exalted Christ, it means:

- ⇒ “Jesus our Lord” (2 Pt.1:2).
- ⇒ “My Lord and my God” (Jn.20:28).
- ⇒ “Both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).
- ⇒ “The Lord of all” (Acts 10:36).
- ⇒ “The Lord of glory” (1 Cor.2:8; Jas.2:1).
- ⇒ “The Lord of lords” (Rev.17:14).
- ⇒ “The Lord our God” (Rev.19:1).
- ⇒ “The Lord God [Theos, Jehovah]” (1 Pt.3:15; cp. Is.8:13).
- ⇒ “The Lord thy God” (Mt.4:7; Lk.4:12).
- ⇒ “The Lord [Jehovah]” (1 Pt.2:3; cp. Ps.34:8; Mk.1:2-3; cp.Is.40:3; Mal.3:1).
- ⇒ “Lord Jesus” (Acts 7:59; 8:16; 9:29; 2 Cor.1:14; 2 Th.1:7; Heb.13:20; Rev.22:20).
- ⇒ “Christ the Lord” (Lk.2:11).
- ⇒ “The Son of Man is Lord” (Mk.2:28).
- ⇒ “The Lord of David” (Mk.12:35-37).
- ⇒ “The [Lord] master of the house” (Mk.13:35).

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

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is seen as the *resurrected and exalted* Son who sits at the right hand of the Father (Jehovah). He sits in the exalted position of glory and majesty, dominion and power, praise and honor. He rules over all.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ is also seen as the sovereign Majesty of the Universe, the Supreme Being who possesses the very nature of God (Jehovah, YHWH Himself). As the Son of God He is just like God in Being, nature, essence, and character—perfect God in every respect. Therefore, He can be addressed as *the Lord* God, Jehovah or YHWH because He is God (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.1:1-5; notes— Ph.2:6; 2:7; DEEPER STUDY # 1—2:11 for more discussion).

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| <p><b>1 The people were convicted &amp; cried out, "What shall we do?"</b></p> <p><b>2 The imperatives: Repent &amp; be baptized<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> | <p><b>D. The First Sermon (Part III): Imperatives of Salvation, 2:37-40</b></p> <p>37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?</p> <p>38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in</p> | <p>the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.</p> <p>39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.</p> <p>40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.</p> | <p><b>3 The results: Forgiveness &amp; receiving of the Holy Spirit<sup>DS2</sup></b></p> <p><b>4 The assurance to all: God's promise &amp; God's personal call<sup>DS3</sup></b></p> <p><b>5 The great cry of Peter: Save yourselves....</b></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**D. The First Sermon (Part III): Imperatives of Salvation, 2:37-40**

(2:37-40) **Introduction:** this passage makes it crystal clear what a person must do to be saved. It gives us "The Imperatives of Salvation."

1. The people were convicted and cried out, "What shall we do?" (v.37).
2. The imperatives: repent and be baptized (v.38).
3. The results: forgiveness and receiving of the Holy Spirit (v.38).
4. The assurance to all: God's promise and God's personal call (v.39).
5. The great cry of Peter: save yourselves (v.40).

**1** (2:37) **Conviction:** the people were convicted and they cried out, "What shall we do?" Peter's sermon, the proclaimed Word, was driven home to the hearts of the people.

The word "pricked" (katenugesan) means to convict, sting, sense pain and hurt.

Conviction is an emotional movement of the heart. A person senses sorrow over disappointing God. The person's heart is touched and moved to some degree of brokenness. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Godly Sorrow*—2 Cor.7:10 for more discussion.) Conviction is being pricked with a tug, a pull, a knowledge, an awareness.

- ⇒ It is a sense of sin, of doing wrong, of breaking God's law, of being disobedient.
- ⇒ It is a sense of failure, of coming short, of not measuring up, of disappointing God.
- ⇒ It is a sense of needing more and more of the Lord and His righteousness.

Conviction causes people to seek answers, to ask, "What shall we do?"

**2** (2:38) **Salvation:** the imperatives are twofold. A person must repent and be baptized. (See also DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Repent*—Acts 17:29-30; DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Baptism*—Acts 2:38; Lk.3:21; Jn.1:24-26 for discussion.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(2:38) **Baptism:** is the outward sign, the immediate sign of repentance. It is the physical sign that a person is identifying with Christ. It is the immediate sign that a person is to show before the world that he is really repenting and is now going to obey and live for God. Baptism and repentance are both...

- outward signs.
- signs that have to do with behavior.
- signs that show the world that a person is turning his life over to God.

Repentance is a command to change one's life. Baptism is a command, the very first command to follow Christ. Baptism is the first command given to those who are repenting. The person who is really repenting must be baptized. He must give testimony to the world and confess to the world that he is repenting by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (cp. Mt.28:19-20). Baptism is not an option. It is as much a command as repentance.

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Mt.28:19).**

**"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk.16:16).**

**"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).**

**"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days" (Acts 10:48).**

**"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).**

Now, note a critical point that is often overlooked and neglected. Just because a person changes his life (repents) and is baptized does not mean he is saved. A person can change his life by the power of his own will, by discipline and self-

control, by his own effort and works. And he can very simply request to be baptized. Many people have and will continue to do this. Many live what society calls a good, upright, and moral life and they have been baptized. But there is more to being saved than merely changing one's life and being baptized. What is it? It is the very basis, the very essential to true salvation, to being truly forgiven and receiving the Holy Spirit:

⇒ It is the essential of faith, of believing "in the name of Jesus Christ."

A person who truly believes and really trusts Jesus does repent and is baptized. But just because a person lives a disciplined and controlled life (repents) and has been baptized does not mean he is truthfully trusting Jesus as his Savior. True faith—the inward work within the heart, the inward work of really believing *in the name of the Lord Jesus*—is the one absolute essential for being saved.

Now note another critical point that is also overlooked and neglected.

⇒ Just because a person says he believes in Jesus does not mean he is saved. A person can say and claim anything, and that person can be baptized. But profession and baptism do not save a person anymore than a changed life and baptism save a person.

There is more to being saved than professing faith and being baptized. What is it? Again, it is the very basis, the very essential to true salvation, to being truly forgiven and receiving the Holy Spirit.

⇒ It is the basis, the essential of *repenting* and of doing the very first act of repentance, being baptized.

There is no faith *without true repentance* and there is no forgiveness by God *without trusting or committing* one's life to God's dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And the very first act of following Jesus is that of repenting and being baptized. A person who honestly believes in Jesus Christ will do what He said, repent and be baptized. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.2:24.)

This is what Peter was saying in this passage. He did not mention faith, but he was not omitting faith nor eliminating belief in the Lord Jesus as essential to salvation. The rest of Scripture cannot be ignored in looking at this verse just as this verse and others like it cannot be ignored by the passages that stress faith alone. Common sense tells us that a person who truly believes something acts upon that thing. *Behavior follows true belief*. But similarly, common sense tells us that behavior can be changed by raw effort and discipline. A person can change because he thinks he should change and not because someone else demands change.

Paul stressed the same point in that classic passage of his (Ro.6:3-4), and the point is very significant. A believer (true believer) is said to be "*baptized [immersed] into the death of Christ.*"

**"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized [immersed] into the death of Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Ro.6:3-4).**

Now note what Paul has just said: when a person is baptized, he is "baptized into His [Jesus'] death" in the same way he is immersed (identified) into the resurrection of Christ. Baptism is an act by which one identifies with Christ. He counts himself as having died *in* Christ's death and as having risen *in* Christ's resurrection; as living and moving and having his being *in* Christ even as Christ lived and moved and had His being in God. Christ's death and resurrection and life becomes the believer's death and resurrection and life. The believer treats and judges himself as having been "crucified with Christ, nevertheless living; yet not himself, but Christ living in him" (Gal.2:20). (See note—Acts 19:2.)

In conclusion, history has shown that this point needs to be stressed and restressed.

⇒ A person can repent, change his own life and be baptized (by his own effort and works) without ever trusting Christ, without really believing in Christ.

⇒ But a person cannot trust, cannot really believe in Christ without repenting and following Christ in the very first act of repentance, that of being baptized. True faith and honest belief always mean that a person repents and is baptized. To believe is to follow (obey) Christ and to be baptized.

**"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb.5:9. See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.2:24.)**

**"He that believeth not [ho apeithon, obeys not] shall not see life" (Jn.3:36).**

**3** (2:38) **Salvation:** the results are twofold, being forgiven of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit.

1. Forgiveness of sins (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Forgiveness*—Acts 2:38 for discussion).
2. Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Holy Spirit*, concluding points—Acts 2:1-4 for discussion).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(2:38) **Remission—Forgiveness** (aphesin): to send off, to send away. The wrong is cut out, sent off, sent away from the wrongdoer. The sin is separated from the sinner.

There are four main ideas in the Biblical concept of forgiveness.

1. There is the idea of why forgiveness is needed. Forgiveness is needed because of wrong doing and guilt and the penalty arising from both.

**“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Ro.3:23).**

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

**“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Ro.8:1).**

2. There is the idea of a *once-for-all* forgiveness, a total forgiveness. A man is forgiven *once-for-all* when he receives Jesus Christ as his Savior. Belief in Jesus Christ, true repentance, is the only condition for being forgiven *once-for-all*.

**“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mt.26:28).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Ro.4:5-8).**

**“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee” (Is.44:22).**

3. There is the idea of forgiveness that maintains fellowship. Fellowship exists between God as Father and the believer as His child. When the child does wrong, the fellowship is disturbed and broken. The condition for restoring the fellowship is confessing and forsaking the sin (Ps.66:18; Prov.28:13; 1 Jn.1:7).

**“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).**

**“And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Lk.3:3).**

**“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Lk.24:47).**

4. There is the idea of a *releasing from guilt*. This is one of the differences between a man forgiving another man and God forgiving a man. A man may forgive a person for wronging him, but he can never remove the guilt that his friend feels. And often he cannot remove the resentment he himself feels within his own heart. Only God can remove the guilt and assure the removal of resentment. God does both. God forgives and erases the guilt and resentment (Ps.51:2, 7-12; 103:12; 1 Jn.1:9).

**“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Is.43:25).**

**“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).**

**“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy” (Mic.7:18).**

**“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer.31:34).**

**“And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me” (Jer.33:8).**

**4** (2:39) **Salvation—Assurance of:** the assurance to all is God’s promise. Note the promise is...

- “to you”: the Jews.
- “to all that are afar off”: the Gentiles; any who are away in distant lands; any who are spiritually away from God, no matter how far away.

But note the condition, the one essential. The promise is assured to those whom “the Lord our God shall call.” (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Call*—Acts 2:39.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(2:39) **Shall Call** (an *proskalesetai*): God has to call because man is dead to God and resists the gospel. Man’s deadness and resistance are seen in the very word *call*. The word *call* has both the idea of initiative and deadness and of constraint and resistance. For example, the calling of a person to simply come involves both actions...

- of pulling him to come.
- of being dead (unaware and not knowing or resisting the fact that one was to come).

Man, self-centered and rebellious toward God, likes to feel independent. Consequently, man is dead to God and resistant to the pulling call and quickening power of God.

The person who comes to Christ is a person who has been called by God, a person who has experienced the divine initiative. A man...

- does not act alone and come to Christ.
- does not come by his own effort and energy.
- does not come by his own works.
- does not come by his own mind, thoughts, and will.
- does not come by his own labor and good deeds.

A man, a dead spirit, can do nothing spiritually just as a dead body can do nothing physically. If a man with a dead spirit is to come to Christ, he has to be *acted upon* and *drawn* by God. Both God and man have a part in salvation.

⇒ God calls and He attracts, draws, pulls, and tugs at the heart of man to come.

Now note: when a man senses the call and pull of God, he must act then and there. He must believe and make the decision to follow Christ, even if he is all alone in the depths of a jungle someplace. Why? Because God's Spirit does not always strive or tug at us. We all know this. We have all felt the call of God before—the tug and movement of His Spirit within our hearts. But we quenched the tug and movement. We rejected the call, and the Spirit of God left us. And the more we reject the tug and call, the less often it comes.

⇒ We *quench* the Spirit.

**“Quench not the Spirit” (1 Th.5:19).**

⇒ The Spirit does not always strive with us.

**“And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man” (Gen.6:3).**

Therefore, when the call of the Lord our God comes, we must *believe* and “repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (v.38). (See notes—Jn.6:44-46; 6:65 for more discussion.)

**“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt.11:28).**

**“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage” (Mt.22:9).**

**“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Jn.7:37).**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).**

**“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:4).**

**“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).**

**“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Is.1:18).**

**“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is.55:1).**

**5** (2:40) **Salvation—Separation:** the great cry of Peter, “Save yourselves from this untoward [corrupt] generation.”

1. The words “save yourselves” (sothete) mean that a person is to act and do exactly what Peter preached: “Repent and be baptized.”

2. “Untoward” (skolias) means crooked or bent out of shape. Men are far from being straight and in the shape intended by God. They are crooked and bent, unrighteous and ungodly, sinful and corrupt.

**“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40).**

**“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).**

**“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph.5:11).**

**“Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD” (Is.52:11).**

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| <p><b>1 A people who received the Word—gladly</b><br/> a. Result 1: Were baptized<br/> b. Result 2: A large church</p> <p><b>2 A people who continued—steadfastly</b><sup>DS1</sup><br/> a. In doctrine<sup>DS2</sup> &amp; fellowship<sup>DS3</sup><br/> b. In the Lord's supper<sup>DS4</sup> &amp; prayer<sup>DS5</sup></p> <p><b>3 A people who stirred souls with a godly fear</b></p> | <p><b>E. The First Church: Worthy Traits, 2:41-47</b></p> <p>41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.</p> <p>42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.</p> <p>43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.</p> | <p>44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;<br/> 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.</p> <p>46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,<br/> 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.</p> | <p><b>4 A people who were together—sharing in ministry</b><sup>DS6</sup></p> <p><b>5 A people who were unified</b></p> <p><b>6 A people who worshipped &amp; praised God daily</b><br/> a. In the temple<br/> b. In their homes<br/> c. With joy &amp; united hearts<br/> d. Praising God<br/> e. Results<br/> 1) Favor with people<br/> 2) Souls were added to the church</p> |
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## DIVISION II

### THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60

#### E. The First Church: Worthy Traits, 2:41-47

(2:41-47) **Introduction:** this is the first look at the early church. It shows us the traits that characterized the daily lives of believers. It should prick the conscience of the modern-day church.

1. A people who received the Word—gladly (v.41).
2. A people who continued—steadfastly (v.42).
3. A people who stirred souls with a godly fear (v.43).
4. A people who were together—sharing in ministry (v.44-45).
5. A people who were unified (v.46).
6. A people who worshipped and praised God—daily (v.46-47).

**1** (2:41) **Word of God:** the early believers were a people who received the Word gladly.

1. This is the basic trait, the very first trait of a true church. It actually defines a church. A church is a people, a body of people who have received *the Word of God*. They were not receiving...

- a set of ideas
- a man's thoughts
- a set of rules and principles
- a human philosophy
- a position
- a religion

They were receiving the Word of God, the very revelation of God Himself. God had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ to His disciples. And Peter, the spokesman for the disciples, was proclaiming the Word about Jesus Christ. God had spoken to the world through His Son Jesus Christ, and the early believers had received His Word. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *The Word—Jn.1:1-5*.)

2. Note the word "received." A true church, a true body of believers, does not just hear and listen to the Word. They are not just present to join the crowd and see what is going on. They do not sit with wandering minds and closed hearts. A true church receives the Word of God; they...

- welcome it
- believe it
- take it in
- practice it
- experience it
- hold on to it
- hunger for it
- joy and rejoice in it
- share it

3. Note the statement: "They that gladly received his word." Not everyone present received it. Some were there for the wrong reasons and others were closed-minded and disinterested. Still others simply refused to believe and rejected the Word. But they who received God's Word became the very first body of believers, the first church.

4. Note that they were baptized: the idea is immediate baptism (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Baptism—Acts 2:38* for discussion). Note also the large number: three thousand "were added" to the 120 disciples.

**"Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" (Acts 4:4).**

**"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).**

**"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).**

**"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Ro.10:18).**

**"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Th.2:13).**

- 2** (2:42) **Steadfastness**: the early believers were a people who continued steadfastly in four things. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1-5—Acts 2:42 for a discussion of these points.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(2:42) **Continued steadfastly** (proskarterountes): to continue, persevere, endure, stick, persist. A person does not quit, back off, fade away, or slip back. He continues on steadfastly.

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(2:42) **In doctrine** (didache): the teaching, the instruction of the apostles. The teaching would include both what Christ taught and His actual death, resurrection, and ascension (or exaltation). It would be the same teaching and instructions...

- that are shared in the New Testament.
- that the disciples wrote to various churches and bodies of believers.

The teaching would be no different. There is only one message, only one Word, that saves, roots, and grounds people in the Lord—the Word of God Himself, the message of the New Testament. On the day of Pentecost, the persons who were saved needed to be grounded in the faith. The only message that could ground them was the message found in the New Testament. It was that message, that doctrine they were taught.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things” (Lk.24:45-48).**

**Thought 1.** Note a striking fact: we can be saved, rooted, and grounded in the *very same message*. God has given us the very same doctrines and instructions to root and ground us. We can have a true, dynamic apostolic experience and maturity in the Lord. We can grow and know the Lord as intimately as the early believers knew the Lord. In fact, we come short if we do not, for we have the very same doctrine, teachings, and instructions that they had.

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(2:42) **Fellowship**: the fellowship wrought by the Spirit of God means more than the association existing in secular groups such as civic clubs and community bodies. There is a vast difference between *community participation* and *spiritual participation*. *Community participation* is based upon neighborly association. *Spiritual participation* is based upon a spiritual union wrought by the Spirit of God.

The distinctiveness is this: the Holy Spirit is within the Christian believer. The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual union by melting and molding the heart of the Christian believer to the hearts of other believers. He attaches the life of one believer to the lives of other believers. Through the Spirit of God, believers become one in life and purpose. They have a joint life sharing their blessings and needs and gifts together. Note several things about fellowship that are taught by this passage.

1. Fellowship is being experienced by the new believers because they join other Christians in learning the Scriptures (apostles' teachings) and in worship (prayers and celebrating the Lord's Supper, Acts 2:41-42).
2. Fellowship forbids an unattached Christian life. Their fellowship is maintained because they "continue stedfastly" in the Scriptures and in worship. An unattached Christian life is just impossible.
  - a. Christianity is first an individual matter, but then it becomes a social matter. The Christian is attached to Christ individually, but he is also attached to other believers. He walks with other believers in the Scriptures and in worship.
  - b. Christianity is first a spiritual organism, but then it becomes a spiritual organization. The Christian has an *inward life*, but he also takes on an *outward form* of life. He becomes a living organization with other Christian believers. He sits at the feet of the apostles' teaching and joins right in with other Christians as they worship together.
  - c. Christianity makes the true believer a saint (one who is set apart unto God), but Christianity is made up of *saints*—plural. Christianity is not just one person; Christianity is many persons—*saints*. The word is often used in the New Testament, but it is never used in the singular. Christianity is Christianity because the saints *study the Scriptures together and worship together*.
  - d. Christianity demands that a believer personally live out such virtues as kindness, longsuffering, and love; but the believer can do this only in association with others.
  - e. Christianity means that the Spirit of God has entered the believer's life, but it also means that the Spirit of God has placed the believer into a corporate body (the church), into Christian society itself. The Spirit of God indwells the corporate body of believers as well as the individual (see note—1 Cor.3:16).
3. Spiritual fellowship faces two dangers.
  - a. Fellowship and society can be over-emphasized—to the point that individual salvation is missed. An individual must "receive His word" (Acts 2:41).
  - b. Individual salvation and individual worship, whether through nature or by any other means, can be overly stressed—to the point that Christian fellowship and society can be missed (Acts 2:42; see note—Heb.10:25).

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5).

“For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor.10:17).

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28).

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:13).

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb.10:25).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).

“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” (Ps.119:63).

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Mal.3:16).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 4

(2:42) **Lord’s Supper:** the phrase “breaking of bread” means the early believers observed and remembered the Lord’s death. They set aside some time to observe what churches call communion, or the Lord’s Supper, or the Eucharist. Note they observed the Lord’s Supper daily (v.46). Why did they observe it so often?

1. The Lord’s Supper was the one ordinance Christ had given to symbolize His death. And it was His death that had saved them. Because of His death, they were now...

- reconciled to God
- in fellowship with God
- made new creatures in God
- infilled with the Spirit of God
- bearing all the fruit of God (Gal.5:22-23)

All they now were and had was due to the death of Christ. They wanted to remember and thank God for His great love demonstrated in the death of His Son, and to do it often.

2. The Lord had commanded His followers to observe the Lord’s Supper often.

**Thought 1.** What an indictment against so many of us who observe the Lord’s Supper so little! We can, of course, remember and concentrate upon the death of Christ without the symbol of the Supper. *But* Christ gave us the ordinance and commanded that we use it as the primary symbol to show His death until He comes (1 Cor.11:26).

“This do in remembrance of me” (Lk.22:19; 1 Cor.11:24-25).

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he comes” (1 Cor.11:26).

“And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many” (Mk.14:22-24).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 5

(2:42) **Prayer:** the early believers were a people who persevered in prayer—the idea is church prayer, united prayer with the whole body of believers.

1. Through prayer they were brought into the most intimate fellowship and presence of God. They could get no closer to God than when they were *drawing nigh* to God through prayer.

“The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth” (Ps.145:18).

“But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works” (Ps.73:28).

“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Heb.7:19).

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt.18:20).

2. Through prayer they received things from God. They received His provision for both their souls and lives.

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Mt.21:22).

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).

- 3** (2:43) **Fear, Godly—Church:** the early believers were a people who stirred souls with a godly fear. Fear (phobias) does not mean terror or fright. It means...
- a godly fear, a fear of God, of His displeasure and judgment
  - a holy sense of God's presence
  - a consciousness that God is working
  - a reverence for God and for what is happening
  - a sense of awe and wonder

Note what it is that stirs the public to be so aware of God: the signs and wonders being done by the *apostles*. And note: there were *many*.

“His mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation” (Lk.1:50).  
 “But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).  
 “What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose” (Ps.25:12).  
 “Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!” (Ps.31:19).  
 “Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God” (Is.50:10).

- 4** (2:44-45) **Church—Unity—Ministry:** the early believers were a people who were together and who shared in ministry. It is critical for the church to pay close attention and heed what is being said in this point.
1. The *professing believers* were true believers. They were those “that [truly] believe” (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Believe—Jn.2:24* for discussion that shows true belief is the commitment of all one *is and has*).
  2. The believers were “together” (esan epito auto). This means they were together in the same place *because they were of the same call, mind, and purpose*. It does not mean just being in the same location and place. They would not have been *together* unless they had been of the same spirit and purpose. This is critical to God's call.
  3. The believers sold their possessions and goods and used the money to minister to the poor and needy. Now note:  
 ⇒ Why would they go to such a drastic extreme to minister? There is one critical reason: Christ commanded it. The church too often denies and ignores it, but denial of the truth does not do away with the truth. (See DEEPER STUDY # 6—Acts 2:44-45 for discussion. Also see outlines and notes—Mt.19:16-22; 19:23-26; 19:27-30 for more discussion.)

Now note: Who are the rich and who are the poor?

⇒ A rich person is anyone who has more than what others have, more than what the vast majority of the world has.

⇒ A rich person is anyone who has anything to put back beyond meeting the true needs of his own family.

This is exactly what Christ and the Bible say time and again (cp. also Mk.12:41-44; Lk.21:1-4; Acts 4:34-35; etc.).

In a summary statement, who is rich? A rich person is anyone who has anything beyond what he needs. What Christ demands is that we give all that we *are and have* to meet the needs of those in such desperate need. We are to hold back nothing. This is often the great complaint against Christians, that we just do not believe, not really. The evidence of our unbelief is seen in the insistence of Christ, the demand that we give all we have to feed the starving and meet the desperate needs of the poor and lost of the world. But we don't. Gandhi, the great leader of India's independence, is said to have never embraced Christianity for this very reason. How many others have rejected Christ because of our hypocrisy?

“Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Mt.19:21).

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Mt.19:29).

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mt.6:21).

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Mt.22:39).

“But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you, Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Lk.12:31-34).

“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold” (Lk.19:8).

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:35).

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love” (Jn.15:10).

“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).

“Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved” (1 Cor.10:33).

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor.8:9).

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).

“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).

“Let your conversation [life, behavior] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).

A final matter is this: Christ demands that we *give all we are and have* if we are to follow Him (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.9:23). Any attempt to *water down* what He often said fails miserably before an honest heart reading His Word (see Master Subject Index, *Stewardship; Rewards*).

**Thought 1.** Just imagine how long ago the world would have been reached with the gospel if *professing* believers had been honestly committing their *total* lives to Christ, giving all they were and had to His cause of world evangelization!

**DEEPER STUDY # 6**

(2:44-45) **Stewardship—Commitment—Self-denial—Possessions:** Christ demands that we give Him all we *are and have* to enter heaven. This is the reason the early believers gave what they had to meet the needs of the world. Christ had demanded it of the rich young ruler and of *His disciples* (see outline and notes—Mt.19:23-26; 19:27-30).

In our struggle to protect the glorious truth that man is saved by grace and grace alone, we often forget and neglect another great truth: to *follow* Christ is to serve and minister to our neighbor. To follow Christ is to deny self completely, all that we are as well as all that we have (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.9:23). When we love our neighbor as ourselves, then we show that we truly love God. If we do not love and minister to our neighbor (above self), then we do not love God.

When we deny self by giving all we are and have (1 Jn.4:20), then and only then do we receive heaven and the treasure of heaven. To deny self, to give all we are and have is a hard saying, but Christ demands it. Our attempts to soften it do not annul His demand (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.3:3).

It is love of the world that makes us unwilling to give up the possessions we have obtained (comfort, esteem, recognition, power, position). By refusing to take and give what we have, we make the fatal mistake of showing (demonstrating)...

- that we love the things of the world more than we love people; that we prefer hoarding and extravagance, living sumptuously and comfortably to helping those who are so needful, so desperately needful. (See note—Lk.16:19-21 for a discussion of what happened to the rich man who lived sumptuously.)
- that we love the world more than we love the hope of eternal life.
- that we love the position, recognition, esteem, and power of the world’s possessions more than we love Christ.

Now note a critical fact that we must heed: this subject is often made a matter of controversy. Men use every explanation possible to ease their consciences and to keep from having to give everything. There is a reason for this, and it is this that is so critical. Possessions pull a person away from God. It is difficult for a person who has possessions to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Why? There is a lure, an attraction, a force, a power, a pull that reaches out and draws any of us who look at or possess wealth. There are pulls so forceful that they will enslave and doom any man who banks and hoards and fails to turn and embrace God.

1. Possessions create the big “I” (cp. Mt.19:16, 20). The man who *has possessions* is usually looked up to, esteemed, honored, and envied. Possessions bring position, power, recognition. They boost ego, and make a person self-sufficient and independent in this world. As a result there is a tendency for the rich person to feel independent and self-sufficient, that he needs nothing. And in such an atmosphere and world of thought, God is forgotten. It is forgotten that there are things that money cannot buy and events from which money cannot save. Peace, love, joy—all that really matters within the spirit of man—can never be bought. Neither can money save a person from disaster, disease, accident, or death—the trials that are sure to come upon all.

2. Possessions tend to make one hoard (cp. Mt.19:21). The Bible lays down the principle of handling money for all men, even for the poor:

“Let him labor...that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself “ (Mt.19:19; 22:39).

The world reels in desperate need. People are starving, sick, unhoused, and unclothed by the millions. Teeming millions are spiritually lost and without God in this world, and they are doomed to die without ever knowing Him. When any of us sit still and objectively look at the world in its desperate plight, we ask: “How in this world can any man hoard and not help—even to the last available penny? Why would any man keep more than what he needs for himself and his family?”

As God looks at any man who banks and hoards, He is bound to ask the same question. In fact, His questions are bound to be more pointed and forceful. This is exactly what Christ said to the rich young ruler:

“Go and sell [all] that thou hast; and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Mt.19:21).

*Riches tend to make a man selfish.* For some unexplainable reason, the more we get, the more we want. When we taste the things of this world and become comfortable, we tend to fear losing our possessions. We struggle to keep what we have and to get more. True, many are willing to make contributions, but only a certain amount, an amount that will not lower their overall estate or standing or level of comfort and possessions. There are few who give all to Christ, all they are and all they have to meet the needs of the world.

As Christ said, it is very difficult for the rich (meaning those who have anything in comparison with most of the world) to enter heaven. If we do not have compassion and take care of our brothers (fellow man) when they are in desperate need,

how can we expect God to have compassion and take care of us when we face the desperate need for heaven? It is foolish to think that a loving and just God will meet our need for eternal life when we would not meet the need of our fellow man for physical life. The rich (all of us who have anything in comparison with the rest of the world) have the means to help and to save human life, if we only would.

3. Possessions attach a person to the world (cp. Mt.19:22). Possessions enable a person to buy things that...
- make him comfortable
  - please his taste
  - stir his ego
  - expand his experience
  - challenge his mental pursuit
  - stimulate his flesh
  - stretch his self-image

If a man centers his life upon the things of the world, his attention is on the world and not on God. He tends to become wrapped up in securing more and in protecting what he has. Too often, he gives little if any time and thought to heavenly matters. Wealth and the things it can provide within this world can and usually do consume the rich.

**“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Lk.12:33).**

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim.6:18).**

**“But to do good and to communicate [give] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).**

**5** (2:46) **Unity:** a people who continued with one accord. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *One Accord*—Acts 1:14.)

**6** (2:46-47) **Church—Worship:** a people who worshipped and praised God every day. Note five things.

1. The believers were worshipping in the temple, praying and attending the regular hours of worship and prayers (cp. Acts 3:1).

2. The believers were worshipping in their homes, moving from home to home. They were sharing together in fellowship meals and in observing the Lord’s Supper, remembering their Lord’s death. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.9:4 for discussion stressing that the home was to be the center of ministry.)

3. The believers were worshipping with gladness and singleness of heart. The word “singleness” (apheloteti) means sincere, without hardness. Their hearts were soft and tender, easily touched and giving. There was no selfishness or withholding on their part. Where there was need, they gave.

Note their attitude was *gladness*, joy, and rejoicing. They were more than glad to worship and minister as the Lord had instructed.

**Thought 1.** Just imagine the radical, transformed behavior of these early believers. What could have caused such radical behavior? The proclamation of the *pure, unadulterated Word of Christ*. The giving of all we are and have is absolutely demanded.

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

**“Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord” (Acts 11:23).**

4. The believers were praising God.

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).**

**“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.15:6).**

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).**

5. The results were twofold: they gained favor with the people, and the Lord added souls to the church. Note the word “saved” (soteria). It is in the present tense, “such as were being saved.” Salvation is a present experience of the believer as well as past and future (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Cor.1:18 for discussion). The idea is that those who were being saved were being added to the church day by day.

**“Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand” (Acts 4:4).**

**“And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women” (Acts 5:14).**

**“And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).**

**“And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord” (Acts 11:21).**

| CHAPTER 3   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Jesus is now working thru His disciples</b></p> <p>a. Those who are faithful in prayer<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p>b. Those who see the desperate need of people</p> <p>1) A life-long cripple</p> <p>2) A beggar</p> <p>3) A request for help</p> <p>c. Those who fasten their eyes upon the need of people</p> <p>d. Those who reach out to meet the need</p> <p><b>2 Jesus is alive: His presence &amp; power are</b></p> | <p><b>F. The Church's First Recorded Miracle: Lessons for Witnessing, 3:1-11</b></p> <p>Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.</p> <p>2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;</p> <p>3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.</p> <p>4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.</p> <p>5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.</p> <p>6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but</p> | <p>such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.</p> <p>7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.</p> <p>8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.</p> <p>9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God.</p> <p>10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.</p> <p>11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.</p> | <p><b>still active upon earth</b></p> <p>a. Are not found in silver &amp; gold</p> <p>b. Are in Jesus' name<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>c. Are still at work, working miracles &amp; meeting the needs of people</p> <p>1) The cripple was healed</p> <p>2) The cripple was changed—his whole being, attitude, &amp; life</p> <p><b>3 The results</b></p> <p>a. The people saw the change</p> <p>b. The people were attracted, wondering</p> |

## DIVISION II

### THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60

#### F. The First Recorded Miracle: Lessons for Witnessing, 3:1-11

(3:1-11) **Introduction:** this is the church's first recorded miracle. God was now ready to reach another great harvest of souls. It was now time to attract the attention of the people, so He reached down and healed a single man, a man whom everyone knew, and filled the man so full of the Holy Spirit that he just went wild with excitement and joy. Such a miracle and behavior naturally attracted the attention of the public.

Note: the miracle was more than just a miracle. It was a *sign*, a demonstration of two things.

⇒ Jesus is alive. His power is just as active upon earth today as it was when He walked upon earth.

⇒ Jesus is now working through His followers. Through them, He is reaching out to save and heal the world. His followers are now His instruments, His emissaries, His ambassadors, His representatives, His messengers, His *witnesses* to a world lost in suffering and death, sin and shame.

In this first recorded miracle of the church, God is demonstrating His power, and bearing witness through His followers. In so doing, He has given us some of the greatest lessons on witnessing to be found anywhere.

1. Jesus is now working through His disciples (v.1-5).

2. Jesus is alive: His presence and power are still active upon earth (v.6-8).

3. The results (v.9-11).

**1** (3:1-5) **Ministry—Sympathy:** Jesus is now working through His disciples. This is one thing Jesus wants people to know. His presence and His power are still at work, still available to men. His great love and concern for the world is still being manifested through the lives of His disciples. In fact, Jesus has...

- no feet but our feet.
- no hands but our hands.
- no voice but our voice.

If we do not go and do and speak the work of God, His work does not get done. Note four significant lessons.

1. Jesus works through those who are faithful in prayer (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 3:1 for discussion).

2. Jesus works through those who look and see the desperate need of the suffering, both those who suffer in spirit and body. How many years had this man been sitting there begging? He had been a cripple for over forty years. Imagine! Forty years or more, a cripple from birth, never having walked a single step. Had he been carried and placed at the temple's entrance to beg...

- for ten years?
- for twenty years?
- for thirty years?

We are not told, but no doubt he had been a beggar for years upon years. Everyone knew him (v.10). Picture the man...

- a helpless cripple
- unable to work
- being ignored
- with no one to take him in and help
- without family
- poor
- having to fend for himself
- never fitting in, never being accepted

Note: he was not even looking up at Peter and John when he asked for alms (v.4). Years of having people look the other way had taught him he was different and did not fit in. From the first, even as a small child, he had probably grown into a shy, withdrawn, embarrassed person, a person unable to look people in the eye.

The point is this: the man was hurting *within* as well as *without*. He was a living picture of so many in the world...

- persons who are wounded and suffering so much (both within and without) from the neglect of men—from an unconcerned and selfish and hoarding world—from a world that will not let go and share what it has with those who do not have.

But even more critical...

- persons who are suffering so much from the neglect of God's people, the very people who profess to know the love and care of God for all, and yet who act just as unconcerned and selfish and hoard just as much as the world.

The needs exist and abound. They are all around us. Jesus can work only through the people who see the desperate needs of hurting men.

3. Jesus works through those who fasten their eyes upon the need. It is not enough just to see the desperate needs of the world—just to see a person hurting and suffering. A person must stop and *fasten his eyes* upon the need. The word for “fastening his eyes” (atenisas) means fixed attention; an earnest, intense gaze, continuous, steadfast attention. It is seeing the need and focusing upon it. It is continuing to focus one's...

- sight,
- concern,
- attention,

...upon meeting the need until it is met.

Peter looked and saw the man in need and *would not look away*. He could have looked away and just passed by the man. Most people did, but not Peter. He was now indwelt by the Spirit of God, and he was on earth to meet the needs of the world for the Lord. Therefore, he fastened his attention upon the man, being full of concern and compassion.

**Thought 1.** The great need of the hour is to see the needs of the world and to fix our attention upon them.

4. Jesus works through those who reach out to meet the need.

⇒ It is not enough to see the needs of the world.

⇒ It is not enough to fasten one's attention upon the needs of the world.

Just seeing and being concerned over the needs of the world does not meet the needs. Peter acted; in fact, he did something dramatic. The need existed; it was there. He knew the Lord cared, and he was the representative of the Lord. It was up to him to show the Lord's care.

Note the words: “Look on us.” The words were authoritative and arresting. They stirred an expectancy within the man to receive something.

The words of Peter demonstrated that...

- he had a sure *confidence* that he himself belonged to God; he was God's representative.
- he had a *plan* to help the man.
- he had an *expectancy*, a genuine faith that God would help him to meet the need.
- he had a *willingness* to act, to reach out by faith and meet the need.

**Thought 1.** All this is essential if we are to reach out in the power of God to meet the needs of the world. In fact, the needs of the world will be met...

- only as we are confident that we ourselves belong to God, that we are His representatives upon earth.
- only as we think and plan how to meet the need.
- only as we are expectant, believing God will meet the need through us.
- only as we are willing to act, step out by faith to meet the need.

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (Jn.4:35).

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(3:1) **Prayer:** Peter and John were faithful prayer warriors. Note the phrase “the ninth hour,” which was around three o'clock in the afternoon. The Jews observed three stated times for prayer...

- the third hour (9 a.m.).
- the sixth hour (12 noon).
- the ninth hour (3 p.m.).

The very fact that Peter and John were going into the temple to pray indicates they were men of prayer. Imagine having three specific times for prayer every day! Not just praying while on the run, not just *praying always* while we go about our daily affairs, which is what we so often claim and use to salve our consciences. But imagine! Actually having...

- three set periods,
- three concentrated times,
- three prayer sessions,

...when we can shut the world out and focus solely upon God.

Such was the prayer life of Peter and John, and such was the reason Jesus was able to work through them in meeting the desperate needs of suffering men.

**“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1).**

**“On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour” (Acts 10:9).**

**“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” (Ps.55:17).**

**“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime” (Dan.6:10).**

**2** (3:6-8) **Jesus Christ, Power:** Jesus is alive; His presence and power are still active upon the earth. This is the most important thing God wants people to know. His Son, Jesus Christ, is alive. He is not dead, having passed from the scene of world history. He is alive and exalted to the right hand of the Father forever. His presence and power are still active upon the earth and will continue to be active in the lives of His true followers until He returns. His power is still available to men. He still loves and is still greatly concerned for the world and for every person in the world. But note three significant facts that must be understood.

1. Jesus’ presence and power are not found in silver and gold. Peter had...
  - no silver or gold.
  - no money or material goods.
  - no food or clothing.
  - no housing or shelter.
  - no social or community services.

Therefore, Peter could not give those things to the man. But note: it was such things that the man wanted and expected, and it was what the man seemed to need *in the eyes of the world*.

**“Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Sam.16:7).**

However it was not what the man needed. It was not the basic need of the man. The man needed to be changed both within and without. If he was changed physically and spiritually, he would be able to walk and be motivated to work.

When God looked at the man, He saw the man’s spiritual need and his physical need. Therefore, God’s concern was to cure and change the man completely. God was out to take care of the *whole man*, and the answer to changing the *whole man* was not found in silver and gold.

**Thought 1.** The necessities of life are just that, things that are necessary to life. But having the necessities of life are not the basic need of man. Man’s spiritual welfare is his basic need. If his spirit is right, he is right with God and man. If his spirit is wrong, he is at odds with God and man. If his motivation is strong, he is strong. If his motivation is weak, he is weak. What God is after is to change man by making him *completely whole*, so that man can be productive: fulfill his purpose in the world and make the contribution he is supposed to make. God is concerned with whatever it is (spiritual or physical) that keeps a man from knowing Him personally and from fulfilling his purpose on earth.

2. Jesus’ presence and power are found in Jesus’ name. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 3:6 for discussion.)
3. Jesus’ presence and power are still at work, working miracles and meeting the needs of people. Note this:
  - ⇒ Peter reached down to take the man by the right hand and lift him up. (What faith!)
  - ⇒ The man let him. (What trust!)
  - ⇒ Jesus healed him. (What power!)

**Thought 1.** How much we need to trust Jesus—His presence and power! How much we need to quit questioning and arguing over whether or not we still have the right to call upon Jesus’ name, over whether or not we can still trust His presence and power! It is time to trust Jesus, to believe Him, *His love and care* for the suffering and lost souls of the world. It is time to go forth in the *full* presence and power of the Lord who *is alive*, whose presence and power are still available for the earth!

**“Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Mt.17:20).**

**“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (Jn.14:13).**

**“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).**

**“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power” (Eph.1:19).**

**“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).**

Note: the man was completely changed, his whole being, attitude, and life. He was no longer shy and reserved, embarrassed and ashamed about not *fitting in* and being accepted. He was saved and healed, inside and out; his whole personality was changed, and he wanted all to know it. He was...

- standing
- walking
- leaping
- praising God

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(3:6) **Name—Jesus Christ, Name:** to call upon the name of someone means to call upon the authority, power, office, nature, and character of the person. The person's name stands for all that the person is.

- ⇒ A king may send a decree throughout his kingdom. The decree goes out *under* his name, under his authority.
- ⇒ A government or business official may send a memo throughout his department. The memo goes out *under* his name, under his authority.

When Peter said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," he was proclaiming: "It is the name, the power, the authority, the Person of Jesus Christ who will heal you." Jesus Christ is alive—His power, His authority, His name, His Person is still active upon earth.

Now note three critical facts about calling upon "the name of Jesus Christ."

1. It is the name or the power of Jesus that meets the need. It is not Peter, nor is it silver and gold. Silver and gold can never bring health, not permanently. Ill health or disease or accident eventually catches us all; and when it does, no amount of money is of any help. It is Christ alone—His presence and power—that can meet our need.

2. Peter *knew* that the power of Jesus Christ dwelt *within* Christ Himself and only in Christ. But he also knew that he possessed the presence and power of Christ within his body, and that he was a *called* representative of Christ upon earth.

Note what Peter said: "*Such as I have give I thee.*" He had the presence and power of Christ. It was that which he could give. In fact, that was his very purpose for being on earth, to represent Christ. He was to share Christ's power with those who were sick and hurting throughout the world.

3. Peter acted first, not the man. Peter was the Lord's representative (ambassador). Jesus had no way to reach the man; He had already ascended into heaven. Jesus had no body, no hands, no feet, no voice upon earth except those of the men and women whom He had left behind. Note two critical things.

- ⇒ If any act or work was to be done for God, they had to do it.
- ⇒ Only what they did would get done.

**Thought 1.** The same is true of us. Just think of the awesome truth: we are the ones who must act and take the first step.

- ⇒ Only what we do will get done.
- ⇒ If any act or work is to be done for God, we have to do it. There is no one else.

**"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mt.20:28).**

**"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (Jn.15:16).**

**"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (Jn.20:21).**

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).**

**"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor.5:20).**

**3** (3:9-11) **Conclusion:** the results were twofold. The people knew the man had been truly healed. They had seen the man for years sitting as a cripple and begging for help. There could be no question about the miracle. They were filled with wonder and amazement at the change, "at that which had happened unto him." And they were attracted, wondering and wanting to see what had caused such a miracle.

**Thought 1.** A changed person, a person who is truly changed by Christ, will cause people to stand in amazement and to wonder. A changed person will stir people to desire the same miracle in their own lives or in the lives of some loved one.

**"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mt.5:16).**

**"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing" (1 Th.1:8).**

**"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pt.3:15).**

**"Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul" (Ps.66:16).**

**"I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses" (Is.63:7).**

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| <p><b>1 A crowd gathered, Peter grasped the opportunity</b></p> <p><b>2 Point 1: The source of power &amp; holiness</b></p> <p>a. Not of man: Not God glorifying man</p> <p>b. Of God's Son: Is God glorifying His Son, His Servant, Jesus</p> <p><b>3 Point 2: The death of Jesus</b></p> <p>a. Men "delivered up" God's Servant<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p>b. Men denied Him, even when He was innocent</p> <p>c. Men denied Him, the Holy One &amp; the Just</p> <p>d. Men desired a murderer before God's Servant</p> <p>e. Men killed the Prince of Life</p> <p><b>4 Point 3: The resurrection of Jesus</b></p> <p><b>5 Point 4: Jesus' name made a man perfectly sound<sup>DS2</sup></b></p> <p>a. It was Jesus' name</p> <p>b. It was faith in Jesus' name</p> <p>c. It was the faith which is "by Jesus"</p> <p><b>6 Point 5: There is no excuse—God foretold the Messiah's death</b></p> <p><b>7 Point 6: Repentance &amp;</b></p> | <p><b>G. The Second Sermon: Points for Preaching, 3:12-26</b></p> <p>12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?</p> <p>13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.</p> <p>14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;</p> <p>15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.</p> <p>16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.</p> <p>17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.</p> <p>18 But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.</p> <p>19 Repent ye therefore, and</p> | <p>be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;</p> <p>20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:</p> <p>21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.</p> <p>22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.</p> <p>23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.</p> <p>24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.</p> <p>25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.</p> <p>26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.</p> | <p><b>conversion</b></p> <p>a. He will blot out sins</p> <p>b. He will refresh</p> <p><b>8 Point 7: Jesus' return &amp; the restoration of all things<sup>DS3</sup></b></p> <p><b>9 Point 8: Judgment</b></p> <p>a. Foretold by God through Moses: God would send His prophet (Messiah)</p> <p>1) He must be heard</p> <p>2) Every soul which does not hear is destroyed<sup>DS4</sup></p> <p>b. Foretold by all the prophets from Samuel</p> <p><b>10 Point 9: A warning—you are especially privileged &amp; blessed</b></p> <p>a. Are the children of the prophets</p> <p>b. Given the covenant, the promise of "the Seed," (Christ)</p> <p>c. Had God's Son, Jesus, born of their race</p> <p>d. Were the first to hear the gospel</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**G. The Second Sermon: Points for Preaching, 3:12-26**

(3:12-26) **Introduction:** the points that should be preached and taught throughout the world are clearly seen in this passage.

1. A crowd gathered—Peter grasped the opportunity (v.12).
2. Point 1: the source of power and holiness (v.12-13).
3. Point 2: the death of Jesus (v.13-15).
4. Point 3: the resurrection of Jesus (v.15).
5. Point 4: Jesus' name made a man perfectly sound (v.16).
6. Point 5: there is no excuse—God foretold the Messiah's death (v.17-18).
7. Point 6: repentance and conversion (v.19).
8. Point 7: Jesus' return and the restoration of all things (v.20-21).
9. Point 8: judgment (v.22-24).
10. Point 9: a warning—you are especially privileged and blessed (v.25-26).

**1** (3:12) **Opportunity—Witnessing:** a crowd gathered and Peter grasped the opportunity. The people were amazed at the healed cripple. As word of his amazing healing spread throughout the temple, the people began to run and gather around him in Solomon's porch. (See note, Mk.11:27—for a discussion of the temple arcades.)

1. The people knew beyond question that the crippled beggar had been healed. They had known him to be a cripple for over forty years; he had *never walked* (Acts 4:22).

2. The people were eager for an explanation. The audience was ready-made for the gospel, so Peter grasped the opportunity and began preaching.

**2** (3:12-13) **Power—Holiness:** point one is the source of power and holiness. Note three things.

1. The people marvelled. They marvelled not only at the miracle, but at the power and holiness of Peter and John. They recognized that power and holiness were essential to perform such a miracle. They wondered...

- who Peter and John were, for men just did not have such power.
- what kind of holiness caused God to give them so much power.

2. Peter made the fact clear, very clear. *Power and holiness* are not of men. God does not work miracles for men to be glorified. Note exactly what Peter said.

a. “Why marvel ye at this?” Miracles should not surprise or puzzle men, for God is God. He is all powerful, able to work miracles, and He loves and cares for man’s welfare. Therefore, miracles should be expected. They should be the common experience of men who walk under the loving and watchful eye of God, a God who loves and cares so much that He just reaches out to look after those persons who trust Him.

b. “Why look ye so earnestly on us?” Peter declared forcibly: we are not the source of this miracle. It is not our power and holiness that has wrought the miracle. Man has no merit, no virtue, no morality, no strength, no authority, no power to work such a miracle. *There was nothing about them that deserved such power, no holiness whatsoever.* God had worked the miracle and God alone.

c. The power and holiness is of God’s Son. In working miracles, God is glorifying His Son, His Servant Jesus. Note how carefully Peter declared this.

⇒ God *has sent* His Son, that is, His Servant (ton paida). The Greek word is Servant. It is a name or title for the Messiah (Is.42:1-4; 52:13). The Messiah was to be the “Servant of the Lord” (cp. Isaiah chapters 50-53). Peter was declaring that “the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers” has done this miracle. He has glorified His Son, that is, His Servant the Messiah.

⇒ God’s Son, His Servant, is Jesus. Jesus is the Messiah. God worked the miracle to glorify His Servant; therefore, it is Jesus’ power, holiness, Person, and worth that are to be glorified.

“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house” (Mt.9:6).

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Mt.28:18).

“And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him” (Lk.8:25).

“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (Jn.17:2).

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).

**Thought 1.** All three points are powerful lessons for us, lessons that would radically change our lives if we heeded them. Just think! If we trusted and honored God’s Son more than we do, how much more would we...

- experience God’s care and love in looking after us?
- walk humbly before men, denying self and the attention of people?
- be focusing attention upon Jesus and His honor and glory?

**3** (3:13-15) **Jesus Christ, Death:** point two is the death of Jesus. Note the charges against men, men who killed God’s Son. (Cp. Acts 2:23, 36; 5:30.)

1. Men “delivered up” God’s Son. It was not only the men of Jesus’ day who put Jesus on the cross. It is every man who has ever lived. No man would have done differently. We all would have crucified Him. This is the very point of His death.

⇒ Jesus died for *every man’s sin*.

⇒ It was every man’s sin that *necessitated His death*.

No man is exempt from God’s love; no man is exempt from the death of Jesus. Every man’s sins are covered by God’s love and Jesus’ death. Therefore, every man—in all the arrogance and rebellion and denial of his sins—delivered Jesus up to the cross and killed Him. It was for *my sins* He died. It was *my sins* that put Him on the cross.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).

2. Men denied Jesus, even when He was innocent. Jesus was innocent of the crimes with which He was charged. Even the Roman governor, Pilate, recognized this (cp. Lk.23:2-4, 13-16). There was no charge against Him that was justified. He was being *rejected* and condemned because men did not like His claims.

⇒ He claimed to be the Son of God.

⇒ He claimed that men had to deny self completely, to give God everything, all they were and had. If they wished to follow God and live eternally, they had to surrender and give all.

**Thought 1.** Very few men are going to give everything to God. Therefore, men reject, accuse, and condemn His claims as false, desiring to get rid of Him as quickly as possible. Guilt and innocence have little, if anything, to do with the matter. Men have to get rid of Jesus or else surrender to His claims. And most are not going to give up themselves and their possessions, not by any stretch of the imagination. (See notes and DEEPER STUDY # 6—Acts 2:44-45; note and DEEPER STUDY #1—Lk.9:23.) Thus they deny and seek to get rid of Him, even when He is innocent.

3. Men deny Jesus, the Holy One and the Just (Righteous One).
  - a. God had declared that His Son—His Servant, the Messiah—would be perfectly righteous.

**“By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities” (Is.53:11).**

- b. Scripture declares time and again that God’s Son—His Servant, the Messiah—is perfectly righteous, without any sin whatsoever. (Also see DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Son of Man*—Mt.8:20.)

**“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?” (Jn.8:46).**

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb.4:15).**

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

**“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:19).**

**“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 Jn.3:5).**

4. Men desired a sinner, a murderer, even before God’s Servant. There is a marked contrast between...
  - “Ye *denied* the Holy One and the Just.”
  - “Ye...*desired* a murderer.”

This is a striking truth: every man who rejects Jesus is choosing sinful men and their ways over the sinless Son of God and His ways. The unbeliever chooses...

- sin over holiness.
- unrighteousness over righteousness.
- sinful and murdering man over the Holy and loving Lord.
- corruption over incorruption.
- death over life.

Note: men desire murdering (sinful) mankind and his ways over the Son of God and His ways. Why? Because murdering, sinful man allows men to walk and live as they wish (immorally and unjustly).

5. Men killed the Prince of Life. The word Prince (archegon) means both Prince and Author. Peter is calling Jesus the Prince and Author of life, the very Source of all Life. Jesus Christ is both the Giver and the Savior of life. (See notes—Jn.1:4; 1:4-5; 10:10; 17:2-3 for discussion. Cp. Col.1:16; Heb.1:2-3.)

**“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Lk.2:11).**

**“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).**

**“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (Jn.3:14-17).**

**“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:30-31).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(3:13) **Jesus Christ, Death:** Jesus went to the cross because of man’s sin—every man’s sin. No man is exempt from God’s love. It was for every man that Jesus died. Therefore, every man, in all the arrogance and rebellion and denial of his sins, delivered Jesus up to the cross and killed Him.

- 4** (3:15) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** point three is the resurrection of Jesus. (See outline and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:3; DEEPER STUDY # 4—2:24; notes 2:25-36 for discussion.)

**5** (3:16) **Jesus Christ, Name—Believe:** point four is Jesus' name. His name made a man perfectly sound.

1. It is the name of Jesus alone that makes a man sound. Jesus alone has the power and holiness, merit and virtue to make a man sound.

**“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (Jn.14:13).**

**“Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you” (Jn.16:23).**

**“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph.5:20).**

2. It is faith in Jesus' name that makes a man sound. Both the messenger of God and the person who needs help must believe in the power of Jesus to make a person sound.

⇒ God is not going to work *through* a messenger who does not believe “in the name of Jesus.”

⇒ God is not going to work *in* a person who needs help if that person does not believe in the name of Jesus.

God is not pleased with anyone who does not believe, and cannot help anyone who will not trust Him to help.

**“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).**

Something else: God cannot indulge unbelief; He cannot be divided against Himself. It is only *foolishness*—foolish talk, foolish discussion, and foolish commentary—to say God indulges unbelief, that He is divided against Himself. Faith is always necessary in both the servant and the person needing God's help.

**“And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour” (Mt.8:13).**

**“Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you” (Mt.9:29).**

**“Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Mt.17:20).**

**“And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand” (Mk.3:24-25).**

**“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mk.9:23).**

3. It is “the faith which is *by Him* [Jesus]” that makes a man sound. A man must believe “in the name of Jesus,” but belief is a gift of Christ. Faith is not an emotion or a thought or a commitment that a man tries and tries to stir up within himself. It is not *of himself*.

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9; cp. Heb.12:2).**

The thought, the impulse, the movement, the tug, the pull to believe is *initiated* by God's Spirit. A man's spirit is dead. It cannot in and of itself move toward a living relationship with God. A dead spirit cannot make any movement whatsoever, for it is dead. When a man experiences and senses the pull to believe, he needs to stop resisting and believe. He needs to let go and trust Christ. When God initiates belief and moves upon a man's heart *with the gift of belief*, the man needs to exercise his will in accepting Jesus; he needs to give all he is and has to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior. It is by such belief and commitment that a man is made perfectly sound. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Believe*—Jn.2:24.) (See note, *Draw*—Jn.6:44-46 for more discussion.)

**“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn.6:44).**

**“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (Jn.12:32).**

**“Draw me, we will run after thee” (Song of Sol.1:4).**

**“The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer.31:3).**

**“I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them” (Hos.11:4).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(3:16) **Perfect Soundness** (holoklerian): to be whole: to be perfectly sound in *all* of one's parts; to be perfectly complete and entire. It means the man was perfectly sound in both body and soul.

**6** (3:17-18) **Jesus Christ, Death:** point five is that there is no excuse. God had foretold Messiah's death. Note two facts.

1. The people who rejected and killed Christ did so in ignorance. They did not know what they were doing, but they should have known. They had the prophets who proclaimed the coming and the death of God's Son. God had foretold all that a man needed to know to accept His Son. Their ignorance is not condoned. They are without excuse. They killed Christ in the sin and shame of rebellion against God, refusing to study and listen to the Scriptures, not accepting them for what they said.

**"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (Jn.5:39).**

2. God fulfilled the prophetic Scriptures in the suffering of Jesus (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Jesus Christ, Death*—Acts 2:23 for discussion and verses).

**7** (3:19) **Repentance:** point six is repentance and conversion. The word "conversion" (epistrepsate) means to turn again. Men must repent and turn again to God. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Repentance*—Acts 17:29-30.) If a man turns his life over to God and changes his behavior, two things happen.

1. His sins are "blotted out" (exaliphthenai): erased, smeared out, rubbed off, wiped out, obliterated—just like handwriting is erased and wiped off a wall.

**"Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities" (Ps.51:9).**

**"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Is.43:25).**

**"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" (Is.44:22).**

2. The Lord will send "seasons of refreshing" from His presence. When a person comes to know Christ personally, he experiences seasons...

- of refreshment and renewal
- of grace and blessings
- of rest and comfort
- of release and deliverance
- of joy and rejoicing
- of revival and stirrings
- of strength and commitment

**Thought 1.** Repentance is an absolute essential for forgiveness. A person just cannot continue and continue doing the same old things and expect forgiveness. He must repent, turn away from his sin to Christ. If a person is sincere, he will repent.

**"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt.3:2).**

**"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).**

**"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).**

**"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22).**

**"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).**

**"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Is.55:7).**

**"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezk.18:31).**

**8** (3:20-21) **Jesus Christ, Return:** point seven is Jesus' return and the restoration of all things. Note several clear facts.

1. God "shall send Jesus Christ," the Messiah, back to earth again, the same Jesus Christ that has been "preached unto you" (see note—Acts 1:10-11 for discussion).

2. Jesus Christ is *presently* in heaven and will be there until He returns. Heaven "must receive" Him until He returns. It is from there that He carries on His present ministry (see note, *Ascension*—Acts 1:9 for discussion).

3. There is to be a "restoration of all things" (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 3:21 for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(3:21) **Restoration** (apokatastaseos): to set in order again; to bring back to a former condition or state of being; to restore; to recreate or remake or renew all over again. (See note, *Regeneration*—Mt.19:28 for more discussion.)

Peter clearly says what he means, identifying the time to which he refers. There is to be a time when "the restoration of all things" shall take place, a time when all things shall be *made new* or *remade* into their perfect state. There shall be a *new order* of things under the personal rule and reign of Christ. (See outline and note, *Regeneration*—Mt.19:28. Cp. Ro.8:19-23; Is.11:6-9.) Note two things.

1. The words "times [plural] of restoration" point toward a period of time, perhaps several, over which the restoration will take place. The restoration will include several events, several periods of time. It will not be everything ending all at once; all the events involved in the restoration will not take place at the same time.

2. Scripture teaches several major events of the restoration that will happen at different times.
- a. There will be the return of the Lord Himself to *catch up* and resurrect the believer (see outline and notes—1 Th.4:13-5:3).

**"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Th.4:16-18).**

**"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn.14:2-3).**

- b. There will be the salvation of Israel (see outline and notes—Ro.11:25-36).

**"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Ro.11:25-26).**

- c. There will be the millennial reign of Christ upon earth (see outline, note, and DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Rev.20:4-6).

**"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev.20:4-6).**

- d. There will be the deliverance of the whole creation from suffering and corruption, including both nature itself and those among mankind who believe (see outline and notes—Ro.8:18-27).

**"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Ro.8:21-23).**

- e. There will be the explosive destruction and melting of heaven and earth by fire as well as the making of the new heavens and earth by God.

**"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pt.3:10-13).**

**"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be with him, and he will be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev.21:1-5).**

- f. There will be the glorious moment when Christ will "deliver up the kingdom [His mediatorial ministry] to God the Father...that God may be all in all" (see outline and notes—1 Cor.15:24-28).

**"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor.15:24).**

**9** (3:22-24) **Judgment:** point eight is judgment. God predicted the coming judgment through the prophets.

1. Moses predicted that God would send His Prophet (the Messiah) to earth (Dt.18:14-19). People must hear God's Prophet or be destroyed (see DEEPER STUDY # 4—Acts 3:23).
2. All the prophets from Samuel also predicted the coming and judgment of God's Prophet (see notes—Lk.3:24-31; 3:32-38; 3:38; DEEPER STUDY # 3—Jn.1:45).

**DEEPER STUDY # 4**

(3:23) **Destroyed** (exolothreutesetai): to be utterly destroyed or slain; to lose one's well-being; to be wasted and ruined and given a worthless existence. It does not mean that a person will cease to exist. It means a person will be destroyed and devastated and condemned to a worthless existence. He will suffer waste and loss and ruin forever and ever.

**“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mt.25:46; cp. v.25-45).**

**“But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation” (Mk.3:29).**

**“...he [Christ] will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable” (Lk.3:17).**

**“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile” (Ro.2:8-9).**

**“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Th.1:7-9).**

**“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people” (Heb.10:29-30).**

**“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).**

**“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev.20:15).**

**“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).**

**10** (3:25-26) **Jews, Privileges of:** point nine is a warning to Israel. However, the warning is really to all men, for the Son of God Himself has been to earth and *blessed all men* with the glorious message of salvation. The Jews were especially privileged in four things. (See outline and notes, *Israel*—Ro.9:3-5.)

1. They were the children of the prophets. They had the glorious heritage and message of God's very special servants.
2. They were the people with whom God made a very special covenant, a very special promise. He chose them to be the people and the race through whom He would send “the Seed,” that is, His Son, into the world.
3. They were the people to whom God sent His Son, Jesus Christ.
4. They were the first people who were blessed by God, blessed with the glorious message of repentance and forgiveness.

**“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever” (Ro.9:1-5).**

**“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Ro.10:1-3).**

| CHAPTER 4  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>1 Peter &amp; John arrested &amp; tried</b><br/>                     a. For preaching (3:1f)<br/>                     b. By the leaders of the temple<sup>DS1,2</sup></p> <p><b>2 They suffered abuse because they preached the resurrection</b><br/>                     a. They were arrested</p> <p>b. They bore fruit: 5,000 converts</p> <p><b>3 They credited Christ with the power to heal &amp; to change lives</b><br/>                     a. The Sanhedrin Court<sup>DS3</sup></p> <p>b. God equipped them with the Holy Spirit</p> <p>c. They credited Christ with the power to make men whole<sup>DS4</sup></p> <p>1) It was by the name of Jesus<br/>                     2) It was the Jesus whom "ye crucified"<br/>                     3) It was the Jesus whom God raised from the dead</p> <p><b>4 They proclaimed salvation in Christ alone</b></p> | <p><b>H. The First Persecution of the Church: Lessons for Christian Service, 4:1-22</b></p> <p>And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. 4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. 5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you</p> <p>builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was showed.</p> |
|  | <p>a. Christ is the Head<br/>                     b. Christ alone saves</p> <p><b>5 They gave evidence that they had been with Jesus</b><br/>                     a. The clear evidence: Boldness &amp; power<br/>                     b. The unequivocal evidence: The healed man</p> <p><b>6 They suffered threats</b><br/>                     a. The Court<br/>                     b. The Court deliberated<br/>                     c. The Court threatened</p> <p><b>7 They refused to compromise their message</b><br/>                     a. Defense 1: God is to be obeyed before men<br/>                     b. Defense 2: A man must testify to what he has seen &amp; heard</p> <p><b>8 The result: All men glorified God</b></p>   |

## DIVISION II

### THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60

#### H. The First Persecution of the Church: Lessons for Christian Service, 4:1-22

(4:1-22) **Introduction:** this is the first persecution of the church. There are several challenging lessons for Christian service clearly seen in the experience.

1. Peter and John arrested and tried (v.1).
2. They suffered abuse because they preached the resurrection (v.2-4).
3. They credited Christ with the power to heal and to change lives (v.5-10).

## ACTS 4:1-22

4. They proclaimed salvation in Christ alone (v.11-12).
5. They gave evidence that they had been with Jesus (v.13-14).
6. They suffered threats (v.15-18).
7. They refused to compromise their message (v.19-20).
8. The result: all men glorified God (v.21-22).

**1** (4:1) **Persecution:** Peter and John were arrested and tried. They were arrested “as they spoke,” that is, while they were preaching. Remember that the cripple had walked through the temple leaping and praising God (Acts 3:8-11). A huge throng of thousands had rushed to see the cripple who had been healed and to hear the message being proclaimed by the two men who had such power. The temple was a massive building which could hold thousands (v.5). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Temple*—Mt.21:12-16.) The excitement and noise were bound to attract attention and bring the temple authorities to the scene. What they saw and heard disturbed them to no end. They thought they had eliminated the “Jesus movement” eight weeks earlier when they had crucified Jesus. They had heard about the preaching incident several days earlier and how excited the people had become (Acts 2:5f). Now these two men (Peter and John) were publicly preaching the rumor that God had raised Jesus from the dead. And they were preaching, of all places, in the temple precincts.

It was time to investigate the matter, to nip the movement in the bud before it could spread. Note those who came to arrest them. As mentioned above, they stopped Peter right in the middle of his message.

1. The priests were probably those who were officiating in the temple at that particular time.
2. The captain of the temple. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Temple Captain*—Acts 4:1 for discussion.)
3. The Sadducees. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 23:8 for discussion.)

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(4:1) **Priests:** all the male descendants of Aaron were priests. In the time of Christ there were over twenty thousand priests. Since there was only one temple (located in Jerusalem), the priests were divided into groups. There were twenty-four groups, and each group served in the temple for one week twice a year (1 Chron.24:1-6; 2 Chron.22:8).

### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(4:1) **Temple Captain:** this was the right-hand man, the chief executive officer or chief of staff to the High Priest. He was probably what Scripture calls the *chief officer* or “the ruler of the house of God” (Jer.20:1; 1 Chron.9:11; 2 Chron.31:13; Neh.11:11). He was responsible for the administration of the temple, which meant he was held accountable for the order and any disorder that took place within the temple precincts. His presence in arresting Peter and John is clearly understandable in light of the situation.

**2** (4:2-4) **Religionists—Persecution—Worldliness:** Peter and John suffered abuse because they preached the resurrection. The officials were threatened by the preaching of Jesus being raised from the dead. They knew that it was the nature of people to respond to hope, especially to great hope. They also knew that great excitement existed within the people’s heart for the coming of the Messiah and that it would take only a small spark of hope to set the excitement aflame (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.1:18). They just could not allow *Jesus* to be preached, not the hope of His resurrection, for the resurrection meant that all men who followed Him would arise. People ached and were ripe for such a message. Therefore, the authorities, knowing the nature of man and the situation, were threatened. If the people turned to the *new movement*, the authorities...

- feared the loss of the people—their loyalty, recognition, and esteem.
- feared the loss of position, authority, and livelihood. If they lost the loyalty of the people or allowed a disturbance, the Romans would replace them with other officials. The Romans were usually tolerant, but they were quick to stamp out disorder and disloyalty.
- feared the people might begin to think that *their doctrine* was wrong. If they allowed the preaching of the resurrection to continue, they would be admitting that God had bypassed them and revealed the truth to *others*. Their own *spiritual condition* and beliefs and teachings would be suspect. They were the secure *religionists* and the official religious leaders. Therefore, they would be jeopardizing their own religion and leadership among the people. They would be undermining their own sense of security and their sense of being acceptable to God.
- feared acknowledging they were wrong in crucifying Jesus. If He were truly the risen Son of God, then they were sinners, chief sinners, guilty of denying and rejecting God’s Son. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.12:10 for more discussion as to why the religionists feared and opposed Christ and Christianity so much.)

“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful” (Mt.13:22).

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mt.16:26).

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lk.21:34).

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas.4:4).

“I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 Jn.2:14-15).

**Thought 1.** Note how the same fears strike so many today, causing them...

- not to support true men and movements of God.
- not to *rock the boat*.
- not to do what is right.

**Thought 2.** Too many seek after the things of the world and of religion instead of really serving God. They seek after...

- |               |             |                     |
|---------------|-------------|---------------------|
| • acceptance  | • position  | • possessions       |
| • esteem      | • authority | • wealth            |
| • recognition | • power     | • bigger and better |

The authorities arrested Peter and John. It was late afternoon, too late for a trial, so they jailed them for the night. But note a significant fact: before Peter was arrested, he had shared enough of the gospel for the crowd to respond. Five thousand men (not counting women and children) made decisions for Christ.

Persecution did not stop the Word and the Spirit of God from working. Souls (fruit) were saved despite the abuse and opposition. What a lesson for believers to *keep on* in their preaching and witnessing no matter the opposition.

**“My Word shall not return to me void” (Is.55:11).**

**“The Word of God is not bound” (2 Tim.2:9).**

**3** (4:5-10) **Jesus Christ, Power:** Peter and John credited Christ with the power to heal and to change lives. Note three points.

1. The Sanhedrin court convened the next morning to put Peter and John on trial. The term “rulers, elders, and scribes” means the Sanhedrin. It was the ruling body, both the governing council and supreme court of the Jews. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Sanhedrin*—Acts 4:5-6.)

a. The term “rulers, and elders, and scribes” is apparently just a term of synonyms, a term used by the people when referring to the Sanhedrin.

- ⇒ Rulers would refer to the whole body.
- ⇒ Elders would refer to the most esteemed of the nation. The whole Sanhedrin was sometimes simply referred to as the *Elders*.
- ⇒ Scribes was a definite profession of men, the experts, the *doctors* of Jewish law and tradition.

Annas was apparently recognized as the High Priest by most Jews. He had actually been removed from power by the Romans, but he had been so influential among his peers that he was still recognized as the *power behind the throne*. (See note, pt. 6—Lk.3:1; Jn.18:12-14.)

- ⇒ Caiaphas was serving as High Priest in the eyes of the Romans (see note—Mt.26:3-5; DEEPER STUDY # 2—26:3).
- ⇒ John is unknown. All we know is what is mentioned here, that he belonged to the high priestly family.
- ⇒ Alexander is also unknown, except that he too belonged to the high priestly family.

b. The question the court asked was straight to the point. “By what power, or by what name have you done this [healed the man]?” The court was doing exactly what God had said to do. God had instructed Israel to try every man who claimed to be a prophet and worked signs and wonders among the people (Dt.13:1-5). If the man was not a true prophet, he was to be executed.

But there is more to their questioning than this. They knew Peter was preaching the resurrection through Jesus Christ. They had to stop it or risk losing the loyalty of the people and their position and livelihood, so they were seeking opportunity to accuse and stop Peter and John. (See note—Acts 4:2-4.)

Their questioning may also involve something else. They were the religious leaders; therefore, they thought the power could not be of God. If God should choose to do some marvelous work, especially in the temple, they thought He would choose to reveal such to them, the traditional religious leaders. Therefore they felt the *name* and the *power* that healed the crippled must be diabolical (Lk.11:15).

**Thought 1.** Men in leadership, leaders in both state and religion, face some common sins, the seeking of...

- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| • position    | • influence       |
| • recognition | • authority       |
| • riches      | • being exclusive |

The flesh, sinful human nature is the culprit. But bureaucratic, institutional, established positions lend themselves to the sins.

**Thought 2.** Every believer, minister, and group must guard against thinking that God can work only through them. God is always bringing new faces and groups into the picture to do His work. He must, for the mission is so enormous and there is still so much to do—so many who have not yet heard and been helped.

2. God equipped Peter and John with the Holy Spirit. Note how quickly God came to the rescue: “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit.” Peter had not even had time to speak, and God was present, filling Peter with the Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit was ready to take over and give Peter the words to say.

**Thought 1.** The believer who is ready to proclaim Christ will never be left alone. The Holy Spirit will be present to speak through him.

“And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (Mt.10:18-20).

“But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost” (Mk.13:11).

“But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist” (Lk.21:12-15).

3. Peter and John credited Christ with the power to make men whole. Peter declared three critical points.
  - a. It was “the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” that made the man whole. Note that Jesus is called the “Christ” (Messiah). Peter was declaring that men must know that Jesus is the true Messiah, and there must be no doubt which Jesus: it was the Jesus of Nazareth. He is the Messiah, the Savior whom God promised to send to the world.
 

Note the word “whole” (see DEEPER STUDY # 4—Acts 4:9-10). The man was made whole in both body and soul. Who did it? Who could heal the man in both body and soul? Peter declared unequivocally:

    - ⇒ not himself, not John, nor any other man.
    - ⇒ Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Jesus from Nazareth; He alone had made this man whole.
  - b. It was Jesus Christ (Messiah) whom ye crucified. Remember Peter was speaking to the top leaders of the nation. He charged them with killing not only a man, but the Messiah. What an indictment! To be charged with killing the Son of God Himself!

**Thought 1.** The indictment is charged against all men. All men are guilty of the death of Jesus Christ. (See notes—Acts 3:13-15; DEEPER STUDY # 2,3—2:23 for discussion and verses.)

- c. It was Jesus whom God raised from the dead that made the man whole. Peter was declaring that it was the power of the resurrected and ascended Messiah, the Lord of heaven and earth who had such power. (See outlines and DEEPER STUDY # 4—Acts 2:24; notes 2:25-36 for discussion and verses. Cp. Acts 1:22; 3:15.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(4:5-6) **Sanhedrin:** the ruling body, both the governing council and supreme court of the Jews. It had seventy-one members and was presided over by the High Priest. Its membership was made up of Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes or lawyers, and elders who were leaders from among the people. A quorum was twenty-three people. The legal power of the Sanhedrin to pass the death sentence was restricted about twenty some years before the trial of Jesus. However, they did retain the right of excommunication (cp. Jn.9:22). The court met in the great “Hall of Hewn Stone.” Its members sat in a semi-circle with the High Priest (or president) sitting at the head.

**DEEPER STUDY # 4**

(4:9-10) **Salvation:** the word “whole” (sesotai) means to be saved; to be made whole; to be safe and sound; to be healed. It means that a person is made whole and continues to be whole. It means that the man was made whole in both body and soul.

**4** (4:11-12) **Jesus Christ, The Stone—Salvation:** Peter and John proclaimed salvation. Peter had just shared the source of his power, the name of Jesus Christ. He now proclaimed the salvation that is in Jesus. And to strike the point home, he used the declaration of prophetic Scripture.

1. Jesus Christ is the Head, that is, the Chief Cornerstone of God’s building (cp. Ps.118:22).
  - a. God gave man the *Head Cornerstone* for His building, the life He wanted man to build. But men set the stone “at nought,” counted it as no good, unacceptable, of no account, of no worth. Men rejected God’s Head Stone and went about finding their own chief stone and building their lives as they wished.
  - b. But God took His Stone, despite man’s rejection, and still made Him the Head of the corner. God has exalted Jesus Christ and made Him the Head of life. (See DEEPER STUDY # 7—Mt.21:42; DEEPER STUDY # 9,10—21:44.)

“This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner” (Acts 4:11).

“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” (Mt.21:42).

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph.2:20).

“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded” (1 Pt.2:6).

2. Jesus Christ alone saves. There is no other Head, no other exalted Lord; therefore, no man can be saved...
  - by any other head or lord.
  - by any other name *under heaven*.

No teacher is capable enough, no prophet is noble enough, no minister is good enough to save himself, much less any one else. Therefore, no matter the claim—no matter the indulgence and strength of the name—the man comes far, far short of being God’s chosen Head. No man has the name by which God saves men. All men are mortal. No man can make another man immortal. Therefore God’s Head, the name which God uses to save men, must be eternal. Only *One Man* is eternal: Jesus Christ the Son of Man Himself.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn.6:68).

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2).

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).

**5** (4:13-14) **Jesus Christ, Fellowship With—Meditation:** Peter and John gave evidence that they had been with Jesus. Note a striking fact: it was the boldness and power of Peter and John that *caused* the rulers to recognize them. The rulers had witnessed the same boldness and power in Jesus. And now it was boldness and power that identified these two men as having been with Jesus.

Note another fact: the boldness and power were not due to education and learning. It was due to their having “been with Jesus.” The clear evidence that a person has been with Jesus is *boldness and power*. The man made whole stood before the *Court of the World*. Therefore, the world was silenced. The enemies of Christ could not refute the claim, for the claim was not profession only. The claim was backed up by the evidence of a miracle, of a changed life: a man was made whole.

**Thought 1.** What a challenge to believers! We must *be with Jesus*; we must spend time, much time with Him. He is the source of boldness and power.

**Thought 2.** There is only one evidence that we belong to Jesus. Do we live in His boldness and power? If we have *been with Jesus*, then His boldness and power are present within us. We are living and witnessing in boldness and power.

**Thought 3.** What a change the world would know if believers spent enough time with Jesus to receive His boldness and power.

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt.18:20).

“For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Lk.1:37).

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor.1:9).

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:16).

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn.1:3).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).

“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up” (Ps.5:3).

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” (Ps.55:17).

“I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings” (Ps.77:12).

**6** (4:15-18) **Persecution:** Peter and John suffered threats. The court had Peter and John escorted from the council chambers so they could discuss the matter and reach a verdict.

⇒ They acknowledged that a “notable” (clear, unmistakable) miracle had been done. The man was *made whole*.

⇒ *All* the people knew the man had been transformed.

⇒ They could not deny the miracle. They would have; but the evidence (the power of Christ), the man made whole, stood before them. (Cp. Mt.28:11-15.)

**Thought 1.** The great need of the hour is for *lame* men to be made whole, transformed by the power of Christ. When a man is truly transformed, the world *cannot deny* it. The power of Christ stands *within* them as evidence that He is the risen and exalted Lord.

The rulers knew they must stop the *new movement*, suppress it from spreading any further among the people (v.17). At this point, they did not dare take drastic steps lest the people cause a disturbance that would bring the Romans down upon them (cp. v.21). Their decision was to threaten Peter and John, forbidding them to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

Note this: the orders and decisions of the court were binding except in the death penalty (which had to be referred to the Romans). The court's orders had to be obeyed or else Peter and John would face severe consequences.

**“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).**

**“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).**

**“And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God” (Ph.1:28).**

**“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).**

**7** (4:19-20) **Witnessing:** Peter and John refused to compromise their message. There are two all-important reasons.

1. God is to be obeyed before men. The highest authority must always be obeyed. This is the very basis of men and their laws. It is the word of the highest authority that men must carry out. Peter and John challenged the world: “Ye judge” (v.19). “[If it is] right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye” (v.19).

Christ had commanded them to preach time and again (Mt.28:19-20; Mk.16:15; Jn.20:21). They had to obey Him. They could do no other, for the highest possible authority had spoken. They were commissioned by God to speak and teach the resurrection, even in the face of opposition and persecution.

**Thought 1.** How can believers keep silent about Christ and His glorious salvation? He has commanded us to *speak* and *teach*, to bear witness and testimony to the living Lord.

2. A man must testify to what he has seen and heard. Note that the two disciples were claiming to have seen and heard Jesus after His resurrection as well as during His ministry.

**“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).**

**“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences....For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead” (2 Cor.5:11, 14).**

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).**

**“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn.1:3).**

**“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul” (Ps.66:16).**

**“I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses” (Is.63:7).**

**“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer.20:9).**

**8** (4:21-22) **Conclusion:** the result of such a dynamic witness was that men glorified God (edoxazon ton theon); that is, they kept on gloryifying Him. Why? Because the power of Christ had taken a man who had been *helpless* for forty years and made him *whole*, completely whole.

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).**

**“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (Jn.15:8).**

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col.1:12).**

**“By him [Christ] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb.13:15).**

**“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pt.2:9).**

**“Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings” (Ps.9:11).**

**“And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long” (Ps.35:28).**

**“Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands” (Is.42:12).**

|   |  |  |  |
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| <p><b>1 Peter &amp; John were released</b><br/> a. They reported to the church<br/> b. The church triumphantly lifted its voice to God—a united voice</p> <p><b>2 A conviction of God’s power<sup>PS1</sup></b></p> <p><b>3 A conviction of man’s futility &amp; God’s plan or providence</b></p> | <p><b>I. The Church Triumphant in Persecution: Victory Over Abuse, 4:23-31</b></p> <p>23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.</p> <p>24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:</p> <p>25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?</p> <p>26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.</p> <p>27 For of a truth against</p> | <p>thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,</p> <p>28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.</p> <p>29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,</p> <p>30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.</p> <p>31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.</p> | <p><b>4 A conviction of mission &amp; of God’s concern</b><br/> a. Of mission &amp; boldness<br/> b. Of the need for signs &amp; wonders</p> <p><b>5 The results</b><br/> a. The place was shaken<br/> b. They were all filled with the Spirit<br/> c. They witnessed boldly</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**I. The Church Triumphant in Persecution: Victory Over Abuse, 4:23-31**

(4:23-31) **Introduction:** the true believer shall suffer persecution. Christ said so (cp. Jn.15:20). Christ suffered persecution; the early church suffered persecution; believers today shall suffer persecution. It is inevitable.

⇒ It may take the form of abuse, anger, slander, gossip, mockery, cursing, isolation, or violence.

⇒ It may take place in the market place, church, home, community, or school.

What believers need is not deliverance from persecution, but victory and triumph over it. Believers need a conviction of mission, a conviction so strong that they become immovable.

1. Peter and John were released (v.23-24).
2. A conviction of God’s power (v.24).
3. A conviction of man’s futility and God’s plan or providence (v.25-28).
4. A conviction of mission and of God’s concern (v.29-30).
5. The results (v.31).

**1** (4:23-24) **Ministers—Humility:** Peter and John were released. As soon as they were released, they sought out their fellow believers, the church. Most likely the church was already meeting together, praying for Peter and John.

1. They reported and shared their experience with the church. Note several striking facts.
  - a. Peter and John were not depressed, discouraged, or downcast. Neither were they stricken with fear and trembling. They were not suggesting the church withdraw into a hole and keep its message to itself. They had been imprisoned and tried by the Supreme Court itself, threatened and warned, but they were not defeated and silenced.
  - b. Peter and John were not puffed up. They had suffered undue strain and pressure in serving Christ, and God had marvelously used them as witnesses to the highest rulers of the land. Yet there is no mention, no suggestion, not even a tinge...
    - of boasting
    - of being God’s special servants
    - of being more used by God
    - of self-glorying
    - of conceit
    - of being exalted above fellow believers
  - c. The concern of Peter and John was to encourage and edify (build up) the church and to warn them of the coming persecution that lay over the horizon. Note the words “reported all.” They shared all that the court had said: their questioning, their threats, their warnings. They shared how persecution would come if they continued to preach Jesus, and they shared how God had so wonderfully defended them.

Note a striking fact: whether or not to continue preaching was not even considered. The decision to carry the gospel to the whole world was made by Christ. It is not up for debate. Believers are commanded to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

2. The church could do but one thing: it triumphantly lifted its voice to God in prayer. But note: the prayer was triumphant and united “with one accord.” The triumph of the church is seen in the points of its convictions throughout the prayer. The “one accord” means they prayed *with one mind and one spirit*. They focused and concentrated upon what was

being prayed. Their minds were not wandering about. They were not half-heartedly praying, some praying and others thinking about their own affairs. They were “all of one accord,” zeroing in on God and His wonderful care and provision. It is such group prayers that God hears and answers.

“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.18:19).

“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mk.11:24).

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jas.5:16).

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer.29:13).

**2** (4:24) **God, Power; Creator:** there was a conviction of God’s power. God is the One who created the universe in all its massiveness. God alone is the One who has such omnipotent power to create. Therefore, there is no one—no person, no being, no ruling body, no nation—not even a world that can stand and stop His will and power. This was the church’s great conviction of God’s power.

1. Note the word “Lord” (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:36).
2. Note the phrase “heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.” This encompasses...
  - all the earth and all upon earth (sea or land).
  - all in the lower heavens (atmosphere).
  - all in the middle heavens (outer space).
  - all in the ultimate heavens (beyond space and time, where Christ is).

All things, whether visible or invisible, have been created by the Sovereign Lord of the universe. He and He alone is God; He is the One who possesses all power, the One whose will and purpose will be victorious. And more immediate, more at hand, He is the One who cares for and loves and oversees those who serve Him. He is the One who stands against the evil of lost and mean men, men who abuse and persecute other human beings.

“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (Jn.1:3).

“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Cor.8:6).

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” (Col.1:16).

“[God] hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:2-3).

“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col.2:10).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(4:24) **Lord (Despota):** means sovereign Master, sovereign Lord, sovereign Ruler. It is the word used by slaves in referring to their Master, slaves who are totally subjected to the Lord and Master of their domain. God is being addressed as “Lord, thou art God,” the Sovereign Majesty, the Creator, Ruler, and Lord of the whole universe and of all life. He alone is God and Sovereign Lord. No one else is—no person, no being, no ruling power, visible or invisible, physical or spiritual (cp. Ro.8:38-39; Col.1:16).

**3** (4:25-28) **God, Will of—Predestination—Determinate Counsel:** there was a conviction of man’s futility and God’s plan or providence. The thought is that man will do evil. Man will persecute believers and attempt to stamp out the gospel and the church. But they will fail, for God has a plan and He will overrule and carry out His plan.

Now note a critical fact: God’s plan—His providence and His working all things out for good—had already been proven. David’s prophecy and the death of Christ had proven it.

1. Man will oppose God. God through David foretold their opposition in Scripture (cp. Ps.2:1-2).
  - a. The heathen, that is, the *lost* of the world, “rage” (ephruxan): to neigh, stomp the ground like a fierce horse; to act untamed, haughty, unruly.
  - b. The people, that is, the *worldly*, “imagine vain things”: to be anxious over *empty* things; to focus one’s life, time and energy upon *meaningless* possessions and *material things*, the empty, unsatisfying things of the world.
  - c. The *kings and rulers* stand up and gather together against God and His Christ, the Messiah. They stand against; stand in an opposite direction; stand in opposition and hostility to God and Christ.
2. God planned and overruled man’s opposition. God’s *counsel determined* what was to be done.
  - a. The prophecy was primarily fulfilled in the death of Christ. Man stood against God’s “holy child Jesus”; they gathered together against Him and killed Him. But God overruled and raised Him from the dead. God took the events—all the evil of man—and worked it all out for good. His will to save the world is still marching on. God’s counsel—His deliberation, His knowing all things and His possessing all power—worked everything out for good. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2,3—Acts 2:23; note—3:13-15 for more discussion and verses.)

**“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23).**

- b. The prophecy is still being fulfilled in the lives of believers and the church. The world...
- still rages,
  - still imagines empty things,
  - still stands and gathers together against God, His Messiah and His church,
- ...but to no avail. God’s will and purpose still marches on. He overrules all the meanness and persecution of evil men. He sees to it that the glorious message of salvation is not stopped, the Word of God is not bound. He causes it to be spread and to save all who hear and will believe.

**“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery [the gospel], even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory” (1 Cor.2:7).**

**“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim.1:9).**

**“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound” (2 Tim.2:8-9).**

**“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:2-3).**

**4** (4:29-30) **Witnessing:** there was a conviction of God’s mission and of God’s concern.

1. Their mission was to “speak God’s Word.” Note what they needed and what they prayed. They did not pray, did not need...

- for evil men to be destroyed.
- for the persecution to stop.
- for God to allow them to stop witnessing until things quieted down.

They prayed for boldness, for more courage to bear testimony, no matter the abuse and opposition. They asked to be fearless, for God to remove their fear. Note they asked for “all boldness.”

- a. The word “now” (nun) is stressed; there is heavy emphasis upon it. The church desperately needed its fear removed, and it wanted a strong courage to get about its business of witnessing.
- b. The word “behold” (epide epi) means to look upon. The church was asking God to concentrate and focus upon the persecution; to deal with it and to overrule the enemy; to give whatever was necessary to endure through it all.
- ⇒ To consider the persecution and remove what He would of it; to remove whatever fury was not to be used for His glory.
- ⇒ To consider the persecution and to give the faith and endurance to bear testimony *through* it; to use the persecution to praise His name.

**“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain” (Ps.76:10).**

**“Wherefore doth the wicked contemn [spurn] God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite [require] it with thy hand” (Ps.10:13-14).**

- c. The word “servants” (doulois) is the word for bond-slaves. The church was saying that they were the slaves of the Lord, to do His will, to share and speak God’s Word despite persecution.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).**

2. Their need was also for power to heal and for signs and wonders, for a demonstration of God’s power to prove their claim, the claim that...

- God’s Son did come to earth.

- God's Son did die.
- God's Son did arise.
- God's Son was exalted to the right hand of God.
- God's Son was still active and working in men's lives today.

Only one thing could prove such a message: the power of the living Lord proving itself in signs and wonders. Note two significant points.

- a. The power lies "in the name" of Jesus (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 3:6. Cp. Acts 4:7, 10, 12, 17, 18.)
- b. The power is for the glory of Jesus alone.

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Mt.10:1).

"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils" (Mk.3:14-15).

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mk.16:17-18).

"To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit" (1 Cor.12:9).

"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Eph.1:19).

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph.3:20).

**5** (4:31) **Boldness—Witnessing:** the results of the church's prayer were threefold.

1. The place was shaken. The shaking was a miracle, a sign showing that God controlled the physical universe, just as they had prayed (v.24).
2. They were filled with the Holy Spirit (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:1-4). They needed a very special manifestation, a fresh experience with the Spirit.
3. They received the boldness for which they had asked. They bore strong testimony, speaking the Word of God with boldness and courage.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

"And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him" (Acts 9:29).

"Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands" (Acts 14:3).

"And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8).

"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" (Tit.2:15).

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pt.3:15).

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| <p><b>1 They were of one heart &amp; soul</b><br/> a. In Jesus' Lordship &amp; mission<br/> b. In their responsibility to love and to share "all things"</p> <p><b>2 They gave great witness to the resurrection</b><br/> a. A witness of great power<br/> b. A witness of great grace</p> <p><b>3 They took care of all who</b></p> | <p><b>J. The Believers of the First Church: Essentials For Life Together, 4:32-37</b></p> <p>32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.</p> <p>33 And with great power gave the apostle witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.</p> <p>34 Neither was there any</p> | <p>among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,</p> <p>35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.</p> <p>36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,</p> <p>37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.</p> | <p><b>had need</b><br/> a. Fact 1: No one lacked<br/> b. Fact 2: All repented of <i>hoarding</i>, gave everything beyond their necessities<br/> c. Fact 3: The needy received only what they needed.</p> <p>d. One man in particular set a godly example: Barnabas<sup>DS1</sup></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**J. The Believers of the First Church: Essentials for Life Together, 4:32-37**

(4:32-37) **Introduction:** the life of the early believers and church was most unusual—a far cry from the way the church and its believers live today. Yet a study of their lives gives us a clear picture of the essentials for living together and for fulfilling the mission of the Lord.

1. They were of one heart and soul (v.32).
2. They gave a great witness to the resurrection (v.33).
3. They took care of all who had need (v.34-37).

**1** (4:32) **Brotherhood—Unity:** the early church was of one heart and of one soul. The order of the Greek sentence says, "the heart and the soul [were] one." The person's *whole being* was one with all other believers. There was complete and total...

- oneness
- unity
- accord
- harmony
- love

And remember, there were multitudes, thousands of believers at this time (cp. Acts 2:41; 3:4). How in the world can a body of people achieve one heart and one soul, become so unified? This verse reveals how.

1. The early believers gave their heart and soul to Jesus' Lordship and mission. They believed, *truly* believed, that the Lord Jesus...

- had died for their sins.
- had risen from the dead.
- had been exalted to the right hand of God.
- had commissioned them to go forth, reaching and helping people.
- was to return and reward believers for being faithful to the great mission of saving and ministering to people.

They were thoroughly convinced of the mission of Christ, of the great commission (Acts 1:8; Mt.28:19-20); therefore, they gave all they were to *speak the Word of God* (v.29, 31). Nothing, not even threats and persecution could keep them from proclaiming the Word and carrying out the mission of Christ.

The point is this: they knew Jesus to be the Lord; therefore, they gave their lives to be His servants (doulos, slaves). They surrendered themselves totally to the Lordship of Christ...

- to His life and will.
- to His purpose and mission.

Christ became their life and will, purpose and mission—their all in all. They lived and existed to do what He said; they did it so that men might be saved from sin, death, and hell and receive eternal life. As just said, nothing, not even threats and persecution, could keep them from proclaiming and carrying out the mission of Christ. In fact, opposition only spurred them on with more boldness and energy in their witness (see outline and notes—Acts 4:23-31).

Another way to say the same thing is this: the early believers knew what the Lordship of Christ really meant. It meant the surrender of all one is and has so that the whole world may know that no man need ever die. A man can live eternally, truly live forever, beginning right now. The early believers just could not keep such a glorious message to themselves, no matter what it cost them personally or financially.

2. The early church gave their heart and soul to the Lord's demand, the demand to love and to share *all things* with the needy. (See outline, notes, and DEEPER STUDY # 6—Acts 2:44-45 for more discussion.)

*The early believer did not...*

- insist on owning property
- count his possessions as his own
- trust in riches
- take from others
- glory in possessions (things)
- lay and store up wealth

*The early believer truly believed...*

- in the Lordship of Christ
- in the inheritance of eternal life (heaven)
- in being rewarded for faithfulness to Christ
- in denying self (all one is and has) to be saved
- in forsaking all for Christ
- in loving others sacrificially
- in God's ownership of all

The early church believed they were on earth to serve Christ and were being blessed with material possessions to help others. Therefore, they met the necessities of their own families, then they gave what they had left to meet the needs of a lost, desperate, impoverished world.

Scripture drives the point home: the early church believed...

- that the true believer was to "labor, working with his hands...that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph.4:28).
- "That...your abundance may be a supply for their want" (2 Cor.8:14).
- "That their abundance [whether things or labor] also may be a supply for your want" (2 Cor.8:14).
- that "he that *had gathered much* had nothing left over" (2 Cor.8:15).
- that "he that had gathered little had *no lack*" (2 Cor.8:15).
- that "God [will] put the same earnest care into the heart of [believers] for you" (2 Cor.8:16).

Note a very practical point, easily seen. Unless the rich use their money to the point of sacrificing, millions will continue to die from senseless causes, causes that could be eliminated by a concentrated effort of the wealthy.

- ⇒ The hungry will continue to starve.
- ⇒ The cold will continue to freeze.
- ⇒ The unclothed will continue to be embarrassed, be misfits.
- ⇒ The unsheltered will continue to suffer exposure.
- ⇒ The uneducated will continue to be ignorant.
- ⇒ The diseased will continue to be eaten away.
- ⇒ The abnormal will continue to suffer and be useless.
- ⇒ The lost will continue to die without Christ.

There are businessmen and leaders with the ability and know-how (under God) to meet the desperate needs of the world. Sorrow, suffering, pain and death could be eliminated by just *some* of the world's leaders if they would just surrender their lives to Christ—all they *are and have*—and get to it.

A man should never forget this: Jesus said that the rich man lost his soul and went to hell because of indulgence, extravagance, storing, hoarding, and neglecting the needs of those in the world who were in such desperate straits. (See notes—Lk.12:15-19; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.16:19-21.) There is no hope for the man, no matter what the institutional church and its leaders say—no hope for the man who *holds back* more than what he and his *dear* family need. The reason is simple: the starving child is God's *dear* child. Let no man think God will excuse him for the death of His *dear* child who starved to death when the man had the money to help. Imagine the scene. A starving child leans against the outside wall of a building. Inside is a man with food or money to help the child. Yet the man refuses to help; he *holds back*, *stores up*, *banks*, *invests* his money to get more and more. All the while, God's *dear* child starves and starves and dies starving. What is it that confuses the mind of man so much? What is it that blinds man, that causes him to think that he will be acceptable to God and allowed to live in heaven forever? What causes him to think that his sin will be overlooked? God's *dear* starving child died because of the man's *holding back*. Christ teaches that there is no way God will excuse the man. The man will be held accountable and judged severely.

Think about this for a moment: If God cares so much about man's human suffering, how much more does He care about man's spiritual and eternal suffering? He cared enough to sacrifice His Son for man's spiritual rebirth. If any man *keeps back* anything when it could be spreading the gospel of eternal life around the world, how much more punishment does he deserve? Christ teaches that every soul is lost and doomed that does not accept Him. The responsibility to send the gospel around the world lies in the hands of men. God is not going to send any other being to earth to do the job. It is up to men. Men must work to earn a livelihood, but they must also work so they will have enough to meet the needs of the world. In addition, some must be willing to go and become personally involved. This is the only way the needs of the world will ever be met.

Now, for the question asked at the beginning of this point. How in the world can a body of people achieve one heart and one soul, become as unified as the early church did?

- ⇒ By giving their souls and hearts, their whole beings to Jesus' Lordship and mission. When men and women surrender to the Lordship of Christ, they become one in following and doing His will. His life and mission become their life and mission. They live the same *kind* of life, the same *style* of life, and they work diligently to achieve the same mission. They become one in life and mission which is to say they become one in everything. There is something else as well, really the most significant factor: when people surrender to the Lordship of Christ, the Spirit of God gives them a supernatural love and a spiritual bond with other believers (cp. Ro.5:5; Gal.5:22-23; Jn.13:34-35. See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 2:42.) It is this that creates one heart and one soul in the church.

**"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn.13:34-35).**

**"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).**

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Ro.5:5).

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office [gifts]: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another” (Ro.12:4-5).

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:12-13).

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor.1:10).

**2** (4:33) **Church—Witnessing:** the early church gave a great witness to the resurrection. (See outline and DEEPER STUDY # 4—Acts 2:24; 2:25-36 for discussion and verses.) They witnessed with great power and great grace was upon them all (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Witnessing*—Acts 1:8; cp. Acts 4:31; see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Grace*—Tit.2:11-15 for discussion).

**3** (4:34-37) **Stewardship—Ministering:** the early church took care of all those who had need. Note four *revealing* facts that are extremely instructive and challenging. These facts show how obedient the early believers were and just how obedient God expects all believers to be. (As these facts are studied, imagine how different the church would be if believers today reached out like the early believers. What a change would be wrought in the heart of the world!)

1. Fact 1: no one lacked. There was not “any among them that lacked” (endees), that was left in need or in want, that went without. The idea is that no family, no man, no woman, no child was neglected. No one was *left* without the necessities of life; no one had to face a day without the food, clothing, or shelter that he needed to take care of himself or of his dear family. All of God’s dear children were taken care of. Remember a critical question: what was it that caused the believers to take *care* of the needy? It was love—the duty laid upon them by Christ. Christ had told them to love and share with all those who lacked the necessities of life. There was a true brotherhood, a genuine love and caring for each other.

2. Fact 2: all repented of their *hoarding*, and they gave everything beyond their own necessities.
- ⇒ Some possessed lands (estates, plural) they did not need. They sold them and gave the monies to meet the needs of others.
  - ⇒ Some possessed houses (plural) that were not essential to their necessities. They too sold them and gave the monies to meet the needs of others.

Some picture this as saying that people sold the homes in which they lived, as though they moved into the streets or under the stars, exposing their families to all kinds of elements and dangers. This is most unlikely. Where would such a multitude of families (over 8,000 at this time) move, live, and survive? Shelter or housing is a necessity. Christ said so (Mt.6:25-34). What the believers were doing is just what Christ demanded:

“If thou wilt be perfect [complete], go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” ( Mt.19:21).

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself [give all one is and has], and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).

“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Lk.12:33).

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:33).

“Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim.6:19).

“The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Ps.24:1).

They truly *loved Christ*, so they were repenting of their *hoarding*, covetousness, and extravagant living. They were focusing upon a world that was full of desperate needs and death.

They truly *loved others*, so they were giving all they had *beyond their own necessities* to help meet the world’s desperate needs.

3. Fact 3: the needy received only what they needed, only what their necessities were. There are always those among us and around the world who need help, who are not able to take care of themselves. The reasons are innumerable. They are...

- too old
- too young
- diseased
- injured
- unemployed
- orphaned
- widowed
- divorced
- oppressed
- broken-hearted
- unskilled
- uneducated

What the early church did was very simple.

- ⇒ They looked at all those around them and pin-pointed the needs.
- ⇒ They repented of their *hoarding* and gave to those who had need.
- ⇒ They gave only what the necessities were.

## ACTS 4:32-37

**“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:33).**

**“When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost” (Jn.6:12).**

4. Fact 4: one man in particular set a godly example—Barnabas. (See note—Acts 4:36-37 for discussion.)

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(4:36-37) **Barnabas**: this is the first mention of Barnabas, the Levite, who was from the Island of Cyprus. His name means “Son of exhortation” or “Son of consolation.” Barnabas was an extremely important person in the life of the early church. His life is a dynamic example to all.

- ⇒ He was gifted by the Spirit of God with the gift of an *apostle* (Acts 14:14; cp. Eph.4:11).
- ⇒ He was totally committed to Christ and to helping others, even to the point of selling land to help (Acts 4:36-37).
- ⇒ He stood up and defended Paul before the early believers who feared Paul because Paul had been a spy and had persecuted the church (Acts 9:26-27).
- ⇒ He was sent forth by the church to exhort believers in the first known Gentile church, Antioch (Acts 11:22f).
- ⇒ He sought after Paul, wanting Paul to serve as his associate, and he disciplined Paul in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26).
- ⇒ He served with Paul (Acts 11:30; 12:25; 13:2-15:40).
- ⇒ He was one of the first two missionaries, Paul being the other (Acts 13:2-3).
- ⇒ He disciplined John Mark (Acts 12:25; 15:37-40).
- ⇒ He was called upon to defend Gentile salvation before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:2, 12).
- ⇒ He differed and split with Paul (Acts 15:36-40).
- ⇒ He backslid, drifted away for a brief period (Gal.2:11-13).
- ⇒ He is mentioned as an example by Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor.9:6).
- ⇒ He was a cousin to John Mark (Col.4:10).

| CHAPTER 5   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1 Keeping back is sin</b></p> <p>a. Is partial commitment<br/>b. Is deceiving</p> <p>c. Is allowing Satan to fill one's heart instead of the Holy Spirit<br/>d. Is lying to the Holy Spirit<br/>e. Is acting against &amp; lying to God Himself</p> | <p><b>K. The First Sin and Trouble in the Church: Keeping Back, 5:1-11</b></p> <p>But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,<br/>2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.<br/>3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?<br/>4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.<br/>5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard</p> | <p>these things.<br/>6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.<br/>7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.<br/>8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.<br/>9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.<br/>10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.<br/>11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.</p> |
| <p><b>2 Keeping back is severely judged</b></p>   |  | <p><b>3 Keeping back influences others to sin</b></p> <p>a. Causes others to follow one's example<br/>b. Causes others to lie</p> <p>c. Causes others to be judged</p>   |
|   |  | <p><b>4 Keeping back—its judgment causes great fear</b></p> <p>a. In the church<br/>b. In the world</p>  |

## DIVISION II

### THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60

#### K. The First Sin and Trouble in the Church: Keeping Back, 5:1-11

(5:1-11) **Introduction:** the first sin ever to appear in the church was serious, very serious. It was the sin of *keeping back*. The sin and the judgment upon it serve as a warning to every believer.

1. *Keeping back* is sin (v.1).
2. *Keeping back* is severely judged (v.2-6).
3. *Keeping back* influences others to sin (v.7-10).
4. *Keeping back*—its judgment causes great fear (v.11).

**I** (5:1-4) **Stewardship—Sin—Hypocrisy—Deception:** keeping back is sin. Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, were professing believers, members of the early church. They professed Christ, professed...

- to deny self, all they were and had.
- to take up the cross daily.
- to follow Christ.

They had some property which they did not personally need for their own necessities. They were professing to follow Christ, to take Him at His Word. Therefore, they sold their property in order to help those who were desperately needing food, shelter, clothing, and the gospel. But their profession was just that, *profession only*, a false profession. It was hypocritical, deceptive, a lie. They tried to *fake* their commitment. They tried to deceive the church. Their sin, holding back, was fivefold.

1. Keeping back is partial commitment. Ananias and Sapphira refused to give everything beyond their own necessities. They kept back *part* of the money that so many desperately needed, kept back that which was the difference between life and death for so many. They hoarded, chose to hang on to *part* of the world.

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim.6:10).

“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty” (Pr.11:24).

“Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard” (Pr.21:13).

“He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse” (Pr.28:27).

“There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt” (Eccl.5:13).

“For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely” (Jer.6:13).

“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezk.33:31).

“And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage” (Mic.2:2).

2. Keeping back is deception: it is deceiving the church. Ananias and Sapphira wanted the church to think they were *fellow believers*. They wanted the privilege and the honor, the acceptance and the fellowship of believers without paying the price of commitment and loyalty to Christ and His church. They did not want to be left out. They wanted to be included and to become part of the church fellowship. But they did not want it enough to totally commit themselves to Christ and His mission. So they tried to deceive the church. They became *pretenders* (hypocrites, liars).

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Ro.16:18).

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Ph.3:18-19).

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim.3:13).

“Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another” (Lev.19:11).

“The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death” (Pr.21:6).

“And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity” (Jer.9:5).

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer.17:9).

“For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth” (Mic.6:12).

3. Keeping back is allowing Satan to fill the heart instead of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Person who stirs sin; He is not the Person who arouses a person to hoard and keep back. The Holy Spirit stirs love—love that cares and ministers (Ro.5:5; Gal.5:22-23). The Holy Spirit is not a murderer, not the one who tempts men to keep back that which would keep others alive (whether food or safety from freezing weather, or whether life in Christ). Keeping back is of Satan; it is allowing one’s heart to be filled with Satan’s lies...

- the lies that the challenge to give all one is and has is too much to ask (Lk.9:23).
- the lies that to lose oneself completely in the cause of Christ, to give up the world, is too unreasonable.
- the lies that what is important is to secure more and more in order to be acceptable, to have position and promotion, esteem and the comforts of the world.
- the lies that one is justified in keeping back some because no one knows the future and, after all, everyone else does it.
- the lies that one can give some and keep back some and still be acceptable to God.

The thing to remember is that Satan is the “father of lies and murder” (Jn.8:44). His strategy is to get us to believe his lie that we can *keep back and hoard*. His purpose is to keep the desperate needs of the world from being met so that many persons will die prematurely, die without ever experiencing life, real life. Christ counters the lies of the devil with words spoken as simply as language can express, counters with all clarity and without equivocation or apology:

“No man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).

“Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me” (Lk.18:22).

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee: Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mt.25:41-46).

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day....and it came to pass that...the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments....Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things: but now...thou art tormented” (Lk.16:19, 22-23, 25).

4. Keeping back is lying to the Holy Spirit. There are several ways this is true.
- ⇒ A person says that he is surrendering his life or goods to Christ, but he does not give all.
  - ⇒ A person says that he wants the Spirit's presence and power when he is really unwilling to surrender all.
  - ⇒ A person says that he is committed to walk as a brother with other believers (who are indwelt by the Spirit) when he is not willing to pay the full price of discipleship.
  - ⇒ A person says that he wants the fulness of God's Spirit when the acceptance and approval of men is more important.

**"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:3).**

**"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51).**

**"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph.4:30).**

**"Quench not the Spirit" (1 Th.5:19).**

**"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb.10:29).**

5. Keeping back is acting against and lying to God Himself. This, of course, is very serious.
- a. Keeping back mocks God. A person mocks God's Word when he says that he is giving his life to God (which means all he is and has), but he does not do it. The person who keeps back is saying that he does not have to be honest with God, that he can lie to God. Pretending always mocks God and His Word. Pretending damages the name of God and causes the world to mock and scoff God, to deny Him and His power. The pretender actually does more harm and damage to the name of Christ than the greatest sinner. How? A pretender shows and proclaims something—his life cries out to the world: "The power of God's Son is...
- not attractive enough to draw me."
  - not challenging enough to captivate me."
  - not important enough for me to give up everything."
  - not powerful enough to change me."
  - not loving enough to demand my loyalty."
  - not beneficial enough to pull me out of the world."
- b. Keeping back cuts the heart of God. God loves the pretender (hypocrite, deceiver, liar). As long as the pretender's heart has enough *softness* to respond to the gospel, God reaches out to him. He wants the pretender, the man who keeps back, to be saved. As long as he is lost, God's heart aches, longs, hurts for the man to come home.
- God's heart is also cut to the core by the suffering and death of so many who could be helped by that which the man keeps back. God feels the infirmities and weaknesses of the whole human race (Heb.2:17-18; 4:15-16). God feels so much that He gave His *only* Son to make a way for the suffering of man to be handled and erased. The very reason so many are still suffering and are so desperate in the world is that so many of us are still keeping back instead of giving all we are and have to the mission of Christ.
- c. Keeping back is distrusting God.
- ⇒ Keeping back is not letting go of what one has beyond his necessities.
  - ⇒ Keeping back is feeling that one has to keep back *just in case*.
  - ⇒ Keeping back is being apprehensive that what one has might not be enough when it is needed.
  - ⇒ Keeping back is believing that securing *mammon* (comfort, ease, pleasure, plenty, money, houses, lands, investments) is what life is all about.
  - ⇒ Keeping back is trusting in *mammon* and the world for one's security.
  - ⇒ Keeping back is thinking one can serve God (give some to Him) and mammon (keep and hoard some).

God is simply not trusted, not completely and wholly, not in the sense that He craves. His Word is not believed or taken at face value. The person who keeps back rejects the clear teaching of God's Word...

⇒ that a man must *deny himself* completely.

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Lk.9:23).**

⇒ that God will give all "these things"—all the necessities of life—to the man who seeks Him first.

**"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt.6:33).**

**"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee" (Mk.10:28).**

**"And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me" (Lk.5:27).**

**"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Lk.12:33).**

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:33).

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you un-awares” (Lk.21:34).

“And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake. Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting” (Lk.18:29-30).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

**2** (5:5-6) **Judgment—Sin, Results:** keeping back is severely judged. Note exactly what happened to Ananias. Peter said nothing, absolutely nothing about death. He did not even say anything about judgment. He merely pointed out the sin of Ananias. The judgment is of God and God alone. But look ahead to Sapphira (v.9). Peter did declare judgment to her. He and the whole church *now* knew the seriousness of *the sin of holding back*. The judgment of Ananias and Sapphira teaches us several crucial lessons.

1. The sin of holding back is serious, very serious to God. When a person comes to Jesus Christ, God expects the person to be sincere and genuine through and through. He expects the person to deny himself—to give all he is and has to meet the desperate needs of dying people. This is the only reason Jesus Christ came to earth. There is no acceptance of anyone who does any less—only judgment.

2. The sin of keeping back involves many other sins, terrible sins. At the very least it involves the five sins described in this passage (see outline and note—Acts 5:1-4).

3. The heart of a person is not truly known except by God. When some read this passage, they wonder why Ananias was not given a chance to repent. They think the judgment was perhaps harsh. They have difficulty thinking of God as someone who judges people to death. But note exactly what is said:

- ⇒ “Satan filled thine heart.”
- ⇒ “[A] lie to the Holy Spirit.”
- ⇒ “Thou hast *not* lied unto men, but unto God.”

No one could know these sins had *filled* Ananias’ heart, not by what he did, not without God. God revealed to Peter that the sins had *filled* and completely possessed Ananias. It *appeared* that Ananias was lying “unto men,” simply trying to deceive the church. But it is said that his heart was *filled*, completely occupied and possessed, by Satan. No one could have looked at the sins of Ananias and known their depth—that all three sins were so deeply rooted—not apart from God revealing the fact.

The point is this: only God knows the heart of a person, what is in the depth of a person’s heart and what fills a person’s heart. Only God knows when a heart is fully possessed by evil. This is the reason God alone can judge, the reason judgment has to be left up to God.

**“Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first” (Mt.19:30).**

4. The sin of Ananias seems to have been close to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (that is, saying the work of the Holy Spirit is of the devil. See note—Mt.12:31-32). The sin of Ananias, of keeping back was saying...

- the work of the Holy Spirit allows sin.
- the work of the Holy Spirit in a life still allows a person to keep back something for himself.
- the movement of the Holy Spirit in a life still allows the devil to fill a heart with some sin.
- a person can be both righteous and worldly, living for God and for mammon.
- the Holy Spirit is not more important in a life than the devil and mammon.

5. If Ananias and Sapphira were genuine believers, if they had really trusted the Lord as their Savior, then their sin *may be* the “sin unto death” taught by Scripture (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Jn.5:16 for discussion).

Now note a most serious fact, a fact so serious it determines one’s eternal destiny.

- ⇒ Judgment upon sin does not always come as soon or as quickly as it did upon Ananias and Sapphira.
- ⇒ But all sin will be judged. There is no escape from the penalty of sin, not if a person continues in sin.

**“The wages of sin is death” (Ro.6:23).**

**“But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Tim.5:6).**

**“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Tim.6:9).**

**“The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezk.18:4, 20).**

**“He that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death” (Pr.11:19).**

**“Evil shall slay the wicked” (Ps.34:21).**

**“But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death” (Pr.8:36).**

**“The perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them” (Pr.11:3).**

**“Disobedience received a just recompense of reward” (Heb.2:2).**

**“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation” (Heb.2:3).**

**“Them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness...shall utterly perish in their own corruption” (2 Pt.2:10, 12).**

The point is simply this: keeping back is condemned by God, and it is to be judged. Sooner or later it is to be severely judged. The only answer to sin is confession and repentance. The sin and judgment of Ananias and Sapphira shows this. God hates sin. Men must repent of sin. There is no other way to be acceptable to God.

**“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.3:2).**

**“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).**

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**

**“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).**

**“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).**

**“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron.7:14).**

**“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).**

**“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die” (Ezk.18:21).**

- 3** (5:7-10) **Stumbling Block—Sin, Misleading Others:** keeping back influences others to sin. Note the three subpoints in the outline. Ananias, as head of the household, was responsible for his wife. He led his wife to follow right along with him; he caused her to lie. He had the opportunity to lead his wife in righteousness, that is, in helping to meet the needs of so many who were so desperately in need. He had the opportunity to lead his wife to a complete and fulfilled life in Christ, a life perfectly assured of eternity. Instead he led her to sin and death. Scripture is strong in what it has to say about being a stumbling block and leading others into sin and death. (See notes—Mt.18:6; 18:7-9 for more discussion.)

**“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Mt.18:6).**

**“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in” (Mt.23:13).**

**“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Ro.14:13).**

**“Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Cor.5:6).**

**“But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Cor.8:12-13).**

- 4** (5:11) **Fear, Godly—Self-denial:** keeping back—its judgment caused great fear both in the church and in the world among those who heard about it. Everyone recognized the great cost and seriousness of following Christ. Following the Lord meant...

- denying self completely, surrendering to Christ all one is and has.

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

**“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl.12:13).**

**“Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Is.8:13).**

- walking the straight and narrow path, living righteously and godly in this present world and looking for the glorious return of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

**“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt.10:28).**

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).**

**“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:24).**

**“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).**

**“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).**

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|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 The reasons for persecution</b></p> <p>a. Performing signs &amp; wonders</p> <p>b. Possessing a great unity</p> <p>c. Holding public worship</p> <p>d. Being separated &amp; different from the world</p> <p>e. Reaching out &amp; evangelizing</p> <p>f. Attracting huge crowds</p> <p>g. Meeting the needs of the public</p> <p>1) Physical needs</p> <p>2) Spiritual needs</p> | <p><b>L. The Second Persecution of the Church (Part I): A Picture of Abuse, 5:12-25</b></p> <p>12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.</p> <p>13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.</p> <p>14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)</p> <p>15 Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.</p> <p>16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.</p> <p>17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,</p> <p>18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them</p> | <p>in the common prison.</p> <p>19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,</p> <p>20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.</p> <p>21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.</p> <p>22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,</p> <p>23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.</p> <p>24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.</p> <p>25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.</p> | <p><b>3 The miraculous deliverance through &amp; from persecution</b></p> <p>a. God's care &amp; deliverance</p> <p>b. God's purpose: Go—stand—speak</p> <p>c. The disciples' obedience</p> <p><b>4 The failure of persecution: Utter perplexity &amp; frustration</b></p> <p>a. The court convened</p> <p>b. The guards found the apostles missing</p> <p>c. The persecutors were perplexed</p> <p>d. The persecutors made an unbelievable discovery</p> |
| <p><b>2 The persecution</b></p> <p>a. By religionists &amp; secular leaders</p> <p>b. Arrested &amp; jailed</p>   | <p>17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,</p> <p>18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them</p>   | <p>25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.</p>   | <p>d. The persecutors made an unbelievable discovery</p>  |

**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**L. The Second Persecution of the Church (Part I): A Picture of Abuse, 5:12-25**

(5:12-25) **Introduction:** this experience of Peter and John gives a clear picture of persecution.

1. The reasons for persecution (v.12-16).
2. The persecution (v.17-18).
3. The miraculous deliverance through and from persecution (v.19-21).
4. The failure of persecution: utter perplexity and frustration (v.21-25).

**1** (5:12-16) **Persecution:** the reasons for persecution are pictured in these verses. Wherever and whenever these things take place among believers, there will be persecution of one sort or another.

1. Signs and wonders and miracles cause persecution. Note: there were *many* signs and wonders, not just a few. God works *signs and wonders* among His people to demonstrate clearly and without question...

- "that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb.11:6).
- that His Son, Jesus Christ, is alive and still actively at work upon the earth, saving and meeting the needs of men.
- that it is the people who trust God that God looks after and that possess His authority and power upon earth.

The world does not experience nor understand *signs and wonders*. The world does not understand how a life can be totally changed by the saving grace of Christ or how a miraculous healing of the body can take place. And what the world does not experience and understand, it often rejects, mocks, abuses, and persecutes. **Why?**

- ⇒ Because miracles show the ignorance and inability of man.
- ⇒ Because miracles show that there is a Being higher than man—a God to whom man must surrender and obey.
- ⇒ Because it disturbs men and reminds them of their great need.

2. The great unity among believers causes persecution. The world fears the unity and binding force, that is, the “one accord” of believers. They fear the force, the strength...
- of their doctrine, worship, and discipline.
  - of their purpose and mission.
  - of what so great a body bound together can do.

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn.17:21).

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph.2:14).

3. The holding of public worship by *true* believers causes persecution. The worship and praise of God is the foundational belief of believers. The world often fears...

- the attraction and pull of *sincere and committed worship*.
- the *loyalty and commitment* of sincere worship.

4. Separation from the world and being different causes persecution. The believers of the early church were different: their lifestyle, their commitment to God, their giving all they were and had above their necessities, their fear of God. Their commitment caused them to walk completely separate from the world and from the enjoyable pleasures it offered. The believers were radically different.

“No man dare join himself to them [the church]” (v.13).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph.5:11).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).

5. The commitment to reach out and evangelize the world causes persecution. The world believes there are many ways to reach God. So long as the world’s religions allow men to live as they wish and still give them a sense of security, they are acceptable and considered to be of value. Therefore, the commitment and mission of true believers, that there is only one way to God, is considered narrow by the world. The world mocks and opposes the idea that Christ is the only Savior of the world. The world rejects and does its best to erase the message of Christ from off the earth.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn.6:68).

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2).

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).

6. The reaching out and mobilizing of multitudes causes persecution. The world fears large crowds who are different and separated from it. Even if the crowds mean no harm, even if the crowd is out to help the world, the world fears it. Believers are different in a way the world does not want, that is, different in morality and righteousness, giving and sacrificing—sacrificing even to the point of giving all one is and has.

“Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand” (Acts 4:4).

“And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord” (Acts 11:21).

“It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it” (Mk.4:31-32).

**“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Is.9:7).**

7. The meeting of man’s needs causes persecution. True believers see the world as being in desperate need, both physically and spiritually. Therefore, they give all they *are* and *have* above their own necessities to meet those needs. The world...

- mocks and ridicules a commitment that demands *all* a person has, feeling that giving some is enough, even if millions of people are still left suffering.
- fears the example of a commitment so deeply made, lest their own consciences (salved by giving some) be convicted.
- dislikes being reminded and told they are *sinful* in their *storing up* and *hoarding*.

Therefore, the world approves of some needs being met by some commitment and some giving. But they reject the demand of Christ, the demand that insists upon total commitment and sacrifice.

**“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself [all he is and has] and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

**“Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee” (Mk.10:28).**

**“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:33).**

Note that the people were clamoring to get to Peter, believing if they could just fall under his shadow they would be healed. Note: there is no mention that anyone was actually healed this way. However, the implication is that some people were. If so, the same two ingredients that bring about healing miracles were at work: the Lord’s power and the faith of the sick. We must always remember that God cares and loves so much that He always honors a person’s faith. If a person had a faith so great that he really believed that Peter’s shadow carried the *virtue* and *power* of God, God would most likely heal the person. How wonderful the love and care of God!

**“Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Mt.17:20).**

**“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.18:19).**

**“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mk.9:23).**

**“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Lk.11:9).**

**2** (5:17-18) **Persecution:** the persecution itself. Note two points.

1. The persecutors were the religionists and secular leaders of the world (see notes and DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Acts 4:1; DEEPER STUDY # 2,3—23:8). They were jealous (*zelou*), which means a boiling zeal and envy. They were consumed with a boiling anger and jealousy or envy over the preaching of Jesus. (See note—Acts 4:2-4 for discussion. See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.12:10 for more discussion as to why the religionists feared and opposed Jesus so much.)

2. There was the persecution itself. They were arrested and jailed. This was an attempt to silence them through...

- restraint
- fright
- shame

Being opposed, actually arrested and jailed by the authorities, would be enough to restrain, frighten, and shame many preachers and believers.

**Thought 1.** The believer knows and has been forewarned that he will suffer persecution.

**“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn.15:20).**

**“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you” (Jn.16:1-4).**

**“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).**

**“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).**

**“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (1 Jn.3:13).**

**“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13).**

**3** (5:19-21) **Deliverance**: the miraculous deliverance through and from persecution. Peter and John's situation was serious.

- ⇒ It was night.
- ⇒ They were behind prison doors.
- ⇒ They were doubly imprisoned: guards were also stationed outside the prison doors (v.23).
- ⇒ They were to stand trial the next morning, a trial that could threaten their lives (v.33).

Note three points.

1. God's deliverance in this situation was through the miraculous working of an angel. Scripture definitely says angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb.1:14. See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Angels*—Heb.1:4-14 for more discussion.) The point is this: God cares. He always cares about the troubling situations of His dear children. Therefore, He will do whatever is necessary to deliver His child through trouble (Ro.8:28).

a. God sometimes delivers by giving His presence of love, joy, peace, and security so the believer can endure and minister while in the trial. Paul is a dynamic example. He spent years in prison, but while there he was always witnessing and ministering (see note—Ph.1:12-14).

**"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor.10:13).**

**"Fear thou not; For I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Is.41:10).**

**"Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb.2:17-18).**

**"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb.4:15-16).**

**"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb.13:6).**

b. God sometimes delivers believers unto Himself, taking them on home to heaven when their ministry on earth is done. Sometimes the believer is to remain in the trial and die as a martyr or as a sufferer in the name of the Lord Jesus. Sometimes there is a need to reach some observer standing there witnessing the trial of the believer. The believer's hope and faithfulness to the end is used by God to preach volumes to the observers. Through suffering, God proves His glorious love and power for His dear servant.

**"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever" (2 Tim.4:18).**

**"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb.2:14-15).**

c. God sometimes delivers believers out and away from trouble. They can best serve the Lord by being free of the trial.

**"Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us" (2 Cor.1:10).**

**"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations [trials, trouble]" (2 Pt.2:9).**

**"Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence" (Ps.91:3).**

**"Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD" (Jer.1:8).**

2. God's purpose for Peter and John was for them to "go, stand and speak" to the people again. The Greek is strong, demanding boldness and courage.

- ⇒ "Go": go now, immediately.
- ⇒ "Stand": take your stand; stand forth without reservation or hesitation.
- ⇒ "Speak": proclaim, preach, teach—courageously, boldly, without fear.
- ⇒ "All the words of this life": the whole gospel of salvation; the glorious message of the death and resurrection of Christ; not watering down or changing anything; not holding back; not trying to soften the message to make it more acceptable.

Note a significant fact: difficult assignments usually follow miracles. A heavy responsibility falls upon the man for whom God works a miracle. God frees His servant in order to perform a great work. Miracles perplex the world. God sees to it because He wants them to lead to the conviction and conversion of men.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).

3. The disciples obeyed, and they obeyed fully and completely, without hesitation. They obeyed as soon as they could. They arose “early in the morning” and entered the temple and taught.

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (Jn.15:10).

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:7-8).

**4** (5:21-25) **Persecution:** the failure of persecution resulted in utter perplexity and frustration. The story of what happened next is an excellent picture of persecution whenever it is launched against Christ and His followers.

1. The persecutors (worldly court) convened to try the disciples.

2. The guards found them missing: they had been delivered out of the persecution. (As pointed out in the previous point, God always delivers His dear child out of the *suffering* of persecution, either *through* or *away* from it.)

3. The persecutors doubted (dieporoun): were perplexed; completely baffled; wondering; questioning; at a loss; thoroughly puzzled. They could not understand how the disciples could be delivered “out of their hand.” They were apprehensive about the growth of the *new movement*.

In the present situation, the authorities probably thought some of the guards had either willfully released the prisoners or else been careless while on duty.

4. The persecutors made an unbelievable discovery. The disciples had not fled for their lives like other escaped convicts would. They were “standing in the temple, and teaching the people.” They were demonstrating unbelievable behavior, not acting like other men. They were like a blazing fire on a rampage through a forest, unstoppable. The persecutors had never seen a conviction and hope like the disciples’, a conviction and hope totally different from that of any other man, a conviction and hope...

- that the resurrection of Jesus Christ had actually happened.
- that men must believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ and repent to know God and to be saved.
- that they must proclaim the gospel no matter the persecution.

**Thought 1.** The behavior of true believers in persecution will always perplex and dumbfound the persecutors. The true believer’s trust and message of the living Lord cannot be stamped out. The believer has to proclaim and live for his Lord even in the face of persecution.

“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (1 Pt.4:16-19).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13).

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pt.5:10).

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| <p><b>1 The disciples were re-arrested</b></p> <p>a. Were arrested without violence</p> <p>b. Were brought to court before the ruling body of the government, the Sanhedrin</p> <p>c. Were accused with a threefold charge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Breaking the law of the government</li> <li>2) Teaching a false doctrine: Stirring up the people</li> <li>3) Threatening insurrection: Falsely accusing the government of murder</li> </ol> <p>d. Were courageous in their response</p> <p><b>2 Reason 1: God has raised up &amp; exalted Christ</b></p> <p>a. To be a Prince<sup>DS1</sup> &amp; a Savior<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>b. To give repentance</p> <p>c. To give forgiveness</p> <p><b>3 Reason 2: God has made us witnesses<sup>DS3</sup></b></p> <p><b>4 Reason 3: God has a will that must be done</b></p> <p>a. God's will opposed by the unthinking men of the world</p> <p>b. God's will recognized by the thinking men of the world<sup>DS4</sup></p> | <p><b>M. The Second Persecution of the Church (Part II): Reasons for Remaining Loyal, 5:26-42</b></p> <p>26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.</p> <p>27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,</p> <p>28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.</p> <p>29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.</p> <p>30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.</p> <p>31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.</p> <p>32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.</p> <p>33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.</p> <p>34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of</p> | <p>the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;</p> <p>35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.</p> <p>36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.</p> <p>37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.</p> <p>38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this council or this work be of men, it will come to nought:</p> <p>39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.</p> <p>40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.</p> <p>41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.</p> <p>42 And daily in the temple, and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.</p> | <p>1) Seen in the events of history &amp; revelation: Theudas &amp; Judas<sup>DS5</sup></p> <p>2) What is not of God will come to nothing</p> <p>3) What is of God cannot be overthrown</p> <p><b>5 Reason 4: God is able to deliver through hardship</b></p> <p>a. Able to stir a sense of privilege</p> <p>b. Able to stir joy</p> <p>c. Able to stir the courage to continue teaching &amp; preaching</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**M. The Second Persecution of the Church (Part II): Reasons for Remaining Loyal, 5:26-42**

(5:26-42) **Introduction:** believers must be loyal; they must obey God. The present passage is forceful in driving the point home to the human heart.

1. The disciples were re-arrested (v.26-29).
2. Reason 1: God has raised up and exalted Christ (v.30-31).
3. Reason 2: God has made us witnesses (v.32).
4. Reason 3: God has a will that must be done (v.32-40).
5. Reason 4: God is able to deliver through hardship (v.41-42).

**1** (5:26-29) **Persecution:** the disciples were re-arrested. They were arrested without violence because the officers feared the reaction of the people. Apparently the officers had *roughed up* the disciples before, taking them by force (v.18). The disciples were taken before the Sanhedrin Court, the ruling body of the government. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Sanhedrin—Acts 4:5-6.*) Three charges were brought against the disciples.

1. They had broken the specific law that the name and resurrection of Jesus Christ was not to be preached (cp. Acts 4:18).

**Thought 1.** Believers are sometimes forbidden to speak for their Lord by governments, businesses, fellow workers, schools, institutions, and neighbors. But note: this is in direct conflict with the Lord's command (Acts 1:4, 8).

2. They were thought to have taught a false doctrine, a doctrine that misled and stirred up people.

3. They were thought to have threatened insurrection, to have falsely accused the government of injustice and murder (Acts 4:10-12; cp. Acts 2:23, 36; 3:15). The leaders feared they would lose control of the people, their support and loyalty. They knew full well their position and livelihood were at stake.

**Thought 1.** Note how the truth mattered little if any to the leaders. They had killed Jesus, fully accepting the responsibility for His death before Pilate (Mt.27:25). What they needed was to confess their guilt and repent of their sins just as the people were doing.

Now note the striking response of the disciples: they must be loyal to God; they must obey God and not man. (See outline and note—Acts 4:19-20 for more discussion.)

**2** (5:30-31) **Jesus Christ, Work of:** the disciple must be loyal; he must obey God, because God has raised up and exalted Christ. (See outlines, notes and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:3; note—1:10-11; DEEPER STUDY # 4—2:24; note—2:25-36 for discussion.) God had three purposes for raising Christ.

1. To make Him a Prince and a Savior (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, 2—Acts 5:31 for discussion).
2. To give repentance (see also DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 17:29-30 for discussion).
3. To give forgiveness of sins (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, 2—Acts 2:38 for discussion).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(5:31) **Prince** (archegon): Author, Originator, Source, Leader, Pioneer, the Beginner and Finisher (Heb.12:2). Jesus Christ is the Prince of life (Acts 3:5) and of salvation (Acts 5:31; Heb.2:10 where *archegon* is translated captain or leader). Note the force of the point: Jesus is both the Giver and Savior of life. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Life*—Jn.1:4; note—1:4-5; DEEPER STUDY # 1—10:10; DEEPER STUDY # 1—17:2-3.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(5:31) **Savior** (sotera): means a Deliverer, a Preserver. It has the idea of a Deliverer or a Savior who snatches a person from some terrible disaster that is going to end in their perishing (cp. Jn.3:16). (See DEEPER STUDY # 6, *Salvation*—Mt.1:21 for more discussion.)

1. Jesus Christ is said to be the Savior.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Lk.2:11).

“And [the people] said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (Jn.4:42).

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).

“Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus” (Acts 13:23).

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph.5:23).

“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ph.3:20).

“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).

“To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Tit.1:4).

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:13).

“Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Tit.3:6).

“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pt.1:1).

“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pt.1:11).

“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning” (2 Pt.2:20).

“That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” (2 Pt.3:2).

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever” (2 Pt.3:18).

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 Jn.4:14).

2. God is said to be the Savior.

“And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour” (Lk.1:47).

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope” (1 Tim.1:1).

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour” (1 Tim.2:3).

“For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe” (1 Tim.4:10).

“But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:3).

“Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Tit.2:10).

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared” (Tit.3:4).

“To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever” (Jude 25).

**3** (5:32) **Witnessing:** the disciple must be loyal, must obey God because God has made him a witness of “these things” (rhematōn) or sayings. What *things*, what *sayings*? The things just stated. The believer is a witness that Jesus Christ is the Prince and Savior, the only Person who accepts repentance and can forgive sins. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:8 for more discussion and verses.)

Note the Holy Spirit is also said to be a witness to these things.

⇒ The Holy Spirit witnesses to Christ by giving supernatural power to the disciples to live righteously and to proclaim Christ.

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning” (Jn.15:26-27).

⇒ The Holy Spirit witnesses to Christ by convicting of sin and righteousness and judgment.

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (Jn.16:7-11).

⇒ The Holy Spirit witnesses to Christ by working signs, wonders, and miracles through the believer.

“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:16-21).

“By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus” (Acts 4:30).

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?” (Heb.2:3-4).

Note something else of importance: the Holy Spirit is given “to them that obey Him.” His wonderful presence and power, guidance and care, purpose and mission can become anyone’s—anyone who will *obey* Him. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 5:32.)

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(5:32) **Obedience—Belief:** the Holy Spirit is given to “them that obey Him.” Note how the word *obedience* is used instead of *believe*. To believe is to *obey*. They are one and the same. If a person believes, he obeys. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.2:24 for more discussion.)

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Lk.11:13).

“Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way” (Jn.4:50).

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb.5:9).

**4** (5:32-40) **Obedience:** the disciple must be loyal; he must obey God because God has a will that must be done. God has a plan and a will to be done upon earth, and His providence and power work it out to see that it is done. This is the point of the story of these verses. The disciples had just been witnessing to the will of God for the world (v.30-31).

1. God's will was rejected and opposed by the unthinking men of the world. Note that both evil and religious leaders were guilty of not thinking, of acting upon emotion and prejudice instead of reason. Apparently most of the civil and religious leaders were...

- "cut to the heart" (die pronto); that is, their hearts were sawn in two, into two parts, through and through. The idea is they were cut to the heart—not with conviction but with anger, wrath, rage, and reaction against the apostles.
- "took counsel" (eboulonto); that is, they were minded, were intending; were set on killing the disciples.

2. God's will is recognized by thinking men of the world. Not all men in the world act upon emotion and personal desires. Some are rational, controlled, and governed by higher purposes than self-interest. Gamaliel was such a man. He was one of the most famous Jewish teachers of all time, and he saw something the unthinking men of the world were missing.

- a. God's will and plan can be seen in world events and revolution. Gamaliel gave two examples (see DEEPER STUDY # 5—Acts 5:36-37).
- b. What is not of God will come to nothing. If the message and work of Jesus' movement are the idea...
  - of deceivers,
  - of revolutionaries,
  - of self-seeking men,
  - of insane men.
  - of foolish thinking men,
  - of power hungry men,
  - of politically motivated men,

...they will be frustrated and exposed by God Himself. God will not let any idea or work or movement *stand forever* that is not of Him.

Note: Gamaliel's philosophy was correct. Everything that is not of God is doomed. But Gamaliel's philosophy had one flaw. Evil ideas and works, deceivers and self-seekers are not necessarily destroyed in the short run—eventually, yes, but not necessarily quickly. Evil is sometimes allowed to reign in order to awaken men to their need for God and His deliverance.

- c. What is of God cannot be overthrown. This is an eternal maxim or rule. God's will and work cannot be overthrown, not totally or finally. The world may try; it may achieve what appears to be temporary success. But God causes the spark and life of His Word to catch fire in the heart of someone else. His Word and life, the glorious message of His Son whom He has "exalted to be a Prince and a Savior," cannot be extinguished. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the Lord's church no matter how great a force of evil is launched by the world against it.

**"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt.16:18).**

This was the advice of Gamaliel, the thinking man of the world, to the others on the counsel. Leave those who believe in Jesus alone. Let them go about doing the good they are doing. Reap the benefits of their ministry.

- ⇒ If they are not of God, they will soon disappear from the scene.
- ⇒ If they are of God, all the forces of the world cannot overthrow them. You will *be found fighting against God Himself*.

The counsel agreed and had the apostles beaten or scourged for preaching the name of Jesus (see note—Lk.18:32-33). They then issued the law once again. The name of Jesus Christ was not to be preached.

**Thought 1.** Note this about the will of God: a man who opposes Jesus and His servant is fighting against God Himself.

**"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Mt.12:30).**

**"And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4).**

**"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Ro.2:5).**

**"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about" (Ps.32:9-10).**

**"He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Pr.29:1).**

**"If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart" (Mal.2:2).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 4**

(5:34) **Gamaliel:** Gamaliel was one of the most outstanding teachers in Jewish history. His name means *the reward of God*.

1. He was a Pharisee (see DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Pharisees*—Acts 23:8).
2. He was the grandson of Hillel, who was the famed founder of the liberal school of Jewish law (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.19:1-12).
3. He was a doctor of law, having secured as much formal training in the law as possible.
4. He was so respected and loved he was given the title “Rabban” (Master). It is said he was the first of only seven men ever given the title.
5. He was a thinking man, an extremely wise man, a man with a firm belief in God and His providence. The present passage indicates this.
6. He was the famed teacher of Saul of Tarsus, later to become Paul the apostle (Acts 22:3). There is a chance that Paul was present at this particular discussion. He was probably a member of the Sanhedrin.

**DEEPER STUDY # 5**

(5:36-37) **Theudas and Judas:** little is really known about these two revolutionaries. The point of their being mentioned is that both led an uprising against the Romans and came to a futile end. It was not in God’s plan for them to succeed, so their efforts came to nothing.

**5** (5:41-42) **Obedience:** the disciple must be loyal; he must obey God because God is able to deliver the obedient through hardship. God delivered the disciples. They had been terribly beaten, but note God’s marvelous deliverance.

1. God stirred within the persecuted heart a sense of privilege. They *counted* themselves privileged to suffer shame for Christ.
2. God stirred within the persecuted heart a sense of joy and rejoicing.
3. God stirred within the persecuted heart a sense of courage and mission. They continued *daily* in the temple, teaching and preaching. Despite the opposition, they were compelled to share the glorious news of the gospel: God had sent His Son into the world to save men (cp. v.30-31).

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22; cp. Mt.5:11; Heb.11:25).

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:17).

“And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God” (Ph.1:28; cp. Jas.5:10; 1 Pt.2:20).

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (Jas.1:2-4).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13; cp. Acts 16:23).

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pt.5:10).

| CHAPTER 6   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>1 A problem arose—some wid-ows were being neglected</b><br/>                     a. Bc. of rapid growth<br/>                     b. Bc. of cliques or different groups<br/>                     c. Bc. of little help<br/>                     d. Bc. not organized<br/>                     e. Bc. of favoritism</p> <p><b>2 The democratic recommendation</b><br/>                     a. Involve the whole church<br/>                     b. Allow the apostles to concentrate on the Word<br/>                     c. Let others minister<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p><b>3 The required qualifications</b><br/>                     a. An honest reputation<br/>                     b. Full of the Holy Spirit</p> | <p><b>N. The First Administrative Problem: The First Deacons, 6:1-7</b></p> <p>And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.</p> <p>2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.</p> <p>3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,</p> | <p>whom we may appoint over this business.</p> <p>4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.</p> <p>5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:</p> <p>6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.</p> <p>7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.</p> | <p>c. Full of wisdom</p> <p><b>4 The basic purpose: To relieve ministers</b><br/>                     a. For prayer<br/>                     b. For the Word of God</p> <p><b>5 The chosen deacons</b></p> <p><b>6 The official ordination</b><br/>                     a. Included prayer<br/>                     b. Included laying on of hands<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p><b>7 The glorious results</b><br/>                     a. The Word spread<br/>                     b. The church grew<br/>                     c. Some priests were converted</p> |

**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**N. The First Administrative Problem: The First Deacons, 6:1-7**

(6:1-7) **Introduction:** this passage is about the birth of the deacons, a whole new level of ministry in the church. Note the office of the deacons was set up to meet a need in the church for day to day ministry. The head ministers had to have help in order to fulfill their preaching mission.

1. A problem arose—some widows were being neglected (v.1).
2. The democratic recommendation (v.2).
3. The required qualifications (v.3).
4. The basic purpose: to relieve ministers (v.4).
5. The chosen deacons (v.5).
6. The official ordination (v.6).
7. The glorious results (v.7).

**1** (6:1) **Division—Grumbling—Criticism:** a problem arose in the church. Some widows were being neglected. Two groups or cliques were seen in the church, and one was complaining and grumbling about the actions of the other. One group felt its needs were not being met; it was not getting a due share of the attention and care it deserved. There were five reasons for the division.

1. The church had grown rapidly. When any organization grows rapidly, all kinds of problems arise, and most of the problems center around how to handle the growth. The church needed to minister to the new members, but it was having difficulty handling and reaching out to everyone. The head ministers, that is, the apostles, could not get to everyone.
2. There were different groups or cliques coming into the church.
  - ⇒ There were the Hebrews, the Jews who were born and reared in Palestine. They spoke Aramaic, the language that had come down from their ancient Hebrew language. They rejected all Gentile and Greek culture completely, and used only the Hebrew Bible in its original Hebrew language. The significant point to note is this: the Hebrew or Palestinian Jews were so inclusive and closely-knit, they despised all Gentiles and Gentile culture. They actually despised and cursed the Gentiles, believing that the Gentiles were cursed eternally by God. This hatred even included the Grecian Jews who had been relocated to other lands by the Romans.
  - ⇒ There were the Grecian Jews who were known as the Hellenists. These were Jews who had been scattered, deported, and dispersed all over the world by the Romans. Many of them would return for the great Feasts of Pentecost and the Passover. Apparently some had been converted on the day of Pentecost or thereafter, and had either delayed their return home or decided to move back to Jerusalem.

The Grecian or Hellenist Jews had adopted Greek culture, spoke the Greek language, and used and read the Greek Bible (the *Septuagint*). It is probably this that lay at the root of the problem mentioned here. The Hebrew Jews, having always been taught to reject and despise anything Grecian, were probably having difficulty getting rid of all their prejudice. No doubt, God had worked in their hearts to cleanse them of prejudice, but they apparently were still hanging on to some feelings against the Hellenists. Perhaps they felt that the Hellenists or Grecian Jews were not due as much attention or as many rights as they were.

## ACTS 6:1-7

**Thought 1.** People do and will form groups and cliques. But we must always be open and accepting, outgoing and friendly, giving and helping, humble and undeserving before each other, ministering and receiving ministry from all.

**Thought 2.** Cliques and groups are dangerous. There are sins common to cliques that must be guarded against, the sins of...

- being exclusive and shutting others out.
- feeling superior and above others.
- believing one has more rights than others.
- thinking one is due more attention than others.

3. The leaders of the church did not have enough help to look after every member. Note two things that are essential when this problem arises.

- a. The church must secure more help. It must seek out people who sense the hand of God upon them, calling them to minister and care for others.
- b. The members must be willing to quit demanding so much of the head minister, to accept the ministry of other men who are called to minister to the flock of God.

Now note a critical point: there was division in the church—grumbling and complaining and griping. Why? The lack of enough leaders to meet *all the needs*. The lack of enough leadership, of enough workers will always cause division. Some will always feel they are neglected.

4. The church was not adequately organized to minister to all. The leadership centered only upon the apostles. There was the need for another whole level of ministers, ministers who could reach out to every single member.

5. There was apparently some favoritism being shown. Most if not all of the food being distributed to the needy was being handled by the Hebrew Jews. The Grecian Jews felt that their needy were being neglected and that favoritism was being shown to those who had need among the Hebrew or Palestinian Jews.

### **2** (6:2) Church—Leaders: the democratic recommendation.

1. The leaders (apostles) called the whole church together. Note: they did not deny the problem, but they graciously acknowledged that the problem might (or did) exist. The leaders knew how easily people, in particular cliques when they feel neglected, can become suspicious and cause even more problems within the church. The point to see is that the whole church was involved in the decision. The leaders *wisely* sought everyone's...

- thoughts
- advice
- counsel
- understanding
- cooperation
- involvement
- love

2. The leaders declared their primary call and mission. They had to concentrate on the Word of God, its study and proclamation. Note:

- ⇒ their unmistakable sense of call and mission.
- ⇒ their unwillingness to be distracted from their primary mission.
- ⇒ the church's understanding and acceptance of their mission. (How desperately this understanding and acceptance is needed by churches today!)

The apostles could have been easily sidetracked, caught up in day to day ministry—the ministry of sitting and listening, serving and meeting the needs of the needy. Such needs must be met; it is the church's duty to minister and meet them. If the church had been smaller, the apostles could have met the needs themselves. But when the church became large, there were just too many people.

**Thought 1.** There is a breaking point at which ministers must put up a guard and protect their primary call to proclaim the Word of God. They *must* above all else have time to *prepare* and *preach* and *teach* the Word.

**“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops” (Mt.10:27).**

**“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph.3:7-8).**

**“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim.1:11-12).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

3. The leaders suggested others be appointed to minister to the needy. Note: this was a suggestion for a whole new level of ministers. Up to this point, the leaders of the church were the apostles. Now a new office was being created to help in the work of the ministry.

**“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest” (Mt.9:37-38).**

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (Jn.4:35-36).

“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building” (1 Cor.3:8-9).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(6:2) **Deacons:** note the words “serve tables” (diakonein trapezais). The word “serve” (diakonein) means to minister, to serve, to wait upon. The men were being chosen to minister, to look after the needy (widows) of the church. They, of course, would not be running to those in need and spending just a few minutes and then turning right around and running out. They would be visiting and taking time to share and minister to those who had need.

The word *diakonein* is used of ministers throughout the New Testament, both preachers of the Word and deacons who serve as ministers in meeting the day to day needs of the flock (cp. Acts 6:4; 12:25; 21:19; Ro.11:13). The deacons were being chosen to minister as much as the apostles, but in a different area of concentration.

This does not mean the apostles never met day-to-day needs of the flock, nor that the deacons never shared the Word. Both apostles and deacons served in both areas, however each *concentrated* upon their primary call and mission. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Deacon*—1 Tim.3:8-13 for more discussion.)

**3** (6:3) **Deacons, Qualifications:** the required qualifications. (See outline, notes and DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Tim.3:8-13 for more discussion.) Note: the apostles had a recommendation. Very wisely, they had met and discussed the division and complaint among themselves. The committee work among the leaders of the church had taken place. Now the recommendation was ready for the whole congregation to consider. Seven men needed to be appointed to handle this ministry. (As mentioned, a whole new level of ministry was being created in the church.)

The qualifications are listed. Note: they all center upon spiritual qualities, upon the spiritual maturity of the men.

1. An honest report (martuoumenous): well attested; well reported of; bearing a good witness; having a good reputation. The deacon’s character was to be proven and beyond reproach. They were to be men of integrity, faithful and trustworthy; moral and upright, men trusted by all.

“And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise [testimony, reputation] is in the gospel throughout all the churches” (2 Cor.8:18).

“Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (1 Tim.3:8-9).

“A good name is better than precious ointment” (Eccl.7:1).

2. Full of the Holy Spirit. The deacon was to be conscious of Christ dwelling within him, aware of being filled with the fruit of the Spirit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).

“Be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph.3:19).

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph.5:18-19).

3. Full of wisdom: able to discern, see through, make judgments. This was especially needed now in handling the division that had arisen in the church. Improper handling by unwise men could only add fuel to the fire, causing further friction and tension.

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor.2:12-13).

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col.1:9).

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (Jas.3:17).

“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (1 Jn.2:20).

**4** (6:4) **Ministers—Prayer—Word of God:** the basic purpose of the deacon is to relieve the head minister(s) for prayer and the ministry of the Word. Note two significant points.

1. The great ministries of the church are twofold: prayer and the ministry of the Word. All else, as needful as some of them may be, must be secondary to these two great ministries. Therefore, the head minister must give his life to these two ministries and not be distracted or diverted from them.

⇒ It is in prayer that the believer reaches up and talks to God. Above all others the leader must live on his face before God, sharing with God and pleading with Him on behalf of the dear flock of God.

“What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mt.26:40-41. See Deeper Studies # 1-10—Mt.6:9-13; Eph.3:14-21 for what and how to pray.)

“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk.18:1).

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Th.5:17).

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).

“For this cause we also...do not cease to pray for you” (Col.1:9. Cp. v.9-11.)

“Wherefore also we pray always for you” (2 Th.1:11. Cp. v.11-12.)

⇒ It is in the Word that God speaks to the minister, to the flock, and to the world. The minister must spend hours and days seeking God, finding out what God wants to say to him, the church and the world.

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries [gospel, Word] of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:1-2).

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:1-2).

“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim.4:15-16).

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).

**Thought 1.** Imagine what a difference there would be if ministers so lived in prayer and in the Word of God! May the lay believers of the world *allow* and *insist* that the ministers of God get on their faces before God in prayer and in His Word.

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).

2. Note the word “continually” (proskarteresomen). It means to continue steadfastly; to persevere; to continue on and on, sticking to it. The minister is to pray and pray and study and study and share and share, preaching and teaching the Word—*without letting up*. He is to be steadfast, persevering, continuing on and on in both prayer and in the Word.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).

“[Christ] whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col.1:28).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb.12:1).

“Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (Jas.5:11).

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.1:13).

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).

“Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev.3:11).

“But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day” (Josh.23:8).

**5** (6:5) **Unity—Love—Humility:** the chosen deacons. Note four significant points.

1. The church acted in love and humility. Neither the apostles nor anyone else had ruffled feelings. The apostles and Hebrew believers (thousands of them) responded in love and humility. Everyone of the seven men chosen were *Grecian Jews*. Their names were Greek, not Jewish. The *largest* segment of the church had humbled itself to the minority. What an example!

2. “The whole *multitude*” of believers was pleased. The body had been reunited as one in spirit and purpose, worship and ministry.

3. The fact that they were all Grecian believers points toward God moving the church out into the whole world. Christ had commissioned the first disciples to go into the whole world (Mt.28:19-20; Acts 1:8). Now, He was providen-

tially preparing the church for the day that was soon to come, the day of persecution that would scatter the believers all over the world (Acts 8:1-4). These seven men, being Grecian ministers, could touch the Gentile world wherever they went—by language, by training, and by culture. God was preparing the church without their knowing it for the day when they were to be scattered all over the world.

**Thought 1.** Believers must be rooted in *love and humility* so that God may use them in His eternal plan to reach the world for His dear Son.

**“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5).**

**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28).**

**“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor.13:11).**

**“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:1-3).**

**“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:2-4).**

4. The men chosen were unknown except for Stephen and Philip (see notes—Acts 6:8-15; 8:5-25). The point to note is that they were men who had the qualities given in verse three.

Note the name Nicolas, a Jewish proselyte. He was a Gentile who had been converted to Judaism and then to Christ. Some try to connect him with the Nicolaitians who went off on a doctrinal error and created a sect. There is no basis for this. In fact, the likelihood is that he was instrumental in starting the church at Antioch, one of the greatest churches of all time (cp. Acts 11:19-30).

**6** (6:6) **Ordination:** the official ordination. This was a definite service, a specific moment when the newly elected men were set apart for their ministry. Before this moment they were not serving in the capacity with which they were now being charged. Hereafter, after the ordaining service, they were to minister to the flock of God and meet the flock’s day to day needs. Note three steps in the service.

1. The church “set” the men apart, set them before the apostles.

2. The church went to prayer; the ministers (apostles) led all in prayer.

3. The ministers (apostles) laid their hands upon the newly appointed deacons. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 6:6 for discussion.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(6:6) **Laying On Of Hands:** this was a significant symbol for blessing (Mt.19:13-15); for healing (Mk.5:23; 6:5); for imparting the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17-19; 9:6, 17); and for ordaining and commissioning men to the ministry.

**“Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them” (Acts 6:6).**

**“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:2-3).**

**“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery” (1 Tim.4:14).**

**“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Tim.1:6).**

**7** (6:7) **Ministers—Church:** the glorious results were threefold.

1. The Word of God increased as never before. The apostles were freed to concentrate on prayer and the Word. There was a new power in their witnessing and teaching.

2. The church grew. Many more people were reached with the glorious gospel.

3. Some priests, a great number, were being reached for Christ. Note the words, they “were obedient to the faith.” They were obedient in both *receiving* Christ and in *following* Christ. They *embraced* the gospel and *lived* the gospel.

**“By whom [Christ] we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name” (Ro.1:5).**

**“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).**

**“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

## ACTS 6:8-15

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>1 A man full of faith &amp; power, doing great works for God<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p><b>2 A man who defended the faith</b></p> <p><b>3 A man fiercely resisted, falsely so</b><br/>a. Men were bribed to lie</p> | <p><b>O. The First Martyr, Stephen (Scene I): A Model Man, 6:8-15</b></p> <p>8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.</p> <p>9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.</p> <p>10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.</p> <p>11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.</p> <p>12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,</p> <p>13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:</p> <p>14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.</p> <p>15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.</p> | <p>against him</p> <p>b. The people &amp; leaders were stirred up against him</p> <p>c. He was arrested &amp; put on trial</p> <p>d. He was falsely accused</p> <p>1) Of blasphemy against the temple &amp; the law</p> <p>2) Of preaching the destruction of the temple &amp; of Jewish custom</p> <p><b>4 A man of great communion—surrounded by the Lord’s presence</b></p> |
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### DIVISION II

#### THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60

##### O. The First Martyr, Stephen (Scene I): A Model Man, 6:8-15

(6:8-15) **Introduction—Stephen the Deacon, the First Martyr:** Stephen was a layman, an extraordinary layman, a great servant of God. His name means a *crow*n. Note these facts about him. He was...

- full of faith (Acts 6:8).
- full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3, 5, 10).
- full of grace (Acts 6:8).
- full of power (Acts 6:8).
- full of wisdom (Acts 6:3, 10).
- a man of great reputation or testimony (Acts 6:3).
- a man of great works (Acts 6:8).
- a great defender of the faith (Acts 6:10).
- the first deacon of the church (Acts 6:5).
- the first martyr of the church (Acts 7:59-60; 22:20).

1. A man full of faith and power, doing great works for God (v.8).
2. A man who defended the faith (v.9-10).
3. A man fiercely resisted, falsely so (v.11-14).
4. A man of great communion—surrounded by the Lord’s presence (v.15).

**1** (6:8) **Stephen:** Stephen was a man full of faith (grace) and power, doing great works for God. The word “faith” is *grace* in the best Greek manuscripts, and is probably accurate since Stephen’s great faith has already been mentioned (v.5).

1. He was full of grace (*charitos*) (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Grace*—Tit.2:11-15). By grace is meant...
  - God’s love, favor, gifts, and blessings.
  - a godly, gracious character and behavior.

“I thank my God always on our behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge” (1 Cor.1:4-5).

“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation [behavior] in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (2 Cor.1:12).

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Eph.3:7).

“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.1:14).

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:11-13).

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (Jas.4:6).

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pt.4:10).

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pt.5:5).

2. He was full of power. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Power*—Acts 6:8).

3. He did great wonders and miracles. God’s grace and power were upon him. Both grace and power (the Holy Spirit) are necessary before a person can serve God effectively. Note that Stephen was a deacon and a layman: a dynamic example that should challenge all!

“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease” (Mt.10:1).

“And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils” (Mk.3:14-15).

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mk.16:17-18).

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

“To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit” (1 Cor.12:9).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(6:8) **Power** (dunameos): the believer’s power is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit within him. The believer has no spiritual power of himself. The power is of the Holy Spirit alone.

*The Holy Spirit is the Divine ...*

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| • Presence | • Might    |
| • Power    | • Strength |
| • Force    | • Energy   |

*...who lives and acts through the believer. The Holy Spirit is the One Who...*

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| • influences | • produces |
| • controls   | • effects  |

*...the work of God both within and through the believer. It is not man, but the Holy Spirit alone who has the power to save and mature and work miracles among men.*

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power” (Eph.1:19).

“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph.3:16).

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).

“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col.1:11).

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake” (1 Th.1:5).

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim.1:7).

“But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin” (Mic.3:8).

“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zech.4:6).

**2** (6:9-10) **Faith, Defending:** Stephen was a man who defended the faith. Note three points.

1. Stephen preached in several of the synagogues throughout Jerusalem (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Synagogue*—Mt.4:23). All of the synagogues listed are Grecian names. Sometime around A.D. 19 the Roman emperor, Tiberius, had expelled all

Jews from Rome. Many of them had returned to their homeland, some settling in Jerusalem. When they returned, because of their common language and culture, they clung together, starting their worship centers or synagogues.

The point to see is that this dynamic layman grasped every opportunity he could to preach. At every opportunity Stephen was travelling all over the city, preaching Christ to the Grecian Jews.

2. Note the word “arose” (anestesan, v.9), which means *stood up*. Five synagogues in particular stood up against Stephen. They opposed what he was preaching. There was a strong reason for the opposition of the Grecian Jews. They and their forefathers had been forcibly deported out of their homeland and scattered across the world by the Romans. While living in the foreign lands of the world, they had remained faithful to their Jewish religion. The message of Jesus Christ was a threat to them and their religion. For example, Stephen was preaching that...

- Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of the world. Animal sacrifices, therefore, were no longer needed.
- Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man; man was now to worship God in spirit and truth through Christ and Him alone. Earthly priests, therefore, were no longer mediators who stood between God and man. They were the ministers and servants of God to the flock of God, but not mediators.

The Grecian Jews saw that the preaching of Jesus as the supreme sacrifice and mediator went against everything they had been taught and stood for. They did not see Jesus as the fulfillment of the law nor as the Liberator of man, but they saw Him as the destroyer of the law and of everything they held precious. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.12:10 for discussion of why the Jews opposed Jesus so greatly.) Therefore, they *stood up* and argued against Stephen. Note the picture: they *stood up* right in the middle of Stephen’s preaching and began to dispute him. The picture is that they did this several times (v.10).

3. Stephen was filled with wisdom and with the Spirit of God in defending the faith. Note the exact words of the Scripture.

- ⇒ “They disputed with Stephen”: they *were able* to resist and argue with him.
- ⇒ “They *were not able* to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.”

They could stand against Stephen, but they could not stand against the Holy Spirit who was in him and speaking through him. The Holy Spirit was supplying the answers, the thoughts and the words to say.

**“For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay [refute, answer] nor resist” (Lk.21:15).**

**“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas.1:5).**

4. Saul of Tarsus, who was to become the great apostle Paul, was probably a member of the Libertine or Cilician synagogue. Saul was from Tarsus of Cilicia and was now in Jerusalem. He was certainly attending some synagogue, so he was probably attending the one of his own countrymen. However, he had also been born of a *freed man*, so he could have been a member of the Libertine (Latin word meaning a freed man or the son of a freed man). Most likely he was one of those who suffered defeat in arguing with Stephen and became so hostile against him. Paul was certainly aware of the message Stephen preached. He was the one who took charge of Stephen’s murder (Acts 7:58; 8:1).

**Thought 1.** Men often do stand against believers, but the man who opposes and argues against the believer’s witness is resisting the Holy Spirit, not the believer.

**“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51).**

**“Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about” (Ps.32:9-10).**

**“Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry” (Is.46:12-13).**

**“And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction” (Jer.32:33).**

**“If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart” (Mal.2:2).**

**Thought 2.** The Holy Spirit gives the genuine believer the thoughts and words to say in bearing witness to the world. But note: not every witness is of the Spirit. A person must be under the control of the Spirit just as Stephen was. (See note, *Stephen*—Acts 6:8-15.)

**“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn.14:26).**

**“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (Jn.15:26).**

**“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And**

when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment because the prince of this world is judged” (Jn.16:7-11).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).

**3** (6:11-14) **Persecution:** Stephen was a man fiercely resisted, falsely so. The synagogues were so angered at Stephen they bribed men to lie against him, stirring up the people and the leaders against him. They arrested and dragged him to court before the Sanhedrin, putting him on trial for his life. Note these points.

1. The word “stirred up” (sunekinesan) means to shake as a volcano; to move and rock together as with a violent shaking. This was the first time the people themselves were aroused against the disciples.

2. The words “came upon him” (epistantes) mean they rushed at him in fury, anger, and violence.

3. The word “caught” (sunerpasan) means to seize with much violence. The picture is that they seized and literally dragged him to court (cp. Lk.8:29; Acts 19:29; 27:15).

4. The charges against Stephen were threefold.

a. Blasphemy against the temple. The Jews had always taught that God dwelt in the temple. The temple was the very center of His presence. Stephen was preaching that God *now* dwelt in the hearts and lives of people, and not just in the temple. The hearts of God’s people were now the very special place where God’s presence dwelt. God does fill the temple; in fact, He fills the whole earth with His presence. But now, Jesus Christ has made it possible for God to fill the hearts of men with the presence of His Spirit, and His presence is permanent. The believer’s body can now become the temple of the Holy Spirit. (See outline and notes—Jn.14:15-26; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:1-4. Cp. 1 Cor.6:19-20.)

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

Note this: Stephen was not saying that God no longer dwells in the temple. God does dwell *in* His church, the place sanctified, *set apart* for Him (see note—1 Cor.3:16-17 for discussion).

**“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor.3:16-17).**

**“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor.6:16).**

**“In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph.2:21-22).**

b. Blasphemy against the law. By law the Jews meant the Scribal Law, all the commentaries and interpretations of the Scripture. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Scribes*—Lk.6:2; DEEPER STUDY # 4—6:7 for discussion.) Stephen was preaching that Christ fulfills the law. God’s law is not destroyed; contrariwise, it is fulfilled in Christ. Christ is now the Ideal, the Pattern, the Standard which we are to follow. The law is not erased, not annulled. The law is now found embraced in the life of Christ. Man’s standard is the law and much more; it is the Living Lord Himself. He fulfills and embraces the law and much more. Man’s standard is no longer just prohibitions and commandments, no longer just writing and words. Man’s standard is now the Life of God Himself, the embodiment of love and liberty as well as of law and demands.

**“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Ro.3:21-22).**

c. Preaching the destruction of the temple and of Jewish customs. This is a repeat of the above. The emphasis is that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was to destroy the temple and customs of the people. The point to note is that the charges were false. Stephen was preaching that Christ fulfills man’s need for God and for salvation.

⇒ Man’s need for God’s presence is now abundantly fulfilled in Christ. Through Christ, God now lives in the very hearts and lives of believers.

⇒ Man’s need to know how to live is now abundantly fulfilled in Christ. He embraces all the law and much more, and by such He is now the standard of God for all men. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.5:17; note—Ro.5:1.)

**“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mt.5:17).**

**“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:3).**

**4** (6:15) **Stephen:** Stephen was a man of great communion; he was surrounded by God's presence. Note: all the council members saw God's presence upon Stephen's face. The words "face of an angel" refers to some splendor, glow, shining radiance—some glory that was present. Apparently, God gave Stephen some special glory (presence) of Himself that had been experienced...

- by Moses

**"And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him" (Ex.34:30).**

**"But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away" (2 Cor.3:7).**

- by Christ

**"And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Mt.17:2).**

**"And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering" (Lk.9:29).**

**"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor.3:18).**

**"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Ph.2:15).**

**"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you" (1 Pt.4:14).**

**"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan.12:3).**

CHAPTER 7

**P. The First Martyr (Stephen)  
(Scene II): The Tragic  
History of Israel, 7:1-53**

Then said the high priest, Are these things so?

2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.

6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.

7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him

governor over Egypt and all his house.

11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our father found no sustenance.

12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,

16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.

17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

19 The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

25 For he supposed his bret-

b. God delivered Joseph

c. God saved the forefathers, that is, the patriarchs

d. The forefathers desired to be buried in the promised land

**4 The second rejection & deliverance: The people rejected God's second chosen servant, Moses**

a. God prepared to save the people to fulfill His promise  
1) Used evil Pharaoh  
2) Used an evil event

b. God protected and prepared the chosen child, Moses

c. God's servant acted in Israel's behalf<sup>ps3</sup>

d. God's servant was

**1 Stephen on trial—defended himself**

**2 The birth of Israel: The promise to Abraham—an inheritance & a possession**

a. The God of glory called Abraham<sup>ps1</sup>

b. God promised a land for an eternal inheritance—if Abraham would give up his old life for the “promised land”

c. God promised the land, but as a future inheritance not a present possession

1) God never gave Abraham any land  
2) God did not give Ab. a son until he was 100 years old

d. God told Abraham “his seed” would be “sojourners” upon earth

1) Held in bondage  
2) Treated with evil for 400 years

e. Abraham's faith would be rewarded: God would deliver “his seed” and bring them to the promised land to serve God

f. God assured Abraham with a covenant, with the covenant of circumcision

**3 The first rejection & deliverance: The forefathers rejected God's chosen servant<sup>ps2</sup>**

a. The forefathers of Israel rejected God's plan & schemed against God's chosen servant, Joseph

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| <p>misunderstood &amp; rejected</p> <p>1) They misunderstood</p> <p>2) They rejected him as ruler &amp; judge over them</p> <p>3) They did away with him—forced him to flee for his life</p> <p><b>5 The third rejection &amp; deliverance: Planned by God through Moses</b></p> <p>a. God prepared to save His people again: He called His servant</p> <p>1) It was an act of grace alone, v.30</p> <p>2) It was God who called Moses</p> <p>3) It was holy ground upon which Moses stood</p> <p>b. God commissioned His servant to save the people</p> <p>c. God sent His servant on a special mission</p> <p>1) To be a ruler &amp; deliverer</p> <p>2) To predict a</p> | <p>ren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.</p> <p>26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?</p> <p>27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?</p> <p>28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?</p> <p>29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.</p> <p>30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.</p> <p>31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,</p> <p>32 Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.</p> <p>33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.</p> <p>34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.</p> <p>35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.</p> <p>36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.</p> <p>37 This is that Moses, which</p> | <p>said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.</p> <p>38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:</p> <p>39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,</p> <p>40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.</p> <p>41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.</p> <p>42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?</p> <p>43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.</p> <p>44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.</p> <p>45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;</p> <p>46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.</p> <p>47 But Solomon built him an house.</p> | <p>unique Deliverer &amp; Prophet who was yet to come</p> <p>3) To bring the living oracles of God to the church (Israel) in the wilderness<sup>DS4</sup></p> <p>d. God &amp; Moses were disobeyed &amp; rejected</p> <p>1) Heart turned away from God back to Egypt (the world)</p> <p>2) Turned to idols</p> <p><b>6 The charges against the people (Israel)</b></p> <p>a. People did not worship God, but false gods</p> <p>1) Worshipped the “host of heaven”</p> <p>2) Results: God turned &amp; gave them up</p> <p>b. People did not carry the tabernacle of God, but of false gods</p> <p>1) Moloch<sup>DS5</sup> &amp; Remphan<sup>DS6</sup></p> <p>2) Result: The people were conquered</p> <p>c. The people were inexcusable: Because they were greatly blessed</p> <p>1) They had the tabernacle of God’s presence</p> <p>2) They had the presence &amp; favor of God in great leaders</p> <p>3) They had the temple</p> |
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| <p>d. The people did not understand the temple—God is not limited only to one particular place</p> | <p>48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,<br/>49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?<br/>50 Hath not my hand made all these things?</p> | <p>ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.<br/>52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:<br/>53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.</p> | <p>f. The people persecuted all the prophets, the very ones who predicted the coming of the Just One (Christ)<br/>g. The people fulfilled the prophecy: Killed the Just One<br/>h. The people did not keep the law</p> |
| <p>e. The people resisted the Holy Spirit</p>  | <p>51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears,</p>  |   |  |

DIVISION II

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60

P. The First Martyr, Stephen (Scene II): The Tragic History of Israel, 7:1-53

(7:1-53) **Introduction:** Stephen defended himself, but not by offering a legal defense. He defended himself by proclaiming the glorious mercy and grace of God throughout Israel’s history. He showed how Israel rejected God time and time again; nevertheless, God reached out to deliver the nation after each rejection.

1. Stephen on trial—defended himself (v.1).
2. The birth of Israel: the promise to Abraham—an inheritance and a possession (v.2-8).
3. The first rejection and deliverance: the forefathers rejected God’s chosen servant (v.9-16).
4. The second rejection and deliverance: the people rejected God’s chosen servant, Moses (v.17-29).
5. The third rejection and deliverance: the great deliverance planned by God through Moses (v.30-41).
6. The charges against the people (Israel) (v.42-53).

**1** (7:1) **Stephen:** Stephen was on trial for his life. The charges had been made: he was accused of insurrection, of preaching that the sacred institutions of the nation were to be destroyed, that is, the land, the temple, the law, and the customs (v.11-15).

Stephen defended himself by reviewing Israel’s history and making the following points. (Note that Stephen’s defense was a sermon; he preached the gospel to the court.)

1. The nation and its sacred institutions (the land, the law, and the temple) were being destroyed, but not by Christ. They were being destroyed by the people themselves. From the beginning they had always misunderstood and rejected God’s plan. (See outline points 2-4.)
2. God loved Israel—He loved Israel so much that in every instance of misunderstanding and rejection, He had worked out a deliverance. (See outline points 2-4.)
3. God’s final plan of deliverance was Jesus Christ, His own Son. But as in the past, the present generation had misunderstood and rejected Him. (See v.52.)

**2** (7:2-8) **Abraham—Israel—Promised Land:** the birth of Israel, the call and promise to Abraham—an inheritance and a possession. Stephen began his defense (his sermon) from the very beginning of the nation’s history. Note the emphasis upon God. God gave birth to Israel—of this there can be no doubt.

1. God appeared to Abraham and called Abraham (v.2). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.4:1-25 for more discussion. Cp. Gen.12:1-5; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; 22:16-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 31:13; 35:9-12; Neh.9:7-8. Cp. Ex.6:8; Lev.20:24; Num.14:8; Dt.6:10; 31:20; Josh.5:6; Judges 2:1.)
  - a. It was the God of glory (ho theos tes doxes) who called Abraham. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 7:2 for discussion.)
  - b. It was “our father Abraham” who was called by God. He was the father of Israel: the first Jew called, the man chosen by God to be the great founder of the nation Israel.

**Thought 1.** Abraham is the great example of faith in the Bible. Men must hear the call of the God of glory even as Abraham did. And men must heed that call.

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Jn.7:37).

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Is.45:22).

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is.55:1).

2. God promised a land, a land for an eternal inheritance—if Abraham would “get out” of his present country and leave all—his past life—for the promised land (v.3-4). Note four facts.
- a. The promised land (Palestine) was promised to Abraham by God. The land was...
    - of God’s own choosing.
    - “the land which I shall show thee” (v.3).
    - an “inheritance” (v.5).
    - “promised” (v.5).
    - to be a “possession” (v.5).
  - b. The land was promised “to his seed after him.” All believers are the seed of Abraham by faith. Abraham is *the father* of all who walk in the steps of faith even as he did. This is made abundantly clear by Scripture (Ro.4:11-13, 16; Gal.3:6-9, 13-14; 6:14-16).
  - c. The land promised to Abraham was Palestine. But the promised land is a type of heaven, of the eternal land promised by God, of the new heavens and earth, of the new Jerusalem. When dealing with the promised land this fact must be always remembered (Ro.4:13; Heb.11:8-16; 12:22; 13:14; 2 Pt.3:3-4, 8-13; Rev.21:1-7, 10-27; 22:1-5, 19).
  - d. The gift of the promised land was conditional. Abraham had to “get out” of his present surroundings and leave all for the promised land. He had to make a choice, a choice between...
    - staying in the world of plenty and comfort (the material world as he knew it), and
    - giving up all for God and His promise of an eternal inheritance.

Abraham made the right choice: “Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans.” God “removed him into this land; wherein ye now dwell.” (Note: Palestine is identified as the land of promise, the type of the promised land of heaven.)

**Thought 1.** Man must do two things.

⇒ Man must “get out” of his present surroundings and leave the world and its material comforts and corruptions.

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph.5:11).

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 Th.3:6).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

⇒ Man must believe in the promise of God, that is, in the “promised land” of heaven.

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb.11:10).

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb.11:13-16).

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels” (Heb.12:22).

“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb.13:14).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Rev.21:1).

3. God promised the land to Abraham and his seed, but it was to be a future inheritance, not a present possession (v.5).
  - a. God never gave Abraham any land, not during his lifetime on earth. Abraham never possessed the land. He never secured his *possession*, his *settlement*, his *resting place*, his *home*—not while he was on earth.
  - b. God never gave Abraham a son until he was incapable of bearing *seed*, well past years—not until he was 100 years old.

**Thought 1.** Note three significant points.

- 1) Abraham had to trust God both for the *promised land* and for *seed*. He could secure neither, not in his own strength.
- 2) Abraham had to *believe* God all his life, even up to the last moment. He had to believe God even as he was slipping out of this world into the next, for he had never possessed a single inch of the promised land. (What a picture of the believer and the promised land of heaven, of the absolute necessity for faith and for believing the glorious promise of God.)
- 3) The gift of the *promised land* and of *the seed* was just that, a *gift* of God's grace. In no way did Abraham ever earn or deserve it. Abraham merely believed and obeyed God.

**“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ro.4:3).**

**“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world [of the new heavens and earth], was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Ro.4:13).**

**“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Ro.4:20-21).**

4. God told Abraham “his seed” would be sojourners upon earth (v.6. Cp. Gen.15:13-14). His seed would not possess the land, not for a long time, not for some hundreds of years. They were to be enslaved.

**Thought 1.** Note the picture painted of the believer: the believer is as a *sojourner* upon the earth. While a *sojourner* on earth the believer is subject to the bondages (sin and death) and evil treatment of the world.

**“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb.11:13).**

**“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).**

**“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pt.2:11-12).**

5. God told Abraham his faith would be rewarded: God would deliver “his seed” and bring them to the promised land to serve God (v.7).

**Thought 1.** Faith will be rewarded, abundantly so. Abraham's *seed*, the believer, will be brought to the promised land of heaven. Note why: to serve God.

**“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt.25:23).**

**“And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath” (Lk.12:42-44).**

**“Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me” (Lk.22:28-29).**

**“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Cor.6:2-3).**

**“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim.4:6-8).**

**“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb.12:28).**

**“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:13-14).**

6. God assured Abraham with a covenant, the covenant of circumcision (v 8). Circumcision was the *seal* of Abraham's faith, just as baptism is the *seal* of the believer's faith. Circumcision was the sign that Abraham was truly trusting God and His promise (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Circumcision*—Ph.3:3).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(7:2) **God of Glory** (ho theos tes doxes): God who possesses and manifests glory; God of the manifested glory, of the outward and visible glory; God who reveals glory. It is the Shekinah glory, the visible splendor, radiance, and brilliance of God's Person which bursts forth from His Supreme Being. The idea is that God appeared and revealed His glory to Abraham. (See note, *Shekinah Glory*—Mt.17:5-8. Note: this throws some light on how God went about calling Abraham. It must have been a visible appearance of God's glory just as Moses and Isaiah and others received.)

**3** (7:9-16) **Rejection—Deliverance:** the first rejection and deliverance. The forefathers rejected God's choice servant, Joseph. Joseph had been chosen by God to save His people, Israel. What happened was this: God had given Abraham a son, Isaac; and Abraham had circumcised him, sealing the fact that Isaac was the child of promise, that is, the promised seed through whom God's people were to be born. From Isaac came the other patriarchs, the first forefathers of the Jewish nation. Eventually Joseph was born, and as stated, Joseph was to be God's choice servant to save His people, Israel. Note four facts. (Cp. Genesis, chapters 37-50.)

1. The forefathers rejected God's plan and schemed against God's choice servant, Joseph. The point is this: from the very first the *fathers* showed...

- that they blinded themselves to God's purpose and plans.
- that they were sinful men, sometimes willing to stand against God's will. Stephen was saying that the present generation was just as guilty as the fathers had been. The same spirit of envy was in their hearts against God's plan, His Messiah and servants (the church).

2. God delivered His choice servant, Joseph (v.10). Joseph had a hard road to travel, being enslaved and imprisoned for years. But "God was with him," strengthening him to go through all the trials. And God delivered him, even to exalting him as governor over Egypt. God overcame the evil of the fathers.

Stephen was saying that God delivered Christ from the evil rejection of the present generation just as He had delivered Joseph.

3. God saved the fathers, that is, the patriarchs (v.11-14). God always works His plan out no matter how much men try to stop it. In the history of the fathers God had used His choice servant, Joseph, to save them, despite the fact that they had rejected him. He had used an affliction—hunger and famine—to force the fathers down to Egypt. In Egypt God had reunited Joseph and his brothers. All the fathers were brought together again and God's plan was back in line.

**Thought 1.** Joseph, the choice son, is a picture or a type of Christ—the choice Son...

- in his being rejected by men (cp. v.52).
- in his forgiving all those who did evil to him.

**"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph.1:7).**

**"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph.4:31-32).**

**Thought 2.** The evil spirit of *envy* is characteristic of man. It was present throughout the history of Israel, and it lives on today (Ro.1:29; Gal.5:21).

**"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (1 Cor.13:4).**

**"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal.5:26).**

Stephen was saying that God's will and plan could not be stopped, no matter what the present generation did against Christ and His followers.

4. The forefathers had desired to be buried in the promised land (v.15-16. Cp. Josh.24:32; cp. Gen.50:13). They had trusted God's promise and had died believing. Therefore, they wanted to be buried in the land, to rest eternally in the great promise of God. (Cp. Heb.11:13-16. See note, pt.2—Acts 7:2-8.)

Stephen was saying that the forefathers had their eye on the promised land, on resting there eternally. They could not have been looking only for a *physical land*. The promise was to them, not only to their *seed*. The promised land was the heavenly land, the eternal land to which Jesus leads.

**"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn.14:2-3).**

**"For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Ph.3:20-21).**

**"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pt.1:3-4).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(7:9) **Envy** (zelosantes): jealousy; to burn and boil; to flame up with envy and jealousy. (See DEEPER STUDY # 6—Ro.1:29.)

**4** (7:17-29) **Rejection—Deliverance**: the second rejection and deliverance. The people misunderstood and rejected God's chosen servant, Moses. (Cp. Exodus, Chapters 1-2.) Note a significant fact: Israel had been in Egypt about four-hundred years. The people had not returned to the promised land, and they had *lost sight* of God's call and promise. They had no plan or intention whatsoever of returning to the promised land. Why? Under Joseph's influence, Pharaoh had given Israel a large, fertile land (Goshen, cp. Gen.47:1, 11-12). And the people had grown enormously, both in numbers and prosperity. Simply put, they had become worldly and perfectly satisfied with what the world had to offer. God and His glorious call to the promised land had been set aside and ignored. The people had become comfortable, complacent, lethargic, worldly, carnal.

Now note what Stephen declared.

1. *God prepared* to save the people and to fulfill His glorious promise to Abraham: "the time of the promise drew nigh" (v.17). The people needed to refocus and to recommit their lives to God and the promised land. But they were not going to do it, not of themselves, not by their own works. They were happy where they were. If they were to be saved, God would have to do it. He would have to act in their behalf; He would have to do it by grace simply because He loved them. They had rejected Him and still were rejecting Him. Therefore, their salvation depended entirely upon God and His marvelous grace. God loves and is gracious, and God wants to save man. Therefore, God moved world events to save His people. He used an evil Pharaoh and an evil event to make Israel willing to leave Egypt.

The new ruler "knew not Joseph"; that is, he cared nothing about some historical event of the past when a few had helped his nation. He was responsible for Egypt, and the Jews were growing into such a large nation, they were becoming a threat. He feared Israel might join forces with some attacking force against Egypt. So he...

- enslaved Israel, taking away all their rights.
- plotted to stop the growth of the nation by killing all the newborn children.

These two events were the events God used to restir Israel's heart. Israel would soon cry out for God and for the promised land.

2. God protected and prepared the chosen child, Moses. (See Exodus, Chapter 2 for the story.) Note: as the child of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses was well educated. The "wisdom of the Egyptian" was well known (1 Ki.4:30). It included science, math, astronomy, and medicine.

3. God's servant acted in Israel's behalf.

- a. Moses was forty years old (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 7:23).
- b. Note: the words "came into his heart" (v.23). Apparently Moses had not associated with the Jews during the forty years; he had lived solely among the Egyptians. But all of a sudden, from the deepest part of his being, the thought of his people and their need for his help rose up in his heart. He was compelled (by divine impulse) to go and visit them.
- c. Moses saw an Egyptian slave mistreating a Jewish slave. He delivered the Jewish slave and killed the Egyptian.

4. God's servant was misunderstood and rejected. Moses thought the Jews would understand and know that God was going to use him to deliver them (v.25). But they did not understand, and they rejected him. This was made abundantly clear on the very next day when he tried to reconcile two Jews who were fighting among themselves. They rejected his leadership, rejected him...

- as their ruler.
- as their judge.

They even threatened to use the fact that he had killed the Egyptian against him if he did not leave them alone and quit meddling in their affairs. This, of course, forced Moses to flee for his life lest Pharaoh imprison him.

Now note Stephen's point. He was...

- saying that as Moses was raised up to be the ruler and judge, so was Christ.
- saying that as Moses was misunderstood and rejected, so are Christ and His followers.

**"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (Jn.15:20).**

**"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Ph.1:29).**

**"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim.3:12).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(7:23) **Moses**: note that Moses had been in the palace of Pharaoh for forty years, cut off from his own people. Moses' life is usually divided into three periods of forty years each.

- ⇒ Forty years in Pharaoh's palace.
- ⇒ Forty years in Midian as a shepherd.
- ⇒ Forty years as the leader of Israel. (He died when he was 120 years old, Dt.34:7.)

**5** (7:30-41) **Rejection—Deliverance**: the third rejection and deliverance—the great deliverance planned by God through His servant. Stephen stressed four points.

1. God prepared to save His people again. Once again, He called His servant Moses (v.30-33).
  - a. God's call was an act of grace alone. The emphasis is upon God and His call of grace, not upon Moses.
    - ⇒ Moses was in "the wilderness," far removed.
    - ⇒ It was God who "appeared" and sought after Moses, not Moses after God.
  - b. It was God who called Moses. The emphasis is again upon God and not Moses. The God who called Moses was the God of the promised land...
    - the God of Abraham.
    - the God of Isaac.
    - the God of Jacob.
  - c. It was holy ground where God met Moses. The emphasis is again upon God not Moses. It was the presence of God that made the ground holy. (Note: wherever God is, the ground is holy.)

Stephen's emphasis could not be missed by the Jewish people...

- they were exalting Moses (the law) above God Himself.
- the promise of God was given long before the law.
- the reason God was calling Moses was to save the people for the promised land, not for the law.
- Moses (the law) was only a part of God's plan. Moses and the law were not the end, not the thing God was after. The promise was the end.
- the temple was not the only holy ground. God's presence was what made ground holy. Therefore, where God is, there is holy ground.

2. God commissioned His servant to save the people (v.34). Again it was God who acted, not the people.
  - It was God who said, "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people," not the people who said, "I have seen, I have seen the promised land of God."
  - It was God who heard their groaning, not the people who heard the groaning of God's heart for His people.
  - It was God who came down to deliver the people, not the people who came to God for deliverance.
  - It was God who sent His servant into Egypt, not the people who raised up a servant to save them.

Stephen's point was well taken. The people failed God at every step. Deliverance and salvation were in the hands of God alone.

3. God sent His servant on a special mission—a mission of extreme importance, a mission that must be understood by the present generation (v.35-38).

- a. God's servant was to be a ruler and a deliverer. This servant was the same who had been rejected. He was God's choice, despite the people's rejection. He came with signs and wonders delivering the people. (Note how Moses is a strong type of Jesus Christ.)
- b. God's servant was to predict a unique Deliverer and Prophet who was to be heard (cp. Dt.18:15). This was Moses' great prophecy of the coming Savior.
- c. God's servant was to bring the living oracles of God to the church of God (Israel) in the wilderness (see note—Acts 7:38).

4. God and Moses were disobeyed and rejected (v.39-41). The people would not obey the "living oracles [Word]" of God. The words "not obey" mean they did not want to obey; their disobedience was deliberate. They rejected both God and His servant. They turned their hearts away from God and back to Egypt (cp. Ex.16:3f; Num.11:4f). The idea of worshipping a calf had come from Egypt. The Egyptians had worshipped two sacred bulls, Apis and Mnevis. (Cp. Ex.32:1f for the story.)

Stephen's point could not be missed. Moses was only a forerunner of Jesus.

- ⇒ Just as Moses had come with signs and wonders to deliver the people, so had Christ.
- ⇒ In fact, Moses had actually predicted the coming of Jesus, the greater Prophet and Savior.
- ⇒ Just as Moses had given the living oracles, the Word of God, to the church in the wilderness, so Jesus had brought the living Word of God to people.

**"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (Jn.12:49-50).**

**"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works....He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (Jn.14:10, 24).**

**"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (Jn.15:15).**

**"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me....And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (Jn.17:8, 26).**

- ⇒ Just as Moses had been rejected, so Jesus was being rejected.

**"He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (Jn.1:11).**

**"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (Jn.5:43-44).**

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn.12:48).

“To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear” (Is.28:12).

“For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not” (Is.30:15).

**DEEPER STUDY # 4**

(7:38) **Israel—Church:** note the word “church” (ekklesia). Israel was God’s church, God’s assembly, God’s congregation in the wilderness. Israel was a type of the church in the world.

**6** (7:42-53) **Israel, Charges Against—Blessings:** the charges against Israel or against the people. The charges are a real eye-opener as to how God saw Israel in the Old Testament.

1. Charge 1: the people (Israel) did not worship God, but worshipped false gods (v.42). They worshipped the “hosts of heaven,” that is, the sun, moon, and stars (for example, the Zodiac, astrology, cosmic forces. Cp. Dt.17:3; 2 Ki.17:16; 21:3; 2 Chron.33:3; Job 31:26-28; Jer.8:2; 19:13). Again this was a carryover of Egyptian idolatry. Note: the charge was dramatic. When Israel was making offerings and sacrifices to God, they were really worshipping false gods. That is, their hearts and thoughts were upon the world (Egypt) and its idols.

God’s response was the same as the people’s act. What they had sown, they were to reap.

⇒ Just as they had turned away from God, He had turned away from them.

⇒ Just as they had given themselves up to worship false gods, God had given them up to do as they pleased. God had given them up to their own lusts.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Ro.1:21-22).

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves” (Ro.1:24).

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Ro.1:26-28.)

2. Charge 2: the people (Israel) did not carry the tabernacle of God, but of false gods (v.43). Publicly and outwardly they were carrying the tabernacle of God wherever they went, but again, their hearts and thoughts were upon false gods. (See DEEPER STUDY # 5,6—Acts 7:43.)

God’s response was to *give them up* to their lusts. Just as they had *carried* the tabernacle with their hearts focused upon false gods, so God had *carried* them and given them up to the captivity of a heathen nation who worshipped false gods (cp. 2 Ki.17:6).

3. Charge 3: the people were inexcusable. Why? Because they were greatly blessed (v.44-47). God had blessed them with three particular things.

a. God had blessed the people with the tabernacle of His presence and testimony. Note that God had shown Moses a “fashion” (tupon), that is, a figure, a pattern, a picture of the tabernacle; and Moses had constructed it after the picture God had shown him.

b. God had blessed the people with His presence and favor in leaders. Joshua, David, and Solomon are mentioned. All three had the favor and blessings of God upon their lives. Therefore, the people were greatly blessed through these leaders.

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Mt.21:43).

c. God had blessed the people with the temple. David had desired to build the temple, but it was Solomon whom God appointed to construct it. (Cp. 1 Kings, chapters 6-8.) When the Jews returned from captivity to Jerusalem, Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple (516 B.C.). Herod the Great rebuilt the temple and made it one of the wonders of the world around 20 B.C. It was this temple in which the Jews gloried.

The point is this: by being so blessed, the people (Israel) were inexcusable in their rejection of God. They had every opportunity available, yet they still chose the world instead of God.

4. Charge 4: the people did not understand the temple. God is not limited to only one particular place (v. 48-50. Cp. Is.66:1-2). Now note a significant point: Solomon, the builder of the great temple, had proclaimed this truth.

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded” (1 Ki.8:27; cp. 2 Chron.6:18).

What Solomon said was true: God never intended for men to think that His presence was limited to the temple. Stephen’s point struck home, for Jesus had taught that men must worship God in Spirit and in truth (Jn.4:24). Note also that Jesus had spoken these words to a Samaritan. Anyone of any race or land could worship God just so they approached Him in *Spirit* and *truth*. A particular land or temple was not necessary.

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (Jn.4:24).

5. Charge 5: the people of the present generation were resisting the Holy Spirit (v.51). Stephen turned to the present generation and charged them with the *very same* resistance and rejection as their forefathers. Note the words, “Ye do *al-ways* resist.” He was identifying them with their fathers. He called them...

- stiffnecked (sklerotracheloi): hard necked, obstinate, stubborn.
- uncircumcised in heart” (aperitmetoi kardiais): heathens, pagans, lost, aliens, idolaters, false worshippers, ungodly.
- resisters: persons who *resist* God; who deliberately oppose or rush against God; who actively struggle and fight against God.

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51).

“Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about” (Ps.32:9-10).

“Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry” (Is.46:12-13).

“And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction” (Jer.32:33).

“If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart” (Mal.2:2).

6. Charge 6: the people persecuted *all* the prophets—the very servants who predicted the coming (offered the hope) of the Righteous One (the Messiah) (v.52. Cp. Acts 3:14; 22:14; Is.11:4-5; 53:11.) Jesus Christ was the One to whom all the prophets looked, the One who was to secure perfect righteousness for man. He was the One who was to bring righteousness to man. Yet the people rejected, persecuted, and killed the prophets who proclaimed the glorious message of His coming (cp. the charge of Jesus against the people).

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets” (Mt.23:29-31).

“Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation” (Lk.11:47).

7. Charge 7: the people, the present generation, fulfilled the prophecies. The present generation betrayed and killed the Righteous One (v.52. Cp. v.38). (See outline and note—Acts 3:13-15 for discussion and verses.)

“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people” (Heb.10:28-31).

8. Charge 8: the people, the present generation, have not kept the law (v.53). The law had been given to them by the *hands* of angels. Yet, they had not kept it. They gloried in the law, but violated it just as much as their forefathers (cp. v.38-43, 52; Ro.2:23).

“And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mk.7:9).

“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph.5:6).

“But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers” (1 Sam.12:15).

“For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (Heb.2:2-3).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 5

(7:43) **Molech**: this was the sun god to whom children were often sacrificed. The idol had the head of an ox and arms that stretched out. There was a hollow place underneath the arms where a fire was built. The fire consumed the sacrifices lying in the outstretched arms above. Molech was the god of the Amorites. (Cp. Lev.18:21; 20:2; 1 Ki.11:7; 2 Ki.23:10; Jer.32:35.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 6

(7:43) **Remphan**: this was a god of the Egyptians, Arabs, and Phoenicians. It is thought to have been the worship of the planet Saturn.

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>1 The cause of martyrdom: Reaction against God</b>  | <b>Q. The First Martyr, Stephen (Scene III): A Study of Martyrdom 7:54-60</b>  | 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,<br>58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. | <b>3 The insanity of murdering the believer</b>  |
| <b>2 The Lord's provision</b><br>a. The Holy spirit<br>b. A vision of heaven<br>1) Of the glory of God<br>2) Of Jesus<br>c. A glorious testimony | 54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.<br>55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,<br>56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. | 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.<br>60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.           | a. Insane rejection: Rejecting a person who offers help & hope of life forever<br>b. Insane leadership: Following one who is in rebellion against God <sup>DS1</sup> |
|  |  |   | <b>4 The believer's supreme confidence</b>   |
|  |  |   | <b>5 The believer's forgiving spirit</b>   |
|  |  |   | <b>6 The believer's peaceful departure</b>   |

**DIVISION II**

**THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-7:60**

**Q. The First Martyr, Stephen (Scene III): A Study of Martyrdom, 7:54-60**

(7:54-60) **Introduction:** this is a vivid study of martyrdom, a study that should encourage believers to stand fast in persecution, no matter the cost.

1. The cause of martyrdom: reaction against God (v.54).
2. The Lord's provision (v.55-56).
3. The insanity of murdering the believer (v.57-58).
4. The believer's supreme confidence (v.59).
5. The believer's forgiving spirit (v.60).
6. The believer's peaceful departure (v.60).

**1** (7:54) **Martyrdom, Cause:** there is the cause of martyrdom—reaction against God. Remember: Stephen was on trial for his life. He had been called upon to defend himself (Acts 7:1). But instead of actually defending himself, Stephen had preached about the tragic failure of the people to follow and obey God. He had...

- shown how God called and founded the nation of Israel to seek and inhabit the "promised land."
- shown how Israel had rejected God's call and the hope of the promised land, rejected it time and again all through their history.
- shown how God delivered the nation time and again, trying to stir within the people an obedience to Him.
- made eight severe charges against the nation including the murder of the righteous One, God's very own Son.

His message had been effective and convicting. It had done its job. Both the leaders and the people were convicted. The response was up to them. Conviction can go either way. It can either cause a person to turn to God, confessing his sin, or cause a person to react against God. Note three facts about the Jewish court and the people present.

1. "When they heard these things." This is present tense. It was *while* they were hearing Stephen preach that conviction was taking place. He was preaching and the Spirit of God was convicting, trying to get through to the hearts of the people. God was giving the people another chance.

2. "Cut to the heart" (dieprionto tais kardiais). The word "dieprionto" means to saw asunder; to cut through. It is used to show violent reaction. The response of their hearts was anger, not godly sorrow (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Godly Sorrow*—2 Cor.7:10). They had no intention of confessing that they had been wrong.

3. "Gnashed" (ebruchon). The word means to bite, to grind, to gnash the teeth just like a pack of snarling dogs. The people were in a rage, filled with anger and malice, ready to do violence, ready to unleash the fury of their emotions.

**Thought 1.** When the human heart rebels against God, it becomes disturbed and tormented. Rebellion against God causes the human heart to be...

- uncertain & insecure
- disturbed & troubled
- indignant & reactionary
- passive & inactive
- withdrawn & lonely
- purposeless & meaningless

"And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people" (Ex.32:9).

"Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear" (2 Chron.24:19).

"To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear" (Is.28:12).

"Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness" (Is.46:12).

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51).

“Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness” (Ps.95:8).

“Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief” (Pr.28:14).

“He, that being often reprovèd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Pr.29:1).

**Thought 2.** Note the faithfulness of Stephen in bearing witness to the truth. His purpose was not to escape condemnation, not at any price. He, of course, was not wishing to die. But he was not willing to deny the truth in order to live. His desire was to proclaim the truth, hoping the *leaders* and *people* of his beloved nation would heed the call of God and be saved. What a dynamic challenge for bearing testimony in difficult situations!

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city” (Acts 18:9-10).

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:7-8).

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).

“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer.20:9).

**2** (7:55-56) **Deliverance:** there was the Lord’s provision. God is always present when one of His dear children is facing a crisis, especially martyrdom. But note this: the person must be a true child of God, faithful and obedient to the Lord of glory. Stephen was. He was doing exactly what Jesus had said to do, bearing testimony to the world. Therefore, Stephen had the promise of the Lord, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:20). Jesus was there with Stephen, there in the most wonderful way. Note the marvelous provision of God to those who face martyrdom.

1. God filled Stephen with the Holy Spirit. Stephen was a man who was always filled with the Spirit (Acts 5:3, 5), but the idea here would be a very special infilling of the Spirit. He received a very special...

- presence and manifestation of the Spirit: a special consciousness; an awareness; a sense surrounding, engulfing, and embracing him; a presence carrying him through the great trial.
- power and grace to bear and go through whatever lay ahead.

2. God gave Stephen a vision *into* heaven: enabling him to see into the other world, the spiritual world, or spiritual dimension of being.

- a. Stephen saw the glory of God. He saw God in the brilliant light of His person, full of splendor and radiance (cp. 1 Tim.1:16; Rev.21:11, 23. See note, *Glory*—Mt.17:5-8.)
- b. Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Jesus is usually said to be *sitting* at the right hand of God, symbolizing His authority as man’s Lord and Intercessor (cp. Mt.26:64; Mk.16:19; Lk.20:42-43; Acts 2:34; Eph.1:20; Col.3:1; Heb.1:3; 10:12-13). But here He is seen standing. This symbolizes His overlooking the scene, His care for His dear follower, and the joyful reception of His faithful servant.

**Thought 1.** Imagine the glorious sight! There will be no difference between the vision of Stephen and the actual experience of God’s glory for any believer. We shall all behold every sight in Stephen’s vision and much more. In a moment’s time, in the twinkling of an eye, the genuine believer will pass from this life into the next world immediately, never tasting or experiencing death.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (Jn.8:51).

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:26).

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor.5:8).

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb.2:9-10).

3. God gave Stephen a glorious testimony. Seeing such a scene, Stephen just burst forth proclaiming the glorious vision he was experiencing. It was most likely a natural outburst of joy and ecstasy, a testimony of the truth of the other world to those standing around. Note this part of the truth: the Son of Man, Jesus, is there. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Son of Man*—Mt.8:20.) He is at the right hand of God. Stephen was proclaiming...

- that Jesus is the Son of God.

- that our faith in Jesus is not in vain.
- that Jesus is exactly whom He claimed to be. (See *Jesus Christ, Claims of*—Master Subject Index.)
  - “So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mk.16:19).
  - “Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God” (Lk.22:69).
  - “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and sat him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:20).
  - “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Ph.2:9).
  - “Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev.5:12).

**3** (7:57-58) **Stephen—Persecution:** there was the insanity of murdering the believer. This is seen in two things.

1. The insane rejection. The persecutors were actually opposing a person who only wanted...

- to help and minister to people
- to offer the hope of living forever

The sole purpose of the believer is to minister to and meet the desperate conditions of man:

- |                     |              |                |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------|
| ⇒ being lost        | ⇒ loneliness | ⇒ disease      |
| ⇒ lack of education | ⇒ poverty    | ⇒ depression   |
| ⇒ alienation        | ⇒ hunger     | ⇒ lifelessness |

Whatever the predicament, the believer is called to minister. He is not out to destroy, but to build. It is utter insanity to oppose and kill such a person. For men to oppose a genuine believer, their behavior has to reach a peak of insanity. Note what is involved...

- loud voices: to drown out the truth
- stopped ears: to keep from hearing the truth
- ran upon: to attack and take vengeance
- cast out and stoned: to get rid of the convicting message, allowing them to live as they desire instead of living for God

2. The insane leadership. A person who takes the lead in persecution is in rebellion against God. Those who follow such a leader are following a person who is actually reacting against the Lord, not against a believer (cp. Acts 9:4-5). The man who took the lead in Stephen’s murder was Saul of Tarsus. He was *kicking* against the pricks, the conviction of conscience (cp. Acts 9:5).

It is dangerous to follow man in rebellion against God. The path of rebellion leads to destruction. The man in rebellion shall perish. There is no exception.

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mt.23:33).

“Maliciousness...murder...malignity...haters of God...proud...covenant breakers...implacable, unmerciful...they which commit such things are worthy of death” (Ro.1:29-32).

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Ro.2:5).

“Hatred...wrath...strife...seditions...heresies...murders...and such like...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:20-21).

“The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).

“Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you” (2 Chron.30:8).

“He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Pr.29:1).

“If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart” (Mal.2:2).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(7:58) **Saul—Paul:** this is the first time Saul of Tarsus is mentioned in Scripture. Note: he is said to be *young*. How old was Saul at this time? Scripture never says.

**4** (7:59) **Hope—Heaven:** there was the believer’s supreme confidence. Note four points.

1. Stephen experienced the pain and suffering of the trial. This is seen in that he called for the Lord’s help. Believers are not removed or relieved from the sufferings of trials, but they are given the grace and strength to endure the trials, even martyrdom.

2. Stephen called upon the Lord Himself. It was the Lord Jesus who was *standing*, ready to receive Him. Jesus wishes all believers to be with Him where He is (Jn.14:2-3; 17:24). This is the very reason for which Jesus...

- humiliated Himself in coming to earth,
- sacrificed His life in death,
- prays and longs for believers to join Him in heaven.

3. Stephen called for Jesus to receive his spirit. Stephen was still trusting the grace of God, the righteousness of Jesus, for his salvation. He was not trusting his own works and goodness. He was still depending upon Jesus and the won-

derful love of God. But note the key words: *still trusting, still depending*. Stephen had trusted and lived for Christ *during life*, so he could expect to trust and live for Christ in *eternity*.

4. Stephen was going to be where Jesus was. He called for Jesus to receive his spirit, to accept him where He was. And remember where Jesus is (v.55):

⇒ in heaven

⇒ at the right hand of God

Stephen and all other believers are to be with Jesus right where He is, in heaven itself.

**“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Lk.23:43).**

**“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn.14:2-3).**

**“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (Jn.17:24).**

**“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor.5:8).**

**“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Ph.1:23).**

**“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th.4:17).**

**5** (7:60) **Forgiveness:** there was the believer’s loving and forgiving spirit. Note that Stephen’s last act was to kneel in prayer and to plead for his persecutors and murderers. He possessed the very spirit of Christ Himself, who had prayed the same prayer (Lk.23:34). “Lay not this sin to their charge” says three things.

⇒ Stephen was filled with compassion for his persecutors. He wanted them to be saved.

⇒ Men will be charged with sin.

⇒ Men must have the charge of sin removed from them to be acceptable before God.

**Thought 1.** Remember: Stephen and other believers would never pay the price demanded if sinful men were going to be accepted by God anyway. Something else: if God was going to accept men as they are in their sinful state, He would have never allowed His Son to die at the hands of men.

**6** (7:60) **Death:** there was the believer’s peaceful departure. Scripture simply says, “He fell asleep.” There is no death for the believer. Stephen simply passed from this life into the next world, an experience that amounts to nothing more than falling asleep. Sleep is often used to describe *death* for the believer (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.11:13).

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (Jn.5:24).**

**“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:25-26).**

**“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom [heaven]: the rich man also died, and was buried” (Lk.16:22).**

**“For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men” (Ro.14:18).**

**“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Ph.1:21).**

**“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law” (1 Cor.15:53-56).**

**“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor.5:1).**

**Thought 1.** Believers are to forgive men no matter what the offense may be.

**“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt.5:7).**

**“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Mt.5:44).**

**“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Ro.12:17).**

**“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Pt.3:9).**

**“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic.6:8).**

| CHAPTER 8  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>1 The flaming fury of the persecution</b><br/>a. Launched by an inflamed man: Saul</p> | <p><b>III. THE CHURCH SCATTERED: MISSIONARY BEGINNINGS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, 8:1-9:31</b></p> <p><b>A. The Church's Lay Leaders Scattered: How God Uses Persecution, 8:1-4</b></p> <p>And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church</p> | <p>which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.</p> <p>2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.</p> <p>3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.</p> <p>4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.</p> |
|  | <p><b>1 The flaming fury of the persecution</b><br/>a. Launched by an inflamed man: Saul</p>  | <p>b. Launched quickly<br/>c. Launched in fury &amp; violence<br/>d. Scattered believers, but apostles remained</p> <p><b>2 The devout cared for the murdered</b></p> <p><b>3 The church was severely persecuted: Both men &amp; women were persecuted by Saul</b></p> <p><b>4 The lay believers were scattered abroad: They went everywhere preaching Christ</b></p>   |

**DIVISION III**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: MISSIONARY BEGINNINGS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, 8:1-9:31**

**A. The Church's Lay Leaders Scattered: How God Uses Persecution, 8:1-4**

(8:1-4) **Introduction:** Stephen's message was God's final invitation to Israel. If Israel rejected the message, God would turn elsewhere to root and ground His church. The terrible tragedy is that Israel did reject the message; in fact Israel killed Stephen and launched a savage persecution against the church, attempting to utterly destroy and stamp it out.

However, God overruled and used the persecution as a means to scatter the church all across the world. Just as Jesus had instructed, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth were now to hear the glorious message of the gospel (cp. Acts 1:8).

The point to note is this: Stephen (his message and martyrdom) is the flame that God used to launch the great evangelistic thrust of the gospel around the world. The believers were scattered all over the world by great persecution.

1. The flaming fury of the persecution (v.1).
2. The devout cared for the murdered (v.2).
3. The church was severely persecuted: both men and women were persecuted by Saul (v.3).
4. The lay believers were scattered abroad: they went everywhere preaching Christ (v.4).

**1** (8:1) **Paul, Persecutor of the Church:** the flaming fury of the persecution. Note four significant facts. (See note—Acts 8:3 for more discussion.)

1. The persecution was launched by an *inflamed* man, Saul of Tarsus. The word "consenting" or "approving" (suneudokon) means to give full consent of the will; to willingly approve; to approve with pleasure; to delight in; to applaud what is being done. Saul was well-pleased with Stephen's death. An *inflamed fury* had been building up in him against the church, for he felt that the preaching of Christ threatened his religion, Judaism. In fact, Saul was the leader in persecuting the church, the one who *boiled* more than anyone else against the church. He was apparently a leader among the religionists.

**"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal.1:13-14).**

**"If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more...an Hebrew of the Hebrews...concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law" (Ph.3:4-6).**

(See notes—Acts 4:2-4; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.12:10 for more discussion. This latter note in particular explains why the religionists and the Pharisees opposed Jesus so violently. Saul was a Pharisee.)

2. The persecution was launched quickly, on the very day of Stephen's death. The words "at that time" (en ekeinei tei hemerai) mean on that very same day. Saul wished to act and to act quickly in wiping out the church. The believers were frightened and on the run. He had to strike immediately to catch them before they could escape.

3. The persecution was launched in fury and in violence. Note the phrase "a great persecution" (diogmos megas). The idea is that Saul *hotly* pursued, chased, and hunted down the believers. He was bent on violence, utterly determined to stamp out the church.

4. The church "[was] all scattered abroad throughout Judea and Samaria" (see note—Acts 8:4 for discussion). Note the apostles remained behind.

- ⇒ They had been given some freedom by the authorities on the advice of Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-40).
- ⇒ They were highly esteemed by the public at large. On other occasions the authorities feared to have them arrested, lest their arrest cause an uprising among the people (cp. Acts 4:21).
- ⇒ The apostles were courageous men, and they had learned to *wait* upon the Lord for instructions. Perhaps they were *braving the storm* until the Lord told them otherwise.

This much can be safely known. If the apostles had fled Jerusalem, there would have been no stabilizing person at the church, no leader holding the church together. Remember: the only organized church in existence was the church in Jeru-

salem. The believers, although imprisoned and scattered, still needed a church to look toward. If the apostles had fled, the church in Jerusalem would have been completely destroyed. There would be no church to picture, no place from which to look for help and direction. The apostles were the hub, the focus, the leaders to which the earliest believers looked for guidance. In the eyes of the earliest believers, the apostles were needed, desperately needed. The Jerusalem church was the only church the believers knew. Therefore it was important for the apostles to remain there, important for their loyalty and availability to the church to be known. By staying in Jerusalem, they held the church together. The believers, no matter where they had scattered, knew that the church was still existing through its courageous leaders.

**“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt.16:18).**

**“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).**

**“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).**

**2** (8:2) **Believer:** the devout cared for the murdered. The *devout* must have been some of Stephen’s friends and fellow synagogue worshippers who had not embraced *the faith of Christ*, but cared for him. They were deeply disturbed over his death, making “great lamentation” over him. Note how God used Stephen’s burial to continue the witness:

⇒ His witness was publicly honored.

⇒ He died what might be called a hero’s death.

**3** (8:3) **Paul—Church; Persecution of:** the church was severely persecuted—both men and women were persecuted by Saul. (See note—Acts 8:1 for more discussion.) Saul made “havoc” (elumaineto) of the church; that is, he tried to devastate it, destroy it, ruin it, wipe it out.

⇒ It is the picture of a wild beast ravaging and tearing to bits some carcass.

⇒ The verb is continued action. He began and kept on ravaging and destroying. He was, as he later confessed, “exceedingly mad against them [believers]” (Acts 26:11).

1. He stormed the homes of believers, breaking open the doors, fiercely seeking every believer in “every house” (Acts 8:3).

2. He arrested all he could find, “hailing” them (suron): constraining and dragging them, using whatever force was necessary to arrest and subdue them. The picture is that of forcibly dragging them from their homes through the city streets (Acts 8:3).

3. He arrested women as well as men. Women were considered unimportant and insignificant in Saul’s day. Yet the fierceness and savagery of Paul was so set on destroying the church that he went after the women as well. His crime against women was to be an offense Paul could never forget (cp. Acts 9:2; 22:4).

4. He imprisoned as many as he could find, and he found *many*...

- committing them to prison (Acts 8:3).

- “binding and delivering into prisons both men and women” (Acts 22:4).

- “many of the saints did I shut up in prison” (Acts 26:10).

5. He stormed “every synagogue” and punished the believers who were present. He tried to force them to *blaspheme* the name of Christ (Acts 26:11).

6. He hunted them down, hotly pursuing them even into foreign cities, persecuting all he could track down (Acts 22:5; 26:11).

7. He brought *many* to their death and gave his voice to the death penalty of many others (Acts 22:4; 26:10).

**“As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison” (Acts 8:3).**

**“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1-2).**

**“And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished” (Acts 22:4-5).**

**“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities” (Acts 26:9-11).**

**“Concerning zeal, persecuting the church” (Ph.3:6, cp. Gal.1:13).**

Note: the mercy and grace of God are fully demonstrated in the life of Paul. God’s mercy is available to all of us, no matter how terribly we have sinned. There is hope, forgiveness, and a glorious ministry for any of us, no matter who we are or what we have done—if we will repent and surrender ourselves to the Lord Jesus, to follow and obey Him.

**“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor.15:9-10).**

**“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding**

abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to live everlasting” (1 Tim.1:12-16).

**4** (8:4) **Witnessing—Preaching:** the lay believers who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching Christ. Note two significant facts.

1. The believers were “scattered abroad” (diasparentes): dispersed, scattered about just as seed is sown or scattered throughout a field. God was using the evil of the world to spread His followers and message all over the world.
2. Note that the scattered believers did not hide in secrecy and fearful silence. They preached the Word wherever they went. “Preaching the word” (euaggelizomenoi ton logon) means to evangelize, to declare, to proclaim, to preach the Word of God, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Preaching—Acts 11:19-30* for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** Note two challenging facts.

- 1) The believers who were preaching and scattering the Word were *lay believers*.
- 2) The pattern was set for all time. Most preaching and witnessing was to be done by the lay believers. All lay believers are to scatter the seed wherever they are, wherever duty or circumstances place them.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them....Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus” (Acts 8:5, 35).

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus” (Acts 11:19-20).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).

**Thought 2.** The great purpose and/or result of persecution is the spread of the gospel. God uses persecution...

- the staunch faith and endurance of believers,
- the dispersion of believers (when necessary),

...to demonstrate the reality of salvation, of His presence in the hearts and lives of people. Through persecution and the believer’s endurance, God shows clearly that He is. He demonstrates that He really exists and saves men, infusing them with both the hope and power to live forever.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Mt.5:11-12).

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Mt.19:29).

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor.12:9-10).

“And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:28-29).

“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (1 Pt.4:14; cp. v.12-19).

**Thought 3.** The persecution may range from simple abuse to violence. It may take place at work, at home, at school, at play, at church. But no matter what form or where it occurs, God will use it to bear witness to Himself—if we will be faithful and endure.

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| <p><b>1 The preacher: Philip</b><br/> a. A layman<br/> b. Preached Christ</p> <p><b>2 The essentials for revival</b><br/> a. Being of one accord<br/> b. Giving heed to the message</p> <p><b>3 The evidence of revival</b><br/> a. Evidence 1: Lives changed—miraculously</p> <p>b. Evidence 2: Great joy experienced</p> <p>c. Evidence 3: Deliverance from the great depths of sin<br/> 1) From a false prophet</p> <p>2) From false religion</p> <p>d. Evidence 4: Believing &amp; being baptized</p> <p>e. Evidence 5: False professions (cp. v.18-24)</p> <p>f. Evidence 6: The reception &amp; manifestation of the Holy Spirit<sup>ps2</sup></p> | <p><b>B. The Great Revival in Samaria: A Study on Revival,<sup>ps1</sup> 8:5-25</b></p> <p>5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.</p> <p>6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.</p> <p>7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.</p> <p>8 And there was great joy in that city.</p> <p>9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:</p> <p>10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.</p> <p>11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.</p> <p>12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.</p> <p>13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.</p> <p>14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they</p> | <p>sent unto them Peter and John:<br/> 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:<br/> 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)<br/> 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.<br/> 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,<br/> 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.<br/> 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.<br/> 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.<br/> 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.<br/> 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.<br/> 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.<br/> 25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.</p> | <p>g. Evidence 7: The rebuke of hypocrisy</p> <p>1) The detection of hypocrisy: Power, prestige, &amp; influence sought</p> <p>2) The judgment of hypocrisy: To perish &amp; to have no part of the Spirit</p> <p>3) The answer to hypocrisy: To repent &amp; pray</p> <p>4) The bondage of hypocrisy: Bitterness &amp; enslavement to sin</p> <p>5) The wrong motive for deliverance: To escape judgment</p> <p>h. Evidence 8: The opening of hearts for evangelism</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: MISSIONARY BEGINNINGS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, 8:5-25**

**B. The Great Revival in Samaria: A Study on Revival, 8:5-25**

(8:5-25) **Introduction:** the need of the hour is revival, a true movement of God in the hearts and lives of people, both within and without the church. This is an excellent study on revival.

1. The preacher: Philip (v.5).
2. The essentials for revival (v.6).
3. The evidence of revival (v.7-25).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**  
(8:5-25) **Samaria:** see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Lk.10:33 for discussion.

**1** (8:5) **Philip:** the preacher was Philip, a layman, one of the first deacons (Acts 6:5). This is important to note:

- ⇒ the first great evangelistic thrust outside Jerusalem was carried out by a *layman*.
- ⇒ the first time the term *evangelist* is used, it is used with a layman (Acts 21:8).

Philip preached (eukerussen) and proclaimed Christ. Later on he is said to preach (euaggelizomeno), to announce the glad tidings, “the things concerning the kingdom of God” (v.12). These two great words are used in the New Testament for proclaiming the gospel. Philip, the layman, was a true servant of the Lord, a lay believer who preached Christ. He was a layman who dedicated his time and energy to proclaiming the things concerning the kingdom of God.

**Thought 1.** Great revival necessitates great laymen sold out to Christ, laymen willing to preach Christ. Note that the following Scriptures are given to believers, not to the clergy.

“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.10:7).

“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops” (Mt.10:27).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them....Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus” (Acts 8:5, 35).

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus” (Acts 11:19-20).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).

**2** (8:6) **Revival:** the essentials for revival are twofold.

1. The people must be of “one accord”: of one mind, spirit and purpose; in full cooperation; willing to *hear* the message and *see* the miracles. If people oppose and shut their ears and close their eyes to the messenger, they cannot have revival. There has to be an openness, a willingness and oneness of spirit with the preacher and his message.
2. The people must give “heed” (proseichon), keep their minds and hearts upon the message.

“But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Mt.13:16).

“But he that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Mt.13:23).

“Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh” (Lk.6:21).

“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Lk.8:15).

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th.2:13).

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart” (Dt.6:6).

**3** (8:7-25) **Revival:** the evidences of revival are eightfold.

1. Evidence one: lives are changed—miraculously. People who cannot help themselves are healed. Note that people possessed with evil spirits were changed: the evil spirits were cast out (cp. Mk.3:11; Lk.4:41). People with diseased and crippled bodies were healed. The power of God was clearly witnessed.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pt.1:23).

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn.5:1).

2. Evidence two: great joy is experienced. A man who truly came to know Christ was filled with joy, the joy...
- of sins forgiven
  - of deliverance
  - of power to live
  - of hope for eternity
  - of knowing God’s presence
  - of security and assurance and confidence

“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Lk.10:20).

“These things [the gospel] have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (Jn.15:11).

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).

“And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves” (Jn.17:13).

“As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Cor.6:10).

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pt.1:8).

3. Evidence three: deliverance from great depths of sin, from false prophets and religion and sorcery. The depth of sin can reach no deeper than these people found themselves. They were gripped and enslaved by error, false teaching, and false hope.

- a. The people had been enslaved by a false prophet, a religious imposter, Simon.  
 ⇒ He used sorcery: magical arts, witchcraft, spirit mediums, astrology, charms, spells, divination or fortune-telling.  
 ⇒ He bewitched people: amazed, astonished, and secured their following.  
 ⇒ He claimed that he was “some great one.”
- b. The people had been enslaved by a false religion: “all” gave heed; all followed his leadership and teaching; all “from the least to the greatest” *confessed*, “this man is the great power of God.”

**Thought 1.** Think how gullible people are in following false prophets and their teaching.

- c. The people had been enslaved for a long time. They had been held in bondage to the false prophet and false religion for a *long time*. But now, they had been freed by the power of Christ.

**Thought 1.** False prophets and false religions differ in their teachings and methods of enslaving people. But they are all false, and their followers can be delivered only by the power of Christ.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mt.7:15).

“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” (Mt.24:11).

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Mt.24:24; cp. Mk.13:22).

“Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30).

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Ro.16:18).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim.4:1-2).

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim.3:13).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” (1 Jn.2:22).

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 Jn.7).

4. Evidence four: believing the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and being baptized.

a. Philip preached two major subjects.

⇒ He preached the kingdom of God (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Mt. 19:23-24).

“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.10:7).

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mk.1:14-15).

“And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent” (Lk.4:43).

“And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick” (Lk.9:2).

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more” (Acts 20:25).

“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening” (Acts 28:23).

⇒ He preached the name of Jesus Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 3:6).

b. When the people heard the message...

⇒ they believed (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.2:24).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (Jn.6:35).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).

⇒ they were baptized (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:38).

5. Evidence five: false professions. It is doubtful that Simon was making a genuine confession of Christ (cp. v.18-24). When people experience true revival there will always be counterfeits. The existence of counterfeits and hypocritical professions dramatize and cause the genuine confessions to stand out even more.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Mt.7:6).

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).

6. Evidence 6: the reception and manifestation of the Holy Spirit (v.14-17). The apostles were the leaders, the supervisors of the church. Therefore, when they heard of the revival at Samaria, they sent Peter and John to investigate. Why was an investigation necessary? Because of the bitter enmity and racial prejudice between the Samaritans and Jews (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Lk.10:33 for discussion).

When Peter and John arrived, they discovered that the Samaritans had believed and been baptized, but the Holy Spirit had not “fallen upon” any of them. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 8:14-17 for discussion.)

7. Evidence 7: the rebuke of hypocrisy. The point is clearly seen in the incident with Simon (see Scripture and outline above, pt.5, v.18-24 for discussion).

Note Simon’s request for the apostles to pray for him. It seems that he did not pray himself nor confess and repent to the Lord Jesus. This was the same approach Pharaoh took with Moses, begging for prayer, but never repenting (Ex.8:8; 10:17).

8. Evidence 8: the opening of hearts for evangelism. Note...

- how open the Samaritans were to the Jewish preachers of the gospel.
- how the apostles went into the villages of the Samaritans to preach.

**Thought 1.** The fruit of revival is more revival, the opening of hearts for both the preaching and receiving of the gospel.

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).

“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul” (Ps.66:16).

“I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses” (Is.63:7).

“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer.20:9).

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Mal.3:16).

### DEEPER STUDY #2

(8:14-17) **Holy Spirit:** this is a puzzling passage to some because the Samaritans are said to have already believed and been baptized, yet the Holy Spirit had not fallen upon them. They had not yet received Him. Note four points.

1. There is no legitimate question about the Samaritans being truly saved. Philip knew the Lord and was filled with the Spirit himself (Acts 6:3, 5). He possessed the power of the Spirit (Acts 8:6-7) and preached the gospel in clear terms. He knew how people were saved and what was involved in salvation. Therefore, two things seem unthinkable and impossible...

- that Philip actually did not proclaim the full gospel (this position would be contrary to what the Scripture says).
- that Philip could be deceived by *all* the people (this position would be contrary to the Spirit's leadership in Philip's life).

2. Scripture declares, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Ro.8:9). If a person is truly saved, the Holy Spirit has entered his heart and life. Scripture is abundantly clear on this point.

3. In light of the above two facts, the Samaritans apparently had two experiences with the Holy Spirit.

- a. The Holy Spirit actually entered their hearts and lives when they *believed* and were *baptized* (v.12, 16). When they believed, they were actually *born again*, becoming new creatures in Christ (Jn.3:5-8; 2 Cor.5:17).
- b. The Holy Spirit *fell upon, poured Himself out*, infilled, and manifested His presence and power on the very special occasion when Peter and John visited the new believers. Christ taught there would be special manifestations and infillings of the Holy Spirit. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Jn.14:21; note—14:21-22.) The experience of the apostles and of the church throughout the *Book of Acts* demonstrates clearly there is more than just one significant experience with the Holy Spirit. The early believers experienced periodic manifestations or special infillings. They had need for such experiences, and down through history as the need has arisen, God has given special manifestations or infillings of His Spirit to all obedient believers.

4. There was a very special need existing between the Samaritans and Jewish believers. The Jews and Samaritans were bitter enemies. They despised each other (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Lk.10:33. Cp. Mt.15:26-27; Jn.4:9, 27.) The Holy Spirit needed to fall upon the Samaritans as much for the sake of the Jews as for the Samaritans. The Jews, especially the Jewish leaders, needed to *see* and *experience* the Holy Spirit falling upon the Samaritans. By witnessing the sight, they would know and testify to God's reception of the Samaritans. A wedge would be driven into the barrier that had separated the two nations for so long. And the Jerusalem Church would have to accept the Samaritans because of the evidence of God's acceptance (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:1-4; note—10:44-48).

There is also perhaps some significance in the fact that God sent the Holy Spirit upon the Jews first (Acts 2). Then, to progressively break the entrenched barrier of racial prejudice between the Jews and Gentiles, He sent the Spirit upon the half-Jews and half-Gentiles (Acts 8). Finally, He was able to send the Spirit upon the full-blooded Gentiles (Acts 10). In other words, there is some truth to the fact that there was...

- a Jewish Pentecost (Acts 2).
- a Samaritan Pentecost—a half-Jew and half-Gentile Pentecost (Acts 8).
- a Gentile Pentecost (Acts 10).

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| <p><b>1 Philip was led by an angel of the Lord</b></p> <p><b>2 What Philip found</b></p> <p>a. A man of Ethiopia, a foreigner</p> <p>b. A high ranking government officer</p> <p>c. A eunuch, a man of commitment</p> <p>d. A worshipper, a seeker</p> <p>e. A reader of Scripture</p> <p><b>3 What Philip sensed</b></p> <p>a. An impulse of the Spirit</p> <p>b. A man's need—perplexity</p> <p><b>4 What Philip did</b></p> <p>a. He obeyed the Spirit of God</p> <p>b. He started a conversation with the man</p> <p>c. He joined the man</p> <p>d. He noted where the man was in his seeking of God</p> <p>1) He was religious: Extremely faithful in worshipping &amp; in reading Scripture</p> <p>2) He did not understand Christ's death</p> | <p><b>C. The Great Mission to An Individual: A Study of Witnessing, 8:26-40</b></p> <p>26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.</p> <p>27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,</p> <p>28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.</p> <p>29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.</p> <p>30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readeest?</p> <p>31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.</p> <p>32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:</p> | <p>33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.</p> <p>34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?</p> <p>35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.</p> <p>36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?</p> <p>37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.</p> <p>38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.</p> <p>39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.</p> <p>40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.</p> | <p><b>5 What Philip said &amp; proclaimed: He preached Jesus</b></p> <p><b>6 What Philip saw happen</b></p> <p>a. A man desiring baptism</p> <p>b. A man believing Jesus is the Son of God</p> <p>c. A man following through with baptism—immediately</p> <p><b>7 What Philip experienced: Continued leadership of the Holy Spirit</b></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: MISSIONARY BEGINNINGS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, 8:1-9:31**

**C. The Great Mission to An Individual: A Study of Witnessing, 8:26-40**

(8:26-40) **Introduction:** this passage stresses the importance of an individual to God. A miraculous act was needed. God is seen leading Philip to a single person who needed to know Christ, and in the interview between the two we have a strong study on witnessing. We see just what is involved in witnessing to an individual.

1. Philip was led by an angel of the Lord (v.26).
2. What Philip found (v.27-28).
3. What Philip sensed (v.29).
4. What Philip did (v.30-34).
5. What Philip said and proclaimed: he preached Jesus (v.35).
6. What Philip saw happen (v.36-38).
7. What Philip experienced: continued leadership of the Holy Spirit (v.39-40).

**1** (8:26) **Guidance:** Philip was led by an angel of the Lord. Angels are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb.1:14. See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Angels*—Heb.1:4-14 for more discussion.) There was a *particular* individual that God wished to reach with the gospel and save, so God sent an angel to instruct Philip where to go. The point is this: Philip had no way of knowing God's will in this particular case, not apart from a personal confrontation from God. So God confronted and instructed Philip in such a way that Philip knew exactly what God's will was.

The angel instructed Philip...

- to arise
- to go—to go south to a certain road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza. The road was a desert road.

Now note: God did not tell Philip why he was to travel the main road to the South, only to arise and go. Just as Abraham of old, Philip had to walk by faith. And this he did. He arose and went, not knowing why, but trusting God to show him.

**Thought 1.** God does whatever is necessary to instruct and guide believers. He is not limited to our theories and beliefs. He has at His disposal all the power and all of creation to use as He wills. And He will use whatever is needed to reach anyone who is truly hungry to know the way of salvation. No one will ever be lost, not if they honestly believe God and diligently seek Him (Heb.11:6). God will see to it, no matter what has to be done.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [provisions] shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:33).

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Lk.11:9-10; cp. v.5-8).

“And [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:26-27).

“But if from thence [idolatry] thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Dt.4:29).

“But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?...And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job 28:12, 28; cp. v.13-27).

“Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore” (Ps.105:4).

“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God” (Pr.2:3-5).

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near” (Is.55:6).

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer.29:11-13).

“For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live” (Amos 5:4).

**Thought 2.** The cry of the hour is for believers...

- to arise.
- to go out into the roads of the world.
- to trust God to lead to those who are seeking Him.

“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt.4:19).

“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests” (Mt.22:9-10).

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).

**2** (8:27-28) **Witnessing:** what Philip found. He saw a man riding in a chariot returning from Jerusalem.

1. Philip found a foreigner, a man from Ethiopia. Ethiopia was hundreds of miles from Jerusalem. The eunuch had been to Jerusalem to attend a religious feast.

**Thought 1.** Too often believers shy away from foreigners, shy away from anyone who differs from them. God wants us to reach everyone, no matter what nationality they are. Just think: everyone is a foreigner to some people of the world. Everyone differs from *someone* else. We cannot let *differences* keep us from witnessing and sharing Christ.

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Jn.7:37).

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:4-6).

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Is.45:22).

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is.55:1).

2. Philip found a high ranking government official who served under the Queen of Ethiopia. Candace is not the name of a particular queen, but the title of a dynasty of queens (such as the title of the Pharaohs and of the Ptolemys of Egypt).

**Thought 1.** The upper levels of society and government must be reached for Christ as well as other citizens.

“Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God” (Lk.12:8).

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn.4:14).

“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Tim.2:1-2).

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn.5:1).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).

3. Philip found a eunuch. Being a eunuch shows that he was a man of extreme commitment and dedication, a man who was probably seeking after truth. It was the policy of queens to choose outstanding eunuchs to fill official positions in their governments.

**Thought 1.** It takes a person of commitment and dedication to be saved. The lazy, complacent, unproductive, and comfortable do not have enough interest and concern for life to be genuinely saved.

“Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids” (Pr.6:4).

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man” (Pr.6:6-11).

“He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame” (Pr.10:5).

“The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat” (Pr.13:4).

“Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger” (Pr.19:15).

“A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again” (Pr.19:24).

“The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing” (Pr.20:4).

“Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty: Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread” (Pr.20:13).

“The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labor. He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not” (Pr.21:25-26).

“I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broke down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man” (Pr.24:30-34).

“By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through” (Eccl.10:18).

4. Philip found a worshipper. This definitely shows he was seeking after the truth and after God. Note: he was a convert to Judaism and had travelled hundreds of miles to Jerusalem to worship in the temple.

**Thought 1.** A person must be a worshipper of God Himself. But note: just being a worshipper is not enough. A person must be seeking after the only living and true God to be saved.

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).

“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (1 Chron.16:29).

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple” (Ps.27:4).

“My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God” (Ps.84:2).

5. Philip found a reader of Scripture. Picture the scene. The Ethiopian official is riding along in his chariot, not observing the scenery, not taking care of some official paperwork, but reading the Bible. The man was experiencing a deep hunger and thirst for God.

**Thought 1.** A person must hunger and thirst after righteousness, true righteousness, to be saved. One must not only *believe*, but diligently seek God. *True belief* is diligently seeking God. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.2:24.)

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Mt.5:6).

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (Jn.5:39).

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort the scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).

“With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Is.26:9).

**Thought 2.** When witnessing, believers need to be alert to the attitude, interest, commitment, and seeking levels of the lost. If the levels are low, the witness needs to quickly sow the seed and move on. There are others whose commitment and seeking levels are high, and who are ready to give their lives to Christ.

“Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee” (Ps.38:9).

“My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Ps.42:2).

“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is” (Ps.63:1).

“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee” (Ps.73:25).

“I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land” (Ps.143:6).

**3** (8:29) **Holy Spirit, Guidance:** what Philip sensed. He sensed the impulse, the tug, the movement, the direction of the Holy Spirit to approach this particular man. And he sensed the man needed Christ.

**Thought 1.** There is great need to be led by the Spirit in our witnessing. But this necessitates being surrendered and controlled by the Spirit. The great need of the hour is for believers to be controlled by the Spirit of God. Then and only then can we expect to be led by the Spirit. Note the clear statement of Scripture.

**Thought 2.** To whom should we witness? To what particular person or persons?

- 1) The Spirit of God will guide and direct us.
- 2) The problem is not the Spirit’s willingness to guide and direct us. The problem is our not being surrendered and controlled enough by the Spirit to sense and know His direction.
- 3) The Spirit of God has been trying to gain control of people’s lives ever since Christ walked upon the earth. He has needed lives to reach the world, but so few have been willing to put their lives under His control, so few have been willing to “arise and go.”

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Ro.8:14).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).

“While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them” (Acts 10:19-20).

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:2).

**“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia” (Acts 16:6).**

**4** (8:30-34) **Seeking God:** what Philip did. Philip did four significant things.

1. Philip obeyed the Spirit of God. He ran up to the man. When he did what the Spirit instructed, Philip found out that the man had been prepared to receive the witness of the Lord. He heard the man reading the Scripture out loud.
2. Philip initiated a conversation with the man. Note Philip did not wait for the man to notice and question him as to why he was running alongside the chariot. Philip took the lead; he spoke first.
3. Philip joined the man. The man invited Philip and welcomed him. The man was one to whom the believer was to go, one who welcomed the witness. Believers are not to go to those who do not welcome the message. (See notes—Mt.10:12-15; Lk.10:5-6.)
4. Philip noted where the man was in his seeking of God. The man was extremely faithful...
  - in worshipping God. He had travelled hundreds of miles to worship in the temple at Jerusalem.
  - in reading the Scripture.

But the man had a problem. He did not understand the most basic truth—the truth that Christ had died for him. He did not know that God’s Messiah had already come and died for man.

Note that the man was reading Isaiah 53:7-8, which is a prediction of the coming Messiah...

- of His death: His being led as a sheep to the slaughter.
- of His willingness to die: His not opening His mouth in opposition.
- of His humiliation in death: His judgment—the justice due Him was taken away and denied Him.
- of His generation, His seed or followers: His generation of followers are innumerable. Who can number them since Jesus’ life was taken from the earth (since He died)? (Cp. Ps.22:30.)

The man just did not understand the Scripture. He did not understand that Jesus of Nazareth had fulfilled the prophecy, that the Savior had already come and died for the sins of men.

**Thought 1.** Many do not know Christ today. Why? For the same reason the eunuch did not know: they have never heard. No believer has gone to tell them.

**“I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not” (Mt.25:43).**

**“And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes” (Lk.12:47).**

**“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas.4:17).**

**“Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard” (Pr.21:13).**

**“When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul” (Ezk.33:8-9).**

**“The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them” (Ezk.34:4).**

**5** (8:35) **Witness:** what Philip said and proclaimed. Philip preached Jesus. He took the prophecy in Isaiah and answered the very question of the man. Philip showed how Jesus fulfilled the prophecy. He preached the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus (see notes and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:3; note—2:22-24; DEEPER STUDY # 4—2:24; notes—2:25-36; 3:13-15 for discussion and verses).

**6** (8:36-38) **Decision:** what Philip saw happen. He saw three significant steps taken by the man.

1. The man desired baptism. Note the immediate request: “Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?”
2. The man believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God (see note—Acts 8:35).

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (Jn.6:35).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).**

3. The man believed and immediately followed through with baptism. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Baptism*—Acts 2:38.)

**7** (8:39-40) **Holy Spirit, Guidance:** what Philip experienced—the continued leadership of the Holy Spirit.

1. Philip was no longer needed. His task was done. It was time for him to move on, so the Spirit of God took him away. The word for “caught away” (herpasen) is strong. It means to be snatched away quickly, immediately, miraculously. It is the same word used for the rapture of the church (1 Th.4:17; cp. 2 Cor.12:2).

2. The Holy Spirit led Philip back to Samaria. Note that he travelled throughout “all the cities” preaching Christ. Eventually he came to the city of Caesarea where he bought a house and set up his evangelistic headquarters (Acts 21:8).

**“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).**

**“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Ro.8:14).**

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

| CHAPTER 9  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 There was his former life: A flaming fury against Christ &amp; His disciples</b></p> <p>a. A fierce anger: Breathed threats &amp; slaughter</p> <p>b. A fierce objective: Destroy all followers of "the Way" of the Lord<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p>1) Volunteered to storm after them</p> <p>2) Included women as well as men</p> <p><b>2 There was the light from heaven</b></p> <p><b>3 There was the confrontation with the Lord</b></p> | <p><b>D. The Confrontation Between Saul and the Lord: A Life-changing Conversion, 9:1-9</b></p> <p>And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priests,</p> <p>2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.</p> <p>3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:</p> <p>4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying</p> | <p>unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?</p> <p>5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.</p> <p>6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.</p> <p>7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.</p> <p>8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.</p> <p>9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.</p> <p>a. The charge of sin</p> <p>b. The request to know the Lord</p> <p>c. The shattering truth</p> <p>1) The Lord is Jesus</p> <p>2) It is hard to kick against conscience</p> <p><b>4 There was the surrender</b></p> <p>a. The acknowledgment: Lord</p> <p>b. The surrender: What will you have me to do?</p> <p>c. The command: Arise—go</p> <p><b>5 There were the witnesses to the event</b></p> <p><b>6 There was obedience</b></p> |

### DIVISION III

#### THE CHURCH SCATTERED: MISSIONARY BEGINNINGS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, 8:1-9:31

#### D. The Confrontation Between Saul and the Lord: A Life-changing Conversion, 9:1-9

(9:1-9) **Introduction:** Saul of Tarsus, the arch-persecutor of the Lord and His followers, was soon to become Paul, the great apostle to the world (Gentiles). From this point on in the Book of Acts, and in fact in all the New Testament, Paul becomes the dominant servant of the Lord. From all indications, only the Lord Himself superseded the dedication of this man, a man who had been forgiven so much, even the slaughter of great numbers of God's people (cp. Acts 9:1; 22:4; 26:10). His life and ministry hold so many lessons for the believer, it is impossible to cover even a smattering in one footnote. For this reason, it is not even being attempted. Instead, the major features of his life are being covered in the passages where they are mentioned. The Master Subject Index does, of course, combine his life and ministry in one overall view. Whatever subject the reader wishes to study can be found there. The present passage covers Saul's confrontation with the Lord. It is an excellent study on conversion. Paul recounts his testimony twice. (Cp. Acts 22:6-16; 26:12-18.)

1. There was his former life: a flaming fury against Christ and His disciples (v.1-2).
2. There was the light from heaven (v.3).
3. There was the confrontation with the Lord (v.4-5).
4. There was the surrender (v.6).
5. There were the witnesses to the event (v.7).
6. There was obedience (v.8-9).

**1** (9:1-2) **Paul—Persecution:** there was Saul's former life; he was the arch-persecutor of the church. He burned with a flaming fury against Christ and His disciples. Two facts show this. (See notes—Acts 8:1-4 for more discussion.)

1. Saul was consumed with a fierce anger and wrath against Christ and His disciples. He "breathed out threatenings and slaughter." The words "breathing out" in the Greek are really *breathing in* (inhaling). The picture is that of Saul *breathing in*, taking into his heart the evil of destroying Christ and His disciples. Of course, what is in the heart is what comes out. Saul actually hunted down and slaughtered believers—many of them (see note, pt.7—Acts 8:3 for more discussion).

2. Saul was given over to a fierce objective, that of destroying all the followers of "the Way" of the Lord.
- a. He volunteered—actually went to the High Priest and the Sanhedrin requesting authority to storm after the fleeing believers—to arrest and bring the believers back to Jerusalem for trial (cp. Acts 22:5; 26:10).
  - b. He included women as well as men (see note, pt.3—Acts 8:3).

(See note, *Church, Persecution of*—Acts 8:3 for more discussion and verses.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(9:2) **"The Way"—Christianity—Jesus Christ, Teachings:** the believers of the early church were known as followers of "the Way" (cp. Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). Note the teachings of the Lord were not pictured as a religion or a set of

principles, or as rules and regulations, but as...

- a way of life
- a course of life
- a means of life
- a condition of life
- a kind of life
- an experience of life

Note also the following titles or names given to Christ and His teachings.

- ⇒ The Way of Salvation (Acts 16:17).
- ⇒ The Way of the Lord (Acts 18:25).
- ⇒ The Way of Peace (Lk.1:79; Ro.3:17).
- ⇒ The Way of Truth (2 Pt.2:2).
- ⇒ The Way of Righteousness (2 Pt.2:21).

**2** (9:3) **Light:** there was the light from heaven. Note: it was while Saul was set on his slaughter of believers that he was stricken down by the light from the Lord. It was in the midst of his ferocious evil that he was saved. (There is hope for all, for anyone of us.) (See outline—Acts 26:12-18 for more facts.)

1. The light appeared suddenly, out of nowhere, unexpectedly.
2. The light was from heaven. It was supernatural and miraculous, from God Himself. God is the source and giver of the light.
3. The light was great, that is, brighter than the noonday sun (Acts 22:6; 26:13. Imagine a light so bright it actually outshines the sun!) When it burst forth, Saul saw the Lord standing in the midst of it (1 Cor.9:1; 15:8). The light radiated from the Lord Himself.
  - ⇒ “[Jesus’] face did shine as the sun and His raiment was as white as the light” (Mt.17:2; see note—Mt.17:2).
  - ⇒ “God is light” (1 Jn.1:5).
  - ⇒ “[God]...dwelling in the light which no man can approach” (1 Tim.6:16).
  - ⇒ “[God] who coverest thyself with light as with a garment” (Ps.104:2).
4. The light and sight of the heavenly figure struck Paul to the ground. (Cp. Acts 26:14 where Paul says that all the others with him fell to the earth as well.)

**Thought 1.** Now note what Scripture proclaims to all hearts. Light, the very presence of God Himself, is the *first thing* experienced in salvation.

**“God...hath shined in our hearts....” (2 Cor.4:6).**

God has to shine in a man’s heart for a man to be saved; he has to give the knowledge of the glory of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Lord of heaven, the Son of God Himself. God’s very own glory dwells in Jesus Christ. Therefore, for a man to know God’s glory, he must know the face of Jesus Christ. He must receive light, the knowledge, the understanding, the awareness, the consciousness, the quickening that Jesus is the Savior, the Son of God Himself.

**“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (Jn.1:4).**

**“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn.8:12).**

**“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor.4:6).**

**“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph.5:14).**

**“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (Is.9:2).**

**3** (9:4-5) **Paul, Conversion:** there was the confrontation with the Lord. He heard a voice speak to him. Note: he alone heard the voice. The others heard a sound, but could not distinguish the words (v.7). The message was a personal message to Paul alone.

1. There was the charge of terrible sin, of opposing and persecuting the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus called Saul by his name, “Saul, Saul.” Calling the name twice shows two things.
  - a. It shows tenderness, love, and concern, an appeal to listen and heed.
  - b. It shows rebuke and warning. Saul was treading on dangerous ground. He was close to the brink, about to fall over the edge of no recovery. Opposing Christ is serious, so serious it dooms a person to hell unless there is repentance.

**Thought 1.** Note how Christ identifies with the believer. The person who opposes the believer is opposing Christ Himself (Mt.25:40, 45).

2. There was the request to know the Lord. Saul knew that the light and the person seen in the midst of the light and the voice had all come from heaven. He knew that he was being confronted by a heavenly being. But who was the heavenly being? Saul—stricken down, humbled, convicted, frightened—cried out in desperation, “Who art thou, Lord?” He knew...

- it was the Lord, the heavenly being.
- it was the Lord he was supposed to know.

This he confessed. But he did *not* know Him. He cried out, “Who art thou, Lord? Tell me. Identify yourself. Let me know you.”

**Thought 1.** A man often *knows and confesses* that it is the Lord who is dealing with him; yet he does not know the Lord, not really, not personally. He has to cry out, “Who art thou, Lord? Tell me, show me who You are!”

3. The shattering truth is a real eye-opener to every person who opposes Jesus (or God).
- a. Jesus is the Lord, the One whom the sinner is opposing. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Lord*—Acts 2:36.) This truth shattered Saul, broke him in utter submission. Why? Because it meant...
- that every stone cast at Stephen was a stone cast against God Himself (Acts 7:59-60).
  - that every home he had stormed into was a home that truly worshipped God (Acts 8:3).
  - that every person he had forcibly dragged through the streets to jail was a true follower of God (Acts 8:3).
  - that every woman he had abused was a child of God (Acts 8:3; 9:2; 22:4).
  - that everyone he had chained and imprisoned was a true servant of God (Acts 8:3; 22:4; 26:10).
  - that every synagogue he had stormed was the true house of God (Acts 26:11).
  - that every believer he had tracked down and persecuted was a true believer (Acts 22:5; 26:11).
  - that every person whom he had killed (slaughtered, v.1), was a charge of murder against him (Acts 26:10; 22:4).
  - that he was lost, truly lost, separated from God and doomed to hell.
  - that his life was a total wreck, being totally deceived and misdirected, bent on utter destruction.
  - that he stood no chance of escaping the guilt of his sin and the doom of hell *apart from the greatest act of mercy ever shown by God*. (Cp. 1 Tim.1:16.)
- (See notes—Acts 4:2-4; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.12:10 for the reason Saul opposed Jesus so fiercely.)

**Thought 1.** When a person really sees that he has been rebelling against God Himself, the Savior of the universe, he is shattered, utterly shattered. He realizes just what Paul did...

- that he has been opposing God Himself.
- that his sin has been against God Himself.
- that he is lost, truly lost, separated from God and doomed to hell.
- that his life is a total wreck, being totally deceived and misdirected, bent on utter destruction.
- that he stands no chance of escaping the guilt of his sin and the doom of hell *apart from the greatest act of mercy ever shown by God*.

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mt.23:33).

“And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?” (Ro.2:3).

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (Heb.2:3).

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven” (Heb.12:25).

“Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them” (Jer.11:11).

“Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down” (Amos 9:2).

- b. It is hard to kick against conscience. The phrase “to kick against the pricks” is the picture of an ox being goaded or pricked with a long stick to make him respond to the driver’s will. Saul was questioning, fighting, struggling within himself over the truth. He was deliberately shutting his ears and closing his mind...
- to the truth of the gospel which he was hearing from the disciples of the Lord.
  - to the truth of his own mistaken way and the awful shame of his sin.

He had chosen and was choosing a *hard* way of life. Every man who rebels against God has chosen a hard way, a difficult life, a life that is doomed to uncertainty and always wondering about the future...

- never possessing the assurance and confidence of being acceptable to God.
- never being sure if he is really right.
- never having the permanent peace and security of God.

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25).

“For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things” (1 Jn.3:20).

“And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens” (Ezra 9:6).

“If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse” (Job 9:20).

“For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me” (Ps.38:4).

“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me” (Ps.51:3).

**4** (9:6) **Paul, Conversion:** there was the surrender. Note: Paul was trembling and in utter shock (astonished). He was devastated, hardly able to bear up under the weight of the sin for which he was now being charged. He knew beyond question he was the most terrible sinner. His only hope was to *turn* and *obey* the Lord Jesus. And, praise God, this he did. He did what every man must do to be forgiven his terrible sins.

1. He called upon and acknowledged the Lord Jesus. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Lord*—Acts 2:36. Cp. Ro.10:13.)
2. He surrendered to obey the Lord Jesus. He asked the key question: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”
3. The Lord commanded him: “Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” Note that God did not answer Saul, not right then.
  - ⇒ Saul could not bear it. He was a shattered man. He needed time for prayer and meditation, for straightening out his mind and for assurance from the Spirit of God now dwelling within him.
  - ⇒ Saul needed the maturing witness and contact and companionship of another believer. It was going to take the testimony of a mature believer that Saul had been converted and undergone a radical change for the Christian community to accept him.

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.10:32).

“Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God” (Lk.12:8).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (1 Jn.2:23).

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God” (1 Jn.4:15).

**5** (9:7) **Dullness, Spiritual:** there were the witnesses to the event. But note they were not privileged to know what was really happening. They were a type of the worldly who saw the miracle of conversion, of God’s marvelous grace, yet they never opened their own minds and hearts...

- to see the light of the Lord.
- to hear the voice of God.
- to confront the Lord.
- to call upon the Lord, surrendering to obey Him.

“Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?” (Lk.12:56).

“Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word” (Jn.8:43).

“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27).

“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God” (Ro.3:11).

“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ” (2 Cor.3:14).

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).

“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing” (Heb.5:11).

**6** (9:8-9) **Obedience:** there was obedience. Saul did just what the Lord told him: he arose and went into the city. But note several facts.

1. His eyes had been closed during the whole traumatic experience.
2. His eyes were now blinded for three days. He was helpless and had to be completely led about by others.

3. His mind would now be shut up in the world of thought alone. He would be left alone...
- to continue praying over his terrible shame.
  - to learn and know beyond question that the Lord had confronted him. Remember: he had three days for the experience to sink in.
  - to think through the confrontation with the Lord.
  - to wonder what changes there would be in his life now.
  - to switch his mind and his thought patterns, his purpose in life from the past life of religion to the present life with Christ.
  - to wonder why Jesus was choosing him, the one who had so fiercely opposed the Lord.
  - to wonder what Jesus wanted with him and what Jesus was going to tell him to do.

Note that Paul was unable to eat or drink for three days. The trauma drained all his strength, completely exhausted him.

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of the Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).**

**“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn.7:17).**

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).**

**“For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer” (Ps.32:4).**

**“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me” (Ps.42:5-6).**

**“My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word” (Ps.119:28).**

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| <p><b>1 Need 1: Help from a very special believer (disciple)</b></p> <p>a. A believer who was sensitive to God's call</p> <p>b. A believer who was willing to face difficult assignments</p> <p>c. A believer who was willing to be the answer to prayer</p><br><p>d. A believer who sensed inadequacy &amp; apprehension</p> | <p><b>E. The Preparation of Saul: The Needs of a New Convert, 9:10-18</b></p> <p>10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.</p> <p>11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,</p> <p>12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.</p> <p>13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:</p> | <p>14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.</p> <p>15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:</p> <p>16 For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.</p> <p>17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.</p> <p>18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.</p> | <p>e. A believer who would obey God</p> <p><b>2 Need 2: To know he was a chosen vessel of God</b></p> <p>a. To bear the Lord's name</p> <p>b. To suffer for the sake of the Lord's name</p> <p><b>3 Need 3: To experience the help &amp; ministry of God's disciple<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p>a. The touch of his faithfulness</p> <p>b. The recognition of being a "brother"</p> <p>c. The power of his healing ministry</p> <p>d. The sharing of the Holy Spirit's infilling</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: MISSIONARY BEGINNINGS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, 8:1-9:31**

**E. The Preparation of Saul: The Needs of a New Convert, 9:10-18**

(9:10-18) **Introduction:** the person who has just come to know Christ has many needs. As a new convert, he is helpless and usually doomed to falling and returning to the world unless his needs are met. This is the challenge of the church, of mature believers. The needs of new converts must be met.

1. Need 1: help from a very special believer (disciple) (v.10-15).
2. Need 2: to know that he is a chosen vessel of God (v.15-16).
3. Need 3: to experience the help and ministry of God's disciple (v.17-18).

**1** (9:10-15) **Discipleship:** the new convert needed help from a very special believer. Apparently the believer was not one of the apostles or deacons nor an ordained minister. The believer was a simple unknown disciple named Ananias. But the traits Ananias possessed were exactly what was needed by the new convert, Saul. (Cp. Acts 22:12 for two other traits of Ananias mentioned by Paul: a strong testimony, and being devout or godly.)

1. Ananias was sensitive to God's call. When God spoke to Ananias, he listened. He was alert and sensitive, aware of and familiar with the voice of God. He was a man of much prayer. Therefore, when God called him, he knew the voice of God and he answered.

**Thought 1.** The new convert needs the ministry of a disciple who knows the voice of God. He needs to learn how to be sensitive to the call and direction of God.

**"Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt.28:19-20).**

**"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim.2:2).**

**"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Pt.5:5-6).**

2. Ananias was willing to face difficult assignments. Reaching out and helping a new convert is always difficult, a heavy responsibility. And the more depraved the convert has been, the more difficult the task becomes. This was true with Saul; this is true with all new converts.

In dealing with the new convert, there is always some apprehension, for he is somewhat unknown and to some degree a stranger and a novice in the faith. There is the difficulty...

- of learning where he is in spiritual and Biblical understanding.
  - of learning where he is in emotional maturity.
  - of knowing what to teach, where to begin, and the pace at which to teach.
  - of determining how much time is necessary to disciple him.
  - of being on guard against becoming a stumbling block, because he is always observing and watching one's life.
  - of rooting and grounding him in the faith by life and example, instruction and *personal attachment*.
  - of leading him to love and not to be critical and judgmental, opposing and attacking other believers.
  - of protecting him from falling and from returning to the world, from returning to his former life of sin.
3. Ananias was willing to be the answer to prayer. Note how God assured the believer, Ananias.
- a. God told Ananias that Paul was praying: he was truly a new convert, seeking God's face. He was broken and trembling, stricken and apprehensive...
    - over the shattering appearance of the Lord Jesus.
    - over the warning from the Lord that he was on the brink of disaster and doom.
    - over having rebelled and opposed the Lord and His people.
    - over his terrible sin.
    - over his obstinate unbelief and over deception, having fought and struggled against God and having kicked against the pricks of conscience when he knew better.
    - over having to wait for the Lord's Word instructing him what to do.
    - over his having been stricken blind and being in total darkness.
  - b. God told Ananias that Paul had been given a vision—clear assurance—that a believer (named Ananias) would come and help him.

The point is this: the new convert who is genuine prays for help. He prays for God to send mature believers into his life who will help him to grow and to know the Lord's will for his life. It is the mature believer himself who becomes the answer to the new convert's prayer.

**Thought 1.** How desperately the Lord needs believers who will reach out to help those who are new in the faith, believers who will stand in the gap and become the answer themselves to the prayer of new converts.

**Thought 2.** All converts who are genuine desire to grow in the knowledge of the Lord. They long for believers to befriend and help them. It is up to us to become the person, the believer, the very answer to the new convert's prayer. There is no one else except us.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

**“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).**

4. Ananias sensed inadequacy and apprehension. He knew about the former life of Saul, the terrible sin and shame, the threat that he was to believers. He shrank from helping him, sensing both an inadequacy and apprehension. But note: this is exactly how the believer should feel about the call of God, no matter what the call is. Feeling inadequate and being apprehensive makes the believer cast himself upon God. It teaches him to trust God, His grace, His suffering, His strength more and more.

**Thought 1.** The very thing Saul (and all other converts) needed was the help of a disciple who knew what it was to feel inadequate and apprehensive. All new converts (just as Saul) have to face difficult tasks all through life, tasks that demand God's special grace if they are to be worked out for the most good. A believer who senses inadequacy can teach the new convert to trust and depend upon God rather quickly.

**“John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven” (Jn.3:27).**

**“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (Jn.15:5).**

**“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God” (2 Cor.3:5).**

**“The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me” (Ps.116:6).**

5. Ananias was willing to obey when God said go. The new convert needs an obedient believer helping him. He would be helpless and most likely ruined if the believer was not obedient. Obedience, learning to obey, is the supreme trait and evidence of the true believer.

a. To obey is to believe and to believe is to obey.

**“He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb.5:9. See DEEPER STUDY # 2, Believe—Jn.2:24.)**

**“The Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32).**

**“His servants ye are to whom ye obey” (Ro.6:16).**

**“Obey my voice” (Jer.7:23; 11:4).**

b. To obey is to love and to love is to obey.

**“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn.14:21).**

**“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him” (1 Jn.2:5).**

c. “To obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam.15:22).

**2** (9:15-16) **Minister, Call:** the new convert needed to know that he was a chosen vessel, a chosen instrument of God. Saul needed to know this glorious truth; so does every new convert. The Lord says this clearly:

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (Jn.15:16).**

The new convert is a priceless vessel, a vessel that must not be knocked over and broken, cast away, or neglected and ignored. The new convert needs to know God has chosen to use him in His work and service, giving him the greatest possible purpose on earth. There are two things in particular he needs to know.

1. God has chosen the believer to bear the Lord’s name.

a. He needs to know that he is to bear the Lord’s name in his heart and in his behavior and actions. Christ is in his heart and the Spirit of God Himself indwells his life. His body has become the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.6:19-20). He is now precious to the Lord and counted as a dear child of God. He is a member of the family of God and an heir of heaven and of eternity. The new convert must be taught; he must learn and come to know...

- that he is to deny self, and take up his cross daily

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

- that he is to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world

**“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit.2:12).**

- that he is to present his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Ro.12:1).**

- that he is not to forsake the assembling of himself with other believers, but to seek their fellowship

**“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb.10:25).**

The presence of Christ within the believer’s heart is said to be a “treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Cor.4:7). It is a treasure that brings fellowship and communion with the Lord Himself, the perfect assurance and confidence that all things are well both now and eternally. The Lord’s presence assures the believer that the Lord cares and is looking after and will carry him through the trials of life victoriously, even through death. Therefore, the convert must be helped to diligently seek God, to conform his life to Christ, and to guard and watch where he goes and what he does and says.

b. He needs to know that he is to bear the Lord’s name in verbal witnessing. He is to witness before all men, high and low, as he can *make opportunity*. The new convert needs to know that his primary purpose for being on earth is to share the glorious salvation that is in Christ Jesus. He is to reach out and help all whom

he can, ministering and meeting their needs in the love of Christ. Wherever he is, he is to witness and help others: at work, at home, at play, at school. The world needs Christ even as he does.

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21).**

**“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).**

**“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).**

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).**

2. God has chosen the believer to suffer for the sake of the Lord’s name. Every true believer is abused and suffers at the hands of the world. Christ has forewarned believers: they shall suffer persecution. The new convert needs to know this. (See note—Mt.5:10-12 for more discussion.)

**“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).**

**“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).**

**“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (1 Jn.3:13).**

**“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” (1 Pt.4:12).**

**3** (9:17-18) **Ministering:** the new convert needed to experience the help and ministry of God’s disciple. Just imagine the brokenness and trembling, the stricken and apprehensive heart of Saul (see note—Acts 9:15-16). He desperately needed four things (as do all new converts).

1. He needed the touch of a disciple’s hand and faithfulness. He needed the presence of some disciple who was faithful enough to come and touch his life. He needed to see faithfulness in action—love, care, concern, interest, help—all ministered to him in the name of Christ. Nothing could help the new convert more than seeing the faithfulness of a disciple reaching out to help him in his need.

2. The recognition of being a *brother* in the Lord. Note: Ananias called Saul *brother*. This one word probably caused Paul to break out in tears. He was being reached out to by a dear believer of the Lord, accepted, and welcomed into his heart despite the terrible wrong he had done to the believers. He now had confirmation; he had been truly forgiven and received by the Lord. He had been truly accepted by God and he was beloved in the name of Jesus, the name he had abused and hurt so much in the past. How he needed to hear a dear child of God say “brother!” And now he had heard it. Only eternity and a conversation with Paul will reveal the impact this one act had upon Paul.

3. The power of his healing ministry. Saul was afflicted. He needed Ananias to help him in his affliction. He needed his eyes healed, his sight restored, and God used his dear disciple to heal Saul. The scales of darkness fell from his eyes, symbolizing how the scales of spiritual darkness and sin and shame had been removed from his heart.

4. The sharing of the Holy Spirit’s infilling; the power of the Spirit. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 9:17-18.)

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

**“Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph.5:18).**

**“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

**“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph.3:17-19).**

**“Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness” (2 Cor.9:10).**

**“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph.4:15).**

**“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pt.2:2).**

**“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn.10:10).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(9:17-18) **Paul, Conversion—Holy Spirit, Infilling:** Was Paul saved on the Damascus road, or when he was infilled with the Holy Spirit? The question is debated by various scholars. Note exactly what Scripture says.

1. Saul called Jesus "Lord": "Who art thou Lord?" (v.5). However, Saul did not know who was speaking to him out of the light (v.3-5). He was asking. But note this.

⇒ The "light [was] from heaven" (v.3)

⇒ The voice was from heaven (v.4).

Saul knew something: whoever was speaking was of heaven; He was a heavenly being. He knew it was bound to be just who He said, "The Lord." He knew it was the Lord in the same sense that Cornelius did (Acts 10:4), not knowing God personally, but knowing that it was the Lord God of heaven.

2. Saul called Jesus "Lord" again and in a far greater sense: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" There can be little question Saul was surrendering to the Lord here. Note this: he was "trembling and astonished" (in utter shock). He was devastated, hardly able to survive the weight of sin for which he was now being charged. Beyond any question he sensed that he was the most terrible sinner. His only hope was to turn and obey the Lord Jesus. And note: he did exactly what every man must do to be forgiven his sins.

⇒ He called upon and acknowledged the Lord Jesus. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Lord*—Acts 2:36. Cp. Ro.10:13.)

⇒ He surrendered to obey the Lord Jesus. He asked the key question: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

3. Saul prayed (v.11). He spent three whole days in prayer. Keeping in mind how shattered he was, a person has to really stretch the imagination to hold that he was not saved. Note it was the Lord Himself who said, "He prayeth." So his praying must have been acceptable to God.

4. The Lord gave Saul a *true* vision which, when the details of it are studied, is phenomenal. Again, the imagination has to be really stretched to hold that he was not saved.

The evidence is strong: Saul surrendered to the Lord on the Damascus road. It was there that the Lord (the Holy Spirit) entered his heart and life. And, as he was to experience the need for many infillings of the Spirit in the future, the need existed when Ananias visited him. So God infilled him then, the first of many enduements of power that were to come upon him. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Holy Spirit*— Acts 2:1-4; DEEPER STUDY # 2—8:14-17. Cp. Eph.5:18.)

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| <p><b>1 He cared for himself physically</b><br/> <b>2 He joined &amp; became associated &amp; identified with other disciples</b><br/> <b>3 He preached immediately</b><br/>         a. Preached Christ<br/>         b. Preached He is the</p> | <p><b>F. The Beginning of Paul's Witness: A Believer's Life and Testimony, 9:19-22</b></p> <p>19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.<br/>         20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of</p> | <p>God.<br/>         21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?<br/>         22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.</p> | <p>Son of God<br/> <b>4 He stood as a testimony to the community</b></p> <p><b>5 He was faithful &amp; steadfast, continuing on with Christ</b><br/>         a. He grew spiritually<br/>         b. He proclaimed Jesus: He is the Christ</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: MISSIONARY BEGINNINGS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, 8:1-9:31**

**F. The Beginning of Paul's Witness: A Believer's Life and Testimony, 9:19-22**

(9:19-22) **Introduction:** the life of Saul, the new convert, is a dynamic example for all. It paints a picture of just what the believer's life and testimony should be.

1. He cared for himself physically (v.19).
2. He joined and became associated and identified with other disciples (v.19).
3. He preached immediately (v.20).
4. He stood as a testimony to the community (v.21).
5. He was faithful and steadfast, continuing on with Christ (v.22).

**1** (9:19) **Body:** Saul cared for himself physically; he looked after his body. He had spent three days before the Lord, confined to the Lord's presence. He had been...

- shattered spiritually.
- drained and exhausted physically.
- isolated socially.
- made weak physically.

He had not eaten, not even had anything to drink (v.9). He was drained and wrung out. Now note what happened: he received food. It seems to read as though he was so weak he had to be fed. Whatever the situation, he was strengthened both by the food and by the Lord. The Lord as well as the food were actively strengthening him.

The point is that both Saul and God were taking care of his body, strengthening him so he could do what God wanted him to do. God had a task, a special work for him to do. His body had to be strengthened and made fit for the task.

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Ro.12:1).**

**"My earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Ph.1:20).**

**"Bodily exercise profiteth [a] little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim.4:8).**

**Thought 1.** Note the strong lessons on eating right, exercising, and getting adequate sleep.

**2** (9:19) **Church:** Paul joined and became associated and identified with other believers. What happened to Paul is critical to note, for it holds a much needed lesson for every generation of men. Paul joined the other believers at Damascus because he was a *true* believer. His old nature, the old man, had truly died; and he now had the new nature of believers. He was *bound* to join those with the same nature as him. It was their presence he desired. He wanted to share in...

- their companionship and fellowship (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 2:42 for more discussion).
- their love, concern, and care.
- their beliefs and principles.
- their study of the Word.
- their growth in Christ.
- their edifying and building up of each other.
- their witness and service.

Saul associated and became identified with the church so that the world might know that he was a believer. He wanted to openly and publicly declare that he was now...

- a new creature in Christ Jesus.
- a follower of "the Way" which he had opposed and persecuted.
- a true disciple of the Lord Jesus.

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb.10:25).

“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” (Ps.119:63).

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Mal.3:16).

**3** (9:20) **Preaching:** Paul immediately preached, not hesitating at all. Note two points.

1. He preached Christ. He was no longer preaching religion, tradition, ceremony, or ritual. Neither was he preaching himself or his spiritual experiences, that is, his visions of the Lord, his discipline, his fasting and praying. He preached Christ and Him alone.

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor.4:5).

“But...we preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor.1:23).

“[Christ]...the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col.1:27-28).

2. He preached that Christ (Messiah) is the Son of God (see note, *Preaching*—Acts 11:19-30 for discussion).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee” (Jn.9:35-37).

“I and my Father are one” (Jn.10:30).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (Jn.11:25-27).

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col.2:9).

**4** (9:21) **Preaching—Zeal:** Paul stood as a testimony to the community. The public as well as the leaders of the synagogue were amazed (existanto), astonished, astounded, shocked at what they were seeing.

1. They were expecting an inflamed antagonist storming the homes and meeting places of those who “called on the name of Jesus.” They knew he had been sent to arrest and chain not only the men, but the women followers of Jesus, and to drag them back to Jerusalem for treason and death.

2. Instead, they were witnessing a man radically changed, a man...

- associating and identifying himself with those whom he had come to destroy.
- preaching like a flaming evangel, proclaiming Jesus to be the Messiah and the Son of God.

“But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” (Lk.12:50).

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Ro.1:16).

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2).

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).

“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer.20:9).

**5** (9:22) **Steadfastness:** Paul was faithful and steadfast, continuing on with Christ. Note two significant facts.

1. He continued to grow spiritually, increasing more and more in spiritual strength. The words “increased the more” (mallon enedunamouto) mean to become strong within, to gain inner strength, to increase spiritually.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Mt.5:48).

“Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness” (2 Cor.9:10).

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph.4:15).

**“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Eph.6:10).**

**“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Ph.4:13).**

**“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).**

**“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).**

**“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.2:1).**

**“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Heb.6:1).**

**“But let patience [stedfastness] have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (Jas.1:4).**

Note: the more he grew in the Lord, the more he was able to “confound” (confuse) those who opposed and rebelled against the gospel. He was able to “prove” (affirm and confirm) it with more and more power as he grew and grew.

2. He continued to preach that Jesus is the Messiah.

**“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).**

**“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).**

**“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (1 Jn.2:23).**

**“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God” (1 Jn.4:15).**

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| <p><b>1 Faithful in witnessing, but faced a life-threatening plot</b><sup>DS1,2</sup></p> <p>a. His witnessing (v.20)<br/>b. The plot to kill him</p> <p>c. The escape</p> <p><b>2 Faithful in seeking fellowship with believers, but rejected</b></p> <p>a. He tried to join the fellowship of believers<br/>b. His past haunted him:</p> | <p><b>G. The Foretaste of Paul's Great Sufferings: Faithful Despite Terrible Trial, 9:23-30</b></p> <p>23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:<br/>24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.<br/>25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.<br/>26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.</p> | <p>27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.<br/>28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.<br/>29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.<br/>30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.</p> | <p>Believers rejected him<br/>c. He was befriended by Barnabas</p> <p>d. He was finally accepted</p> <p><b>3 Faithful in preaching boldly, but faced opposition and assassination</b></p> <p>a. His bold preaching<br/>b. The opposition &amp; attempted assassination<br/>c. The escape</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: MISSIONARY BEGINNINGS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, 8:1-9:31**

**G. The Foretaste of Paul's Great Suffering: Faithful Despite Terrible Trial, 9:23-30**

(9:23-30) **Introduction:** the one thing God wants is faithfulness. Believers are to be faithful no matter the trouble or trial. The one man who blazed across the pages of history who stands head and shoulders above all others in faithfulness is Paul.

1. Faithful in witnessing, but faced a life-threatening plot (v.23-25).
2. Faithful in seeking fellowship with believers, but rejected (v.26-28).
3. Faithful in preaching boldly, but faced opposition and assassination (v.29-30).

**1** (9:23-25) **Witnessing—Paul, Persecution:** Paul was faithful in witnessing, faithful despite a life-threatening plot against him.

1. Paul had apparently been witnessing in Damascus for some time, preaching Christ and proving that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior promised by God (v.20, 22). He was strong in the Lord. His spiritual strength was evident and his proclamation confounded those who rebelled against the Lord and His gospel (v.22).

The gospel is effective; it always is.

**“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb.4:12).**

**“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Is.55:11).**

**“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (Jn.4:35-36).**

**“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal.6:9).**

**“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Ps.126:5-6).**

2. The Jews plotted to kill Paul. They became disturbed—full of anger, bitterness, and enmity. Why? Why did they hate Paul with such vengeance?

- a. They considered him a traitor to their religion and nation and cause (cp. Acts 9:1-2, 20-21. See notes—Acts 4:2-4; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt. 12:10 for more discussion.)
- b. Paul was sharper than they were in debate. He out-argued them and they felt ashamed and embarrassed. They were unable to get the best of him mentally and spiritually, so they set out to retaliate physically.
- c. The message of the gospel convicted and threatened them. The gospel demanded self-denial, the sacrifice of all they were and had to the Lord Jesus. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.9:23.)

What the Jews did was convince the civil authorities, the governor of Damascus, that Paul was a fanatic, a rabble-rouser, a threat to the peace of the city. The Jews were so convincing, the governor sent patrols out on a manhunt for Paul and posted guards all around the city to prevent his escape (v.23-25; cp. 2 Cor.11:33).

3. Paul escaped. The plot to kill him was discovered. Patrols and guards were everywhere. The way of escape was interesting. The city was surrounded by a wall; the disciples put him in a basket and lowered him down by the wall.

**Thought 1.** Paul's faithfulness and his bold witnessing are a dynamic example for all. No matter the opposition, we must be faithful in bearing testimony for Christ. People must hear the gospel, the glorious news that the Savior has come to give life and to give it abundantly (Jn.10:10).

**"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"** (Jn.10:10).

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"** (Mt.28:19-20).

**"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"** (Mk.16:15).

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"** (Acts 1:8).

**"Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life"** (Acts 5:20).

**Thought 2.** Being a fanatic is often the charge made against the believer and his witnessing for Christ. Note Paul's faithfulness and loyalty to Christ despite all.

**"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved"** (Mt.10:22).

**"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God"** (2 Tim.1:8).

**"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"** (2 Tim.2:3-4).

**"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [trial]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him"** (Jas.1:12).

**"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully"** (1 Pt.2:19).

**Thought 3.** God will always *make a way to escape* if we are faithful in our witness. He will either deliver us from the difficulty or carry us through the difficulty. He will even carry us through death into His wonderful presence.

**"There hath no temptation [trial] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"** (1 Cor.10:13).

**"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever"** (2 Tim.4:18).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(9:23) **Paul, Preparation—Journeys:** note the words, "And after *many* days were fulfilled." This seems to refer to Paul's Arabian retirement where he spent two to three years alone with God.

In Galatians 1:15-18, Paul says that immediately after God saved and called him, he...

- did not confer with flesh and blood (to learn about Jesus),
- did not go up to Jerusalem (to confer with the apostles about Jesus),
- *but he went into Arabia* where he stayed for about three years (Gal.1:17-18);
- then, after Arabia, he *returned* to Damascus.

What happened seems to be this: after Ananias helped Paul, he stayed with the disciples at Damascus for "certain days" (hemeras tinas, a term indicating a short time) (Acts 9:19). While there he preached like wild-fire (v.20); but in so doing, he began to sense a real inadequacy, a deep need to get alone with the Lord. This he did. He left Damascus, and just like Moses of old who sought the Lord for years in the desert, Paul went into the desert of Arabia to spend three years learning from the Lord Himself. It was in the quietness of the desert that he communed and learned of his Lord; it was there that God...

- revealed the truth to Paul causing Paul to rethink and restructure his beliefs.
- revealed the truths of Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians.
- revealed the marvels and mysteries of His glorious grace and His plan for believers and the world (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Cor.2:7 for a list of the mysteries).

The point is this: "after many days" in Arabia, Paul *returned* to Damascus. It is here that the story picks up in Acts 9:23. Paul was a much more mature believer and servant of the Lord now. But note: this fact shows how time is needed for a believer to mature enough to carry out his lifetime ministry for the Lord.

- ⇒ After returning from Arabia and ministering in Damascus, it was still twelve years before Paul was called to launch his missionary journeys. He had to flee Damascus, for assassination attempts were made against his life. He went to Jerusalem, but he had to flee from there also. It was from Jerusalem that he went home to Tarsus and remained for eleven years. (See *Deeper Study # 1, Paul, Journeys—Gal.1:17-24.*)
- ⇒ Paul's time in Tarsus, his hometown, was apparently both a learning and training time just as Arabia had been. But it was apparently a time of ministering as well.

**Thought 1.** Paul's time in Arabia and Tarsus show how a person must take time to get alone with God to learn, grow, and prepare before carrying out his life ministry.

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(9:23) **Paul, Journeys:** a complete list of the significant journeys of Paul seems to be as follows (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Paul, Journeys—Gal.1:17-24* for more discussion):

1. His conversion (Gal.1:15-16; Acts 9:1f).
2. His first ministry in Damascus (Acts 9:19-22).
3. His time alone with God in Arabia (Gal.1:17).
4. His second ministry in Damascus after returning from Arabia (Acts 9:23-25).
5. His first trip to Jerusalem for fifteen days to see Peter (Gal.1:18-19; Acts 9:23-30). The apostles in Acts 9:27 would be Peter and James, the Lord's brother.
6. His ministry in and around Tarsus which apparently lasted for about eleven years (Gal.1:21-2:1).
7. His call by Barnabas to help him minister in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26).
8. His second trip to Jerusalem to carry relief goods during a famine (Gal.2:1f; Acts 11:30; 12:25).
9. His call and commissioning as a missionary (Acts 13:2-3).
10. His first great mission to the Gentiles: to Cyprus and Galatia (Acts 13:1-14:28).
11. His return to Antioch after completing his first missionary journey (Acts 14:26-28).
12. His third trip to Jerusalem to defend the gospel of grace before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-30).
13. His return to Antioch with the message from the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:30-35).
14. His second great mission to the Gentiles: to Europe (Acts 15:36-18:22).
15. His return to Antioch after completing his second missionary journey (Acts 18:22).
16. His third great mission to the Gentiles: Asia Minor and Europe (Acts 18:23-21:16).
17. His fourth and final trip to Jerusalem where he was arrested (Acts 21:17-26:32).
18. His journey to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:1-28:15).
19. His ministry in Rome while a prisoner (Acts 28:16-31).

**2** (9:26-28) **Church—Worship:** Paul was faithful in seeking fellowship with believers, but they rejected him. Paul fled to Jerusalem. Note these facts.

1. Paul tried and tried to join the disciples at Jerusalem. The Greek word "assayed" or "tried" (epeirazen) means to try repeatedly.
2. Paul's past as the arch-persecutor of believers haunted him; the believers would not accept him. They did not believe his testimony. They were suspicious, thinking he was an imposter trying to work his way into the circle of believers...
  - to spy upon them.
  - to identify all the disciples so he could arrest them.

3. Paul was befriended by Barnabas. Somehow Barnabas began to sense Paul may be telling the truth. Apparently, he sat down with Paul and had Paul relate his experiences with Christ. Barnabas became thoroughly convinced that Paul was truthful, and took Paul to the apostles. (By apostles is meant Peter and James, the half-brother of Jesus who was to become, if he was not already, the pastor of the church at Jerusalem [Gal.1:18-19]. The other apostles were probably out of town on some mission.) Note that Barnabas, after introducing Paul to Peter and James, shared three things about Paul:

- ⇒ Paul's conversion—that he had actually seen the Lord on the road to Damascus.
- ⇒ that the Lord had actually spoken to Paul.
- ⇒ that Paul had been preaching boldly in Damascus.

4. Paul was finally accepted. Peter was convinced and invited Paul to stay with him. Paul did, and he stayed fifteen glorious days, fellowshipping with the man whom the Lord Himself had chosen to be the first leader of His dear people (cp. Gal.1:18. Note: Paul said his primary purpose for coming to Jerusalem was to see Peter.) This was important, for it meant he had not gone for the purpose of ministering, but to learn about Jesus from the leader of the apostolic band. Note also that while there, Paul was not sitting around revelling in the fellowship of Peter and James. He still ministered, still bore witness of the saving grace of God. He went out and preached Jesus.

**Thought 1.** Note the great struggle Paul went through just to be able to worship and fellowship with other believers. There was no thought whatsoever about forsaking the assembly of believers, no thoughts about worshipping alone out in nature or wherever. He fought to fellowship with other believers, fought until they accepted him.

**"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).**

**“For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me” (Ro.1:11-12).**

**“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb.10:25).**

**3** (9:29-30) **Preaching—Faithful:** Paul was faithful in preaching boldly, faithful despite facing opposition and an attempted assassination. Note three points.

1. Paul preached boldly in Jerusalem. It must be remembered that Paul *had not* gone to Jerusalem to preach, but to see Peter (Gal.1:18). In fact, it was dangerous for him to become too visible because it had been only three years since he had been commissioned by the city officials to be the arch-persecutor of the church. So, why was Paul found preaching? There are probably two reasons.

- a. He could not keep quiet. Sharing the Lord and the message of the glorious gospel of salvation was in his heart, and he just had to share with all who would listen.
- b. He still felt pain over Stephen’s death and ached for the Grecian Jews (Hellenists) he had aroused to murder Stephen. Being in Jerusalem gave him the opportunity to go back to them, confess his wrong, and proclaim Christ to them. He probably went into the very synagogue where he had argued against Stephen, trying to reach the very ones who had helped him stone Stephen.

**Thought 1.** There is a great lesson here. We should try to reach those we have offended or led astray.

**“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Mt.5:23-24).**

**“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Ro.12:18).**

2. The opposition was fierce. The Grecians refused to surrender to the One called “Jesus.” They rebelled, arguing with Paul. They became so infuriated with him that they determined to assassinate him.

3. The believers discovered the plot. But the Lord Himself also warned Paul, instructing him to flee the city and go to Tarsus, his hometown. It was there that Paul was to begin reaching the Gentiles of the world (Acts 22:17-21).

**Thought 1.** The major thrust to note is Paul’s unswerving faithfulness to Christ despite terrible trial. A courageous example for all!

**Thought 2.** Note the four commendable traits seen in Paul throughout these events:

- ⇒ a strong conviction in Christ as the true Messiah.
- ⇒ an iron determination to be obedient in witnessing—regardless.
- ⇒ an unswerving perseverance in purpose.
- ⇒ a strong, strong stamina and commitment to preaching.

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard” (Acts 22:14-15).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).**

**“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).**

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|   | <b>H. The State of the Church:<br/>What a Church Should<br/>Be, 9:31</b>   |
| <b>1 Condition 1: At peace</b>  | 31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. |
| <b>2 Condition 2: Edified</b>   |  |
| <b>3 Condition 3: Walking</b><br>a. In fearful trust <sup>DS1</sup><br>b. In the Spirit's comfort |  |
| <b>4 Condition 4: Growing</b>   |  |

### DIVISION III

#### THE CHURCH SCATTERED: MISSIONARY BEGINNINGS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, 8:1-9:31

#### H. The State of the Church: What a Church Should Be, 9:31

(9:31) **Introduction:** this single verse is a summary statement showing the state of the church. It is a picture of just what a church should be.

1. Condition 1: at peace (v.31).
2. Condition 2: edified (v.31).
3. Condition 3: walking (v.31).
  - a. In fearful trust.
  - b. In the Spirit's comfort.
4. Condition 4: growing (v.31).

**1** (9:31) **Church, At Peace; At Rest:** the church was at peace. The word "rest" (eirenen) is peace in the Greek. The tense is active: the church was in a continuous state of peace or rest. It had been going through a most troublesome time, but now the trouble had been handled and peace reigned. Calm and rest settled in and took control. The idea is that the believers were now joying and rejoicing in the peace and deliverance God had given from their great trial. The problem had been severe persecution (see outline and notes—Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-2 for discussion). But now the storm had settled; peace and calm, quiet and rest prevailed.

God Himself stopped the persecution. He did so by doing two things.

1. God converted the arch-persecutor himself, Saul of Tarsus (see outline and notes—Acts 9:1-9. Rather humorously and rejoicing in the grace of God, that is one way to stop the persecution: convert the persecutor!)
2. God overruled the evil of men, worked it out for good. He used a world event to distract the Jewish rulers from the church. The Roman emperor Caligula was attempting to set up a statue or an image of himself in the temple at Jerusalem. He was set on forcing the Jews to worship his image. This, of course, was anathema, accursed to the Jews. In their minds, it was a much greater threat than the small movement of Christianity. Therefore, they turned from persecuting the church to dealing with the threat of the Roman emperor.

**Thought 1.** The church is to joy and rejoice when peace and rest reign about the church.

- 1) The church should joy in God who worked things out for good and brought such a state of peace to the church. The believer shall suffer persecution (cp. Ph.1:28; 2 Tim.3:12). There is no escape. Therefore, when peace reigns there is cause for rejoicing.

**"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [trials, sufferings]; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jas.1:2-4).**

**"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pt.4:12-13).**

- 2) The church should make use of the calm and peace, bearing a stronger testimony than ever before. Times of peace and quiet, rest and comfort are too often used for revelling in the *blessings* of fellowship, and the church becomes complacent and lethargic. This should not be the case. Calm and peace mean the gospel is *now unhindered and unopposed*. Therefore, opportunity for proclaiming the gospel *freely* should be grasped to the fullest.

**"For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk.19:10).**

**"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (Jn.9:4).**

**"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (Jn.20:21; cp. Lk.19:10).**

**"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Col.4:5).**

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Ps.90:12).

**2** (9:31) **Church—Edification:** the church was “edified” (oikudomoumene). The word means to build up, to grow spiritually, to promote spiritual growth, to strengthen, to establish, to confirm in the faith. The tense is continuous action. The believers were continuing to grow spiritually...

- becoming stronger in their faith in the Lord Jesus.
- learning more of the Word of God, of Jesus’ teachings and doctrines.
- gaining a greater knowledge of the Holy Spirit’s presence and power.
- learning how and becoming more effective witnesses for the Lord.
- gaining more and more boldness both for living and witnessing.

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Ro.14:19).

“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Ro.15:2).

“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor.14:3).

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:12).

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph.4:29).

**3** (9:31) **Believer, Life - Behavior—Walk, Spiritual:** the church was walking in the Lord just as the Holy Spirit exhorts in Scripture.

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Pt.2:21).

Note they were *walking* in two things in particular.

1. They walked in the “fear of the Lord” (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Fear—Acts 9:31* for discussion). Very simply, this means to *live* in “the fear of the Lord”; to live before Him in trust, reverence, awe, worship, and obedience. It means to live a life that witnesses to the glory of His love and grace, holiness and righteousness.

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt.10:28).

“And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation” (Lk.1:50).

“But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).

“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Dt.10:12).

“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth” (Josh.24:14).

“What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose” (Ps.25:12).

“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!” (Ps.31:19).

“The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy” (Ps.147:11).

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Pr.1:7).

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl.12:13).

“Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Is.8:13).

2. They walked in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. The word “comfort” (parakleseis) means *paraclete*, the very title by which Christ called the Holy Spirit. It means comforter, advisor, helper, encourager, exhorter. The picture is that of One who is called to stand by the believer’s side (just as Jesus did). That is the reason Jesus made the great promise: “[God] shall give you *another Comforter*.” (See note—Jn.14:26 for more discussion.) The Holy Spirit was flooding their hearts with a great sense...

- of the Lord’s presence: comforting, advising, helping, counseling, and exhorting them.
- of joy and rejoicing over the great salvation that had saved them to the utmost and given them an eternal inheritance in the presence of God Himself.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (Jn.14:16).

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn.14:26).

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col.1:12).

“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:4).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(9:31) **Fear** (phobo): means to stand in awe and reverence before God. It does not mean to fear God’s presence, to shrink and withdraw from Him. To the contrary, it means that a person reverences and stands in awe of Him, wanting to approach and know Him because He is the majestic and sovereign Being of the universe. It means that a person does not fear...

- to trust and believe Him
- to approach and worship Him
- to do His will
- to serve Him

**4** (9:31) **Church**: the church was growing and multiplying by leaps and bounds. But note why the church was growing at such a rapid pace. The believers...

- were at rest and peace.
- were edifying and building each other up.
- were walking in the fear of the Lord.
- were walking under the control of the Spirit.

These are the essentials for church growth, for reaching people with the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1 The disciple: A commitment to the Lord's mission</b><br/> <b>2 The place: A city where saints lived<sup>DS1,2</sup></b></p> | <p><b>IV. THE CHURCH SCATTERED: THE FIRST GREAT MISSION TO THE GENTILES—BY PETER, 9:32-11:18</b></p> <p><b>A. A Broader Ministry—In Lydda: Making Men Whole, 9:32-35</b></p> <p>32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at</p> | <p>Lydda.<br/>         33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.<br/>         34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.<br/>         35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.</p> | <p><b>3 The need: A tragic sickness</b></p> <p><b>4 The proclamation: Jesus Christ heals<sup>DS3</sup></b></p> <p><b>5 The result: All turned to the Lord<sup>DS4</sup></b></p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: THE FIRST GREAT MISSION TO THE GENTILES—BY PETER, 9:32-11:18**

**A. A Broader Ministry—In Lydda: Making Men Whole, 9:32-35**

(9:32-35) **Introduction:** the power of Christ to make men whole is proclaimed in this passage.

1. The disciple: a commitment to the Lord's mission (v.32).
2. The place: a city where saints lived (v.32).
3. The need: a tragic sickness (v.33).
4. The proclamation: Jesus Christ heals (v.34).
5. The result: all turned to the Lord (v.35).

**1** (9:32) **Peter—Dedication:** there was Peter's commitment to the Lord's mission. Christ had chosen Peter to be the leader, the apostle to the Jews (cp. Gal.2:8). Therefore, it was Peter's duty to reach out to the Jewish believers wherever they were. They were now scattered all over Palestine because of persecution (Acts 8:1-4). Therefore, he set out on a mission and evangelistic tour to visit and strengthen the believers and to preach Christ to all who would hear. Note these points.

- ⇒ Peter "passed throughout *all* quarters," that is, Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (cp. Acts 8:4, 14, 25). He went everywhere, ministered everywhere for which he was responsible.
- ⇒ Peter *preached the gospel* to the lost and he edified the believers (Acts 8:25). This must always be remembered. It is the duty of believers to witness and share Christ wherever they are, no matter their gift or calling.
- ⇒ Peter was faithful to his calling, faithful to the Lord's mission. He had to pay a price by sacrificing personal comfort. He had a family and a home to look after, yet he left the comfort of all to travel about and preach Christ (cp. Mt.8:14).

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk.16:15).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (Jn.4:35-36).

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal.6:9).

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps.126:5-6).

**2** (9:32) **Saints:** the place where Peter went was a city where *saints* lived—Lydda. There are two things of significance here.

1. The city was a place where the power of Christ was to be demonstrated. It was an important commercial city (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Lydda—Acts 9:32*).

2. The city had *saints* living within it (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Saints—Acts 9:32*). It is difficult for God to work where there are no believers present. A city that has believers dwelling within its boundaries is greatly blessed. The citizens may not know it, but they are. Believers bring the presence of God to a place, the presence of...

- |                 |              |   |
|-----------------|--------------|---|
| • righteousness | • concern    | • peace                                   |
| • morality      | • joy        | • hope (of eternal life)                  |
| • justice       | • confidence | • ministry to the poor, diseased, and un- |
| • assurance     | • care       | educated                                  |
| • love          | • life       |   |

**“By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked” (Pr.11:11).**

**“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pr.14:34).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(9:32) **Lydda—Lod:** Lydda was called “Lod” in the Old Testament (1 Chron.8:12; Ezra 2:33; Neh.7:37; 11:35). It was located about 30 miles northwest of Jerusalem and 10 miles south of Joppa.

- ⇒ It was located in the fertile plain of Sharon.
- ⇒ It was one of the cities to which the exiles of the Babylonian captivity returned when they were set free (Ezra 2:33; Neh.7:37).
- ⇒ It was an important commercial city. It was lying on the caravan route from Babylon to Egypt.

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(9:32) **Saints:** note the believers are called *saints*. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Holy*—1 Pt.1:15-16 for more discussion.) Ananias was the first to call believers saints. He did so when he was praying to the Lord (Acts 9:13). The word refers to the sanctified or holy ones. It simply means to be set apart; to be separated (see note—1 Pt.1:15-16 for more discussion). There are three stages of sanctification.

1. There is initial or positional sanctification. When a person believes in Christ, he is immediately set apart for God—once-for-all and permanently.

**“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Heb.3:1).**

**“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb.10:10).**

2. There is progressive sanctification. The true believer makes a determined and disciplined effort to allow the Spirit of God to set him apart day by day. The Spirit of God takes him and conforms him into the image of Christ more and more—for as long as he walks upon this earth.

**“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn.17:17).**

**“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor.3:18).**

**“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph.5:25-26).**

**“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th.5:23-24).**

3. There is eternal sanctification. The day is coming when the believer will be perfectly set apart unto God and His service—without any sin or failure whatsoever. That day will be the great and glorious day of the believer’s eternal redemption.

**“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph.5:27).**

**“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).**

**3** (9:33) **Hopelessness:** the need Peter ran across was a tragic sickness, a man (Aeneas) who had been paralyzed and bedridden for eight years. His condition was similar to the paralytic Christ had confronted and healed (cp. Lk.5:18-26). Note two things.

1. The man’s condition was desperate. He was paralyzed, bedridden...
  - *unable* to arise out of bed.
  - *unable* to walk.
  - *unable* to wash himself.
  - *unable* to dress himself.
  - *unable* to feed himself.
  - *unable* to take care of his own personal needs.
  - *unable* to move himself.

He was unable to leave the house and the room he was in; he was unable to leave the bed in which he was lying. And this had been going on for eight long years. Picture the situation. His condition was about as critical as a person could face.

2. The man and his family or the ones taking care of him were full of despair and hopelessness. There was no hope he could ever recover and take care of himself. They were all helpless and gripped with a sense of hopelessness. There was no doctor, no man who could change his condition. He was destined and ill-fated to be paralyzed the rest of his life, and someone was required to take care of him.

“My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul” (Job 10:1).

“For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed” (Ps.31:10).

“O my God, my soul is cast down within me” (Ps.42:6).

“I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me” (Ps.69:2).

“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped” (Ps.73:2).

“Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go” (Jer.2:25).

“That at that time ye were without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph.2:12).

**4** (9:34) **Jesus Christ, Power—Deliverance:** the proclamation was a straightforward confrontation. Peter forcefully declared, “Jesus maketh thee whole.” Note five points.

1. All that is known about the man is his name, Aeneas. He was unimportant to the world, a man of no fame and significance, unable to contribute to society and its welfare. He was most likely even forgotten by the world. But note: he was important to God, very important.

2. The focus was Jesus Christ and His power, not Peter, not even the man and his need. Peter did not say, “I make you whole.” He did not say, “It is my power, my faith, my act, my work.” But he said, “Jesus Christ makes you whole.” It is Christ Himself...

- His love and care,
- His authority and power,

...that can make the *foulest clean* and heal any man.

3. The word for “maketh whole” (iatai) means to be healed immediately, here and now. It was not a drawn out thing. The man was to be healed right then. The word has the idea of being made completely whole, within as well as without, spiritually as well as physically. The man, if not already saved, was made whole spiritually as well as physically. (See note—Mt. 14:36 for more discussion.)

4. Peter declared the Word of God to the man: Jesus Christ heals and makes men whole. Then Peter assured and challenged the man. He told him to arise, to believe the Word, the proclamation, and make his bed. Peter did not declare the power of Christ, then turn and walk away. He gave assurance to the man and challenged him, encouraging him to act, to believe, to get up and do something, to make his bed.

5. The man had to believe that Christ had made him whole. If he believed, he would get up; if he did not believe, he would not get up.

“And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God” (Mk.11:22).

“Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (Jn.6:28-29).

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Ro.10:17).

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).

“Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper” (2 Chron.20:20).

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(9:34) **Heal - Healing:** Jesus Christ does heal, does make people whole. But we must always remember, He heals some and does not heal others, just as He did when He walked upon earth. What makes the difference? Why are some healed and some not? Why are not all faithful believers healed when they are sick and diseased and ask for healing? Some who walk ever so faithfully believe God. They have the necessary faith, believing that God does heal, and they have as much if not more faith than some who are healed. Why then are they not also healed?

The reason is God. When God looks at our requests, He considers four things. (Also see notes—Eph.1:3; see outline and notes—2 Cor.1:3-11. Cp. Ph.1:29.)

1. God’s glory. Would granting the request bring the greatest glory to His name?
2. Our good, not only physically, but spiritually. What particular spiritual grace or quality do we need to learn: endurance, self-control, trust, dependence?
  - a. Spiritually, within ourselves: will granting our request strengthen us more spiritually? Which way will our faith and trust in God grow more?
  - b. Spiritually, without ourselves: how does God now want to use us? As a constant prayer warrior? As an unbelievable testimony to His empowering spiritual strength, no matter the physical condition? Note something else: What do the people need with whom God wants to use us? What is the best way for God to reach them? By demonstrating His strength in and through our trial?
3. God’s wisdom. He knows what is needed by whom; when it is needed; for whom it is needed; where it is needed; how it is needed; why it is needed.
4. God’s mercy. He wills above all else for men to know His mercy. He does whatever is needed to demonstrate His mercy to men. Sometimes walking through the trials of life reveals His mercy more; sometimes removing the trials reveals His mercy more. He chooses the best.

The point is this: Jesus Christ heals the believer who has *need of healing*. This is always true. A believer who really needs healing is blessed by God and healed. But note: *the need for healing is not always the greatest need of a person*. God sometimes uses the physical need to meet that which is far more important: the spiritual need and the glory of God. Therefore, not all believers are always healed. Sometimes the believer needs to learn love, joy, peace, endurance, prayer, trust, faith, and hope through his suffering.

**5** (9:35) **Conversion:** the result is that all of Lydda turned to the Lord. So did all the residents of the Valley of Sharon, all who saw the healed man. (See DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Sharon*—Acts 9:35.) Note the word *saw*. It was “seeing” the power of Christ in the man’s life that stirred the people to turn to Christ. Nothing influences people more than the power of Christ in the life of a person. Christ within a believer—the rule and reign of His presence and power, the evidence of His working in human lives—touches people. It causes people to turn to the living Lord. They turned from religion in all its form and ritual to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, **Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them**” (Lk.10:23-24).

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul” (Ps.66:16).

**DEEPER STUDY # 4**

(9:35) **Sharon:** this was not a city but a rich coastal plain. It lay between the central mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. Several cities were built within its boundaries such as Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea, Dor, Antipatris.

1. The valley was so fertile, its pastures and beauty became proverbial (cp. the term the “Rose of Sharon,” Song of Sol.2:1; cp. 1 Chron.27:29).
2. The valley is used by Scripture as a type or symbol of eternity, of the new heavens and earth which God has promised to create (Is.35:1-2; 65:10-27. Cp. 2 Pt.3:7, 10-13; Rev.21:1f.)
3. The pasture lands of the valley were possessed by the tribe of Gad in the Old Testament (1 Chron.5:16).

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| <p><b>1 The place: A city where disciples &amp; saints lived</b><sup>DS1</sup></p> <p><b>2 The need: A believer had tragically died</b></p> <p>a. A faithful believer<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>b. A tragic death</p> <p>c. A great hope &amp; desperate appeal</p> <p>d. A sensitive, pastoral response</p> | <p><b>B. A Broader Ministry—In Joppa: Conquering Death, 9:36-43</b></p> <p>36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.</p> <p>37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.</p> <p>38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.</p> <p>39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he</p> | <p>was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.</p> <p>40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.</p> <p>41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.</p> <p>42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.</p> <p>43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.</p> | <p>e. A deep sorrow for a dedicated believer</p> <p><b>3 The source of power to raise the dead: Christ Jesus</b></p> <p>a. Getting alone</p> <p>b. Praying to the living Lord</p> <p>c. Acting as Jesus instructed</p> <p><b>4 The results</b></p> <p>a. Many believed</p> <p>b. An open door to evangelism</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: THE FIRST GREAT MISSION TO THE GENTILES—BY PETER, 9:32-11:18**

**B. A Broader Ministry—In Joppa: Conquering Death, 9:36-43**

(9:36-43) **Introduction:** Jesus Christ has the power to raise the dead. This is abundantly demonstrated in this marvelous event, an event that speaks loudly and clearly to the most desperate need of man—the need to conquer death.

1. The place: a city where disciples and saints lived (v.36).
2. The need: a believer had tragically died (v.36-39).
3. The source of power to raise the dead: Christ Jesus (v.40-41).
4. The results (v.42-43).

**1** (9:36) **Saints:** the place where the power of Christ confronts death—a city where disciples and saints lived (cp. v.36, 41). Note two points.

1. The city of Joppa was an important commercial city (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Joppa*—Acts 9:36).
2. The city had disciples or saints living within its borders (see notes—Acts 9:32 for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(9:36) **Joppa:** Joppa was a seaport town, bringing commercial goods from all over the ancient world. It was...

- the seaport for Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.
- the only seaport that could provide shelter between Egypt and Mt. Carmel.
- a busy, bustling seaport, populated with Jews as well as Gentile people from all over the world.
- an ancient seaport town, one of the very oldest in the Mid-East, dating back to the time of Jonah (Jonah 1:3).
- assigned to the tribe of Dan in the Old Testament (Josh.19:46).
- the city where Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36f) and had the vision that led to the evangelizing of the Gentiles (Cornelius, Acts 10:1f).

**2** (9:36-39) **Ministering—Death:** the need was created by the tragic death of a believer. Note five points.

1. The believer was a faithful believer, a lady named Dorcas.
  - a. Two names are given for her: “Tabitha,” which was her Jewish or Hebrew name, and Dorcas, which was her Greek name. Her name means gazelle (or doe or deer) which is a most beautiful creature. The gazelle is known for...
    - its slender features.
    - its grace and loveliness.
    - its bright eyes and tender looks.

The same traits were apparently characteristic of Dorcas. Note: Scripture does say the wife is to be as the loving hind and the pleasant roe to her husband (Pr.5:19). She is to be as the beautiful creature: gracious and loving, bright eyed (joyful, excited, expectant) and tender.

- b. She was deeply committed to Christ, a very faithful and devoted disciple, full of...
  - “good works” (agathon ergon): a general term meaning all kinds of good works, serving and doing all kinds of good to all who needed help.
  - “almsdeeds”: charitable gifts. She gave gifts to the needy.
- c. Note the *deeds which she did* (on epoiei). The emphasis is that she gave things, gifts which she herself made (cp. v.39). She must have been well off, perhaps wealthy; for she was buying material to make clothing, apparently for a large number of the needy. Note she was helping a large number of widows (v.39). The widows without the financial support of their deceased husbands would be especially poor and needful.

**Thought 1.** Dorcas’ discipleship was not a false profession.

- ⇒ She did not promise something and then not follow through.
- ⇒ She did not begin and then slack off.
- ⇒ She did not say, “I will serve” and then ignore the need.

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).**

**“Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have” (2 Cor.8:11).**

**“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor.9:7).**

**“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim.6:18).**

**“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Tit.2:7).**

**“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Heb.10:24).**

2. Dorcas tragically died. The idea seems to be that she died right in the midst of her ministry when she was so needed. The believers were crushed. There was little hope that the ministry could go on as effectively as it had been.
  - ⇒ There apparently were few, if any, as mature in the Lord as she. It appears as if they were newer believers, not having had sufficient time to grow and mature in Him.
  - ⇒ There were so many *poor*. There apparently was no one else wealthy and gifted enough to meet their needs. The church desperately needed Dorcas.
3. A great hope and desperate appeal was stirred. The disciples at Joppa...
  - had heard about Peter being close by in Lydda.
  - had heard about the phenomenal healing of the paralytic.
  - had heard (perhaps some had even witnessed) that Jesus had raised the dead.

Note three significant points about the believers.

- a. Great hope swelled up in their hearts. They did not rush to bury Dorcas as was the custom of Jews. But they washed her and laid her in an upper chamber.
- b. They sent two men to ask Peter to come and seek the Lord in behalf of Dorcas—for the sake of the church and its witness as well as for her sake.
- c. They demonstrated *great faith* in the possibility that the Lord could raise the dead and meet the cry of their hearts. They had enough faith...
  - not to bury her.
  - to go for Peter and ask him to come. This is important. They did not go to discuss the matter with him, but to ask him to come and to come quickly, without delay.

The words “delay not” (me okneseis) mean not to hesitate, not to be reluctant; but to act and act now, quickly, without questioning. The believers were in dead earnest, believing that the Lord could raise the dead if it was His will to do so. What an enormous faith in the Lord Jesus they demonstrated!

4. A sensitive, pastoral response was the result. Peter arose and went with the two men. He was the servant of the Lord, so he did love and care. He was deeply concerned and compassionate. He had been made aware of the need; the cry for help had reached his ears and he responded. (What a lesson for the leaders of the church!)
5. A deep sorrow was expressed for Dorcas, the dedicated believer. As soon as Peter arrived, they took him into the upper chamber. The widows whom she had helped so readily surrounded Peter, weeping from broken hearts. Note they began to show Peter the clothes Dorcas had made and given them. The word *showing* (epideiknumenai, middle voice) means they were pointing to the clothes. They were actually wearing the clothes she had made in her honor or because they had few or no other clothes decent enough to wear publicly.

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).**

**“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim.6:18).**

**“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Tit.2:7).**

**“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Heb.10:24).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(9:36) **Dorcas**: think of the legacy left behind by this woman. Contrast the legacy of Euodias and Syntyche (see note—Ph.4:2-3).

**3** (9:40-41) **Power**: the source of power to raise the dead is Christ Jesus. Note three significant points.

1. The disciple got alone with the Lord. He excused everyone from the room. He had to get alone and seek the Lord. He had to concentrate and meditate; his thoughts had to be undisturbed before the Lord. There are at least three incidents in Scripture where the dead were raised in similar circumstances.

- ⇒ Jesus and Jairus' daughter (Mt.5:40-42).
- ⇒ Elijah and the widow's son (1 Ki.17:17-24).
- ⇒ Elisha and the Shunammite's son (2 Ki.4:18-37, esp. 32-37).

2. Peter prayed to the living Lord. The Lord is living, and because He is alive Peter got alone with Him and asked at least two things:

- a. He asked for the Lord's will. Was it the Lord's will or not His will to raise Dorcas? (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Healing*—Acts 9:34 for discussion.)
- b. Once Peter knew that the Lord wanted Dorcas raised, he prayed both for the power to raise her and for God to use the miracle to make men believe (cp. v.43).

**“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Mt.6:6).**

**“And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray” (Mk.6:46).**

**“And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God” (Lk.6:12).**

**“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (1 Jn.5:14-15).**

- 3. Peter did exactly what Jesus instructed. He turned to the body and boldly demanded, “Tabitha, arise.”
  - a. Note the faith of Peter. It was the faith of the Lord Jesus Himself, the faith which Jesus had demonstrated in raising Jairus' daughter (Mk.5:41).
  - b. It was the Lord's will for Dorcas to be raised from the dead. The Lord told Peter what His will was while Peter was praying. If Jesus had told Peter it was not His will, then Peter would not have commanded Dorcas to arise. Her resurrection was to serve a greater purpose than her remaining dead. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Healing*—Acts 9:34 for discussion.)

**“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn.7:17).**

**“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).**

**4** (9:42-43) **Power—Witnessing**: the results of raising the dead were twofold.

- 1. Many believed.
- 2. A tremendous door was open for Peter to freely evangelize the area. It was here in Joppa that God was to give him the vision that led to the carrying of the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1f).

**Thought 1.** Note this critical point. When God raises the dead, it is always to demonstrate the enormous power of God to save men through any and all trials, even from the greatest of enslavements—death. There is dramatic symbolism in this point for the conversion of a soul from death to life eternal.

The “many” who believed in Joppa illustrate the point. They believed because Dorcas was raised. Because she was raised, they turned to the Lord for salvation. They turned from spiritual death to spiritual life, from physical death to life eternal. They wanted life now and eternally, life abundant and life that lasted forever. They wanted to live with Christ in that glorious day of promise, the day of redemption.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ro.8:38-39).**

CHAPTER 10

**C. A Worldwide Ministry—  
In Caesarea (Part I):  
Breaking Down Preju-  
dice, 10:1-33**

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,

2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:

6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of

the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowl of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

3) His instructions

4) His refusal

5) His being corrected

6) His experiencing the event three times

7) His perplexity

8) His sensitivity to the Spirit's leadership

9) His reception of Gentile servants

**1 The breakdown of prejudice in the Gentile man, Cornelius<sup>DS2</sup>**

a. His profession: A military officer in Caesarea<sup>DS2</sup>

b. His unusual reverence for God

c. His vision from God

d. His obedience to the heavenly vision & instructions

**2 The breakdown of prejudice in the Jew**

a. His prayer life

b. His humanity

c. His heavenly trance

1) Was of heaven

2) Was the picture of a vessel, a platter full of animals<sup>DS3</sup>

**3 The confrontation: Lessons learned by the Jew & the Gentile, the prejudiced of the world**

a. The preparation by Peter

b. The preparation by Cornelius

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>c. The confrontation of two men humbled by God<br/>                 1) The humility of Cornelius, the Gentile<br/>                 2) The humility of Peter, the Jew</p> | <p>25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.<br/>                 26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.<br/>                 27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.</p>   | <p>30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,<br/>                 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.<br/>                 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.</p> | <p>e. The lesson learned by Cornelius<br/>                 1) The man who truly seeks God moves God</p>                          |
| <p>d. The lesson learned by Peter: No man is common or unclean<sup>25-26</sup></p>  | <p>28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.<br/>                 29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?</p> | <p>33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.</p>  | <p>2) The man who seeks God must obey God<br/>                 3) The man who seeks God must be receptive to the Word of God</p> |

DIVISION IV

THE CHURCH SCATTERED: THE FIRST GREAT MISSION TO THE GENTILES—BY PETER, 9:32-11:18

C. A Worldwide Ministry—In Caesarea (Part I): Breaking Down Prejudice, 10:1-33

(10:1-33) **Introduction:** prejudice and partiality exist. From the beginning of time prejudice has existed (Cain and Abel, Gen.4:1f). Prejudice is everywhere in the world—in every nation, state, city, and neighborhood. Prejudice (discrimination) even exists within families between parent and child, brother and sister, family and relatives. Feelings toward and against people are a tragic reality. Note several facts about prejudice.

1. There are at least two basic reasons for prejudice.
  - a. People differ. They differ in nationality, color, beliefs, religion, speech, looks, behavior, ability, energy, position, status, social standing, possessions, wealth, birth, heritage. Prejudice arises when people feel they and their differences make them better than others.
  - b. Mistreatment causes prejudice, both mistreating others and being mistreated. When a person mistreats others or is mistreated by others his nature is immediately aroused to become prejudicial and judgmental. The mistreatment that gives rise to prejudice covers a wide range of behavior: ignoring, neglecting, joking, gossiping, opposing, cursing, abusing, fighting against, persecuting, passing over, segregating, enslaving.

2. The present passage strikes a fatal blow against prejudice. It shows forever that Jesus Christ has erased all prejudices and barriers between people. Jew and Gentile are now one in Christ Jesus. This is the subject of the present passage. However, before launching into the passage, some background will be helpful in understanding just what is happening and the significance of it.

The Jews, like all other people of the earth, had developed their own laws and customs; and every Jewish child was born and reared in the environment of those laws and customs. They, like all other people, were steeped in their own nationality and looked upon other people with suspicion. However, there were two factors which made the Jewish prejudice run deeper than most.

1. The Jewish people had always been mistreated, enslaved, and persecuted much more than the other people of the world. Through the centuries the Jewish people had been conquered by army after army, and by the millions they had been deported and scattered over the world. Even in the day of Jesus they were enslaved by Rome. Their religion was the binding force that kept Jews together, in particular their belief that God had called them to be a distinctive people (who worshipped the only true and living God) and their rules governing...

- the Sabbath
- the temple
- intermarriage
- worship and cleansing
- diet, what foods they could and could not eat

Their belief and their rules kept them from alien beliefs and from being swallowed up by other people through intermarriage. Their religion was what maintained their distinctiveness as a people and as a nation.

Jewish leaders knew this. They knew that *their religion* was the binding force that held their nation together. Therefore, they opposed anyone or anything that threatened or attempted to break the laws of their religion and nation.

2. The Jews misread and misinterpreted God's Word and purpose for them. God had called Abraham and given birth to the Jewish nation for one primary purpose—that they might be His people, His witnesses, His missionaries to the rest of

the world. God had given the Jews His Word and instructed them to take His Word to the world and tell them about God. They were to bear witness that God *is*—God does exist—and that men are to worship and serve Him and Him alone.

It was here that Israel failed. Instead of proclaiming God and His Word of righteousness and morality to the world, Israel separated itself from the world, hoarding and claiming that God and His law were theirs and theirs alone. They became *separatists*, extremely prejudiced, building barriers and partitions between themselves and the other people of the world (Gentiles). Prejudice became so deep-seated that attitudes such as these were adopted:

- ⇒ They called other people “dogs.”
- ⇒ They would have no contact with a Gentile unless absolutely necessary, and then after contact, they had to go through a religious ceremony to be cleansed.
- ⇒ They would not help a Gentile woman who was giving birth lest another Gentile be born into the world.

It was into such a world that the church was born, a world of prejudice, the prejudice...

- of Jew against Gentile.
- of Gentile against Jew.
- of Gentile against Gentile.

How was God going to overcome and break down the walls and barriers of prejudice that had been built up through the centuries of history? How was He going to get His church, His people to break away from their Jewish roots and reach out to the whole world?

That is the point of the present passage. The doors of God’s salvation are about to be gloriously swung open to the people of the world. Every man will soon have the wonderful privilege of hearing the marvelous message proclaimed: God is love and has sent His dear Son into the world that the world might be saved and not perish. The present passage shows how God broke through the prejudicial environment and customs of his dear servant, Peter, and led him to swing open the door to a Gentile soldier who was desperately crying out to God.

The story is one of the great stories of history, and it should be studied by all people everywhere. A study of this event shows that God has broken down the barrier of prejudice between men racially and religiously. He means and intends them to be erased forever—in the name of His dear Son who came to show that God loves all men and wishes all men to be saved.

The subject of the passage can be titled: “The Breakdown of Prejudice” or “The Opening of the Door to the Gentiles.” The door could not be opened until the existing prejudices were dealt with; therefore, the story deals mainly with the breaking down of the prejudices between the Gentile Cornelius and the Jewish minister Simon Peter.

Because of the length of the story and *its significance*, the event is divided and dealt with in three parts.

- Part 1: The Breakdown of Prejudice (Acts 10:1-33).
- Part 2: The Message to be Preached to the World (Gentiles) (Acts 10:34-43).
- Part 3: The Holy Spirit Given to the World (Gentiles) (Acts 10:44-48).

**1** (10:1-8) **Prejudice—Jew vs. Gentile—Seeking God:** the breakdown of prejudice in the Gentile, Cornelius. Note: it is God who breaks down prejudice. Prejudice is so deep-seated in the heart of man, only God can erase it and reconcile man.

1. Cornelius was a soldier, a military officer, a Centurion in the Roman army (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Centurion*—Acts 23:23 for discussion). The Italian band simply means that all the soldiers (100) under his command were from Italy. Cornelius was stationed in Caesarea. This is important to note, for Caesarea was a Gentile city, a place in which strict Jews would never set foot, not if preventable.

2. Cornelius had an unusual reverence for God. He was...
- a devout man: one who worshipped the true and living God.
  - a God-fearing man: one who sensed the presence of God in the world and knew he was responsible to God to live righteously, justly, and morally toward all men.
  - a benevolent and charitable man: one who gave to charity. Note: he gave “much.”
  - a praying (deomenos) man: the word means *begging of God*. Note that he prayed *always*.

The point is this: Cornelius was totally unlike most of the Gentiles of his day. He was not worshipping false gods. The Scripture says he worshipped and “prayed to God” (tou theou). In Greek this means the true God, the only living and true God. Cornelius had done two things.

- a. He had looked at nature and at the world around him and seen that there was bound to be one God who had created all things.

**“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Ro.1:20).**

- b. He had looked at Jewish religion (Judaism) and seen that it was head and shoulders above all other religions in...
- its worship of one God.
  - its teachings of righteousness and justice and morality.
  - its religious practices such as praying three times daily. (Note his praying at the Jewish ninth hour, which today is 3 p.m.)

But note: Cornelius did not become a Jewish worshipper. He was not circumcised (cp. Acts 11:3). He would never consent to becoming a Jewish convert. He could learn from them and their religion, but he would never become one of them. The prejudice existing within his own heart, existing between Gentile and Jew was too great to overcome. (We must always remember, prejudice is too great to overcome in the flesh of natural man.)

3. Cornelius was given a vision from God. Note five points.
- Cornelius was in prayer when the vision came.
  - The vision involved an angel bringing a message from God.
  - Cornelius “looked on” (atenisas), that is, fastened his eyes, gazed, focused his attention; he was startled, frightened.
  - Cornelius realized the angel of God was a messenger from God (cp. v.30, “bright clothing”). He addressed him as “Lord.”
  - The message to Cornelius was twofold.
    - His prayers and charity had come before God as a memorial (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 10:1-6 for discussion).
    - He was to send men to Joppa to see Peter and ask him what to do. Now note a critical point: despite Cornelius’ enormous reverence and faithful service for God...
      - he was still not doing enough.
      - something else was missing.
      - one thing was still lacking.
 Note another fact as well: Cornelius was aware he still lacked something, very aware of the fact. *He had asked God what he still needed.* Despite all his reverence and good works, he still felt a lack, an emptiness; and he was begging God to fill that emptiness, to show him what he *still* had to do.
4. Cornelius was obedient to the heavenly vision and instructions. He sent two trusted household servants and his most trusted military orderly to find Simon Peter. Cornelius would seek the answer to his heart’s need from a Jew.

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).**

**“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn.7:17).**

**“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (Jn.15:10).**

**“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev.22:14).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(10:1-6) **Seeking God—Lost—Salvation:** Cornelius was not saved. Scripture says so (Acts 11:14). He was a man who...

- was good and very devout.
- worshipped the true God.
- feared and revered God.
- did good, giving “much” to charity.
- prayed “always”—not just daily, not just often, but *always*.

However, as wonderful as these things are, they are not what saves a person. Note a critical point often overlooked: Cornelius was *genuine* in his seeking after God. His prayers and charity ascended to God as a memorial (eis mnemonon). The word means that the sincerity of Cornelius’ heart caught God’s eye. Cornelius was *seeking* God, desiring to please God, to know God and to do God’s will. Therefore, God could not miss him. He had to see to it that Cornelius heard the message of salvation.

It is the person who seeks God whom God saves. God will do anything, do whatever is needed, so that the message of salvation is sent to the person who truly seeks Him. The person who seeks Him will find Him even if that person is in the deepest jungle on earth, completely isolated in the uttermost part of the earth. This is the promise of God.

**“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer.29:13).**

**“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Mt.7:7-8).**

Scripture describes people such as Cornelius, people who look at nature and at the world around them and see the true God: they seek God, yet they have never had the privilege of hearing the truth of the glorious gospel. (What an indictment against believers! Century after century has passed and the world has not yet been reached!)

**“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Ro.1:20).**

**“When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (Ro.2:14-15).**

**“If the uncircumcision [Gentile] keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Ro.2:26-29).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(10:1) **Caesarea:** the city was built by Herod the Great between 25-13 B.C. and named for Augustus Caesar. It became the Roman capital of Palestine, the center of Roman government and military headquarters in Palestine.

- ⇒ It was a seaport town about 30 miles north of Joppa.
- ⇒ It was a magnificent city—newly built, gleaming with the royal palace of Herod, magnificent buildings, and huge temples built to honor false gods.
- ⇒ It was the home of Cornelius (Acts 10:1).
- ⇒ It was the home of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8).
- ⇒ It was the city where Paul appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:10-13).
- ⇒ It was the city to which Paul escaped (Acts 9:30).
- ⇒ It was the city where Paul was imprisoned (Acts 13:12-35).
- ⇒ It was the city Peter was to evangelize (Acts 10:1-48).

**2** (10:9-22) **Prejudice—Jew vs. Gentile:** the breakdown of prejudice in the Jew, Simon Peter. The servants from Cornelius had almost reached the city of Joppa where Peter was. They would be approaching Peter soon with the request to visit and help Cornelius. However, Peter was not ready...

- to welcome these men.
- to return with them to visit Cornelius.
- to stay and share in the home of Cornelius.

Why? Cornelius was a Gentile and Peter was a Jew. There was deep-seated racial discrimination between the two. Welcoming and visiting and sharing in the homes of each other was out of the question. And on top of that, there was a religious difference, a difference that was even more deeply seated in Peter's mind than the racial difference. Peter was just not ready for these Gentile men to approach him with the request to visit Cornelius the Gentile, not yet.

But God was ready. And it is God who makes the difference. God can break down prejudice. God can reconcile the Jew to the Gentile and the Gentile to the Jew. God can reconcile man to man; He can bring peace to men and between men. Note these facts.

1. Peter prayed often every day. This is seen in the fact that he was praying about the sixth hour (12 noon Jewish time). This was one of the three prayer hours practiced by Jews. Peter got alone and prayed at least three times daily.

Peter was such a man of prayer that God could intervene in his life and direct him, give him specific instructions. It was while he was praying that God spoke to Peter.

2. Peter was a mere man, very human. Despite his being the leader of Jesus' apostles—the great apostle to the Jews, a man of great spiritual maturity and depth, a great servant of the Lord, a minister highly esteemed—Peter was still just a man, a man who hungered and thirsted, ached and hurt, was weak and frail, prejudiced and too often wrong just like the rest of us.

The point is this: being saved and spiritually mature and called to serve God did not make Peter perfect. It did not free him from need and lack, nor from sin. Peter as a mere man was subject to hunger just as all men, and subject to the prejudices of his environment just as all men—subject to the prejudices until God changed him. And praise God, He was about to change Peter's prejudice against us, the Gentiles! If God had not changed him and his prejudices, we would still be lost and without Christ in this world.

3. Peter experienced a trance. The Greek says that "a trance [an ecstasy] came upon him"; that is, he was transported out of himself (ekstasis). His mind was so concentrated, so focused that Peter lost all sense of the world around him. He was swallowed up in the thoughts of God, transported mentally out of this world. It is something like a daydream, but a daydream so concentrated and focused that all contact with one's surroundings is completely lost. It is a time of ecstasy in the presence of the Lord, receiving His Word, whatever He has to say to one's heart.

- a. The trance (ecstasy) was of heaven. Peter saw heaven open. Peter's prejudice was encrusted and hardened. He had never known anything but prejudice within his environment except what Christ had demonstrated. *Peter did not think or know that he was prejudiced. He thought he was only standing against the unrighteousness and injustices of men, that he was to ignore and have nothing to do with ungodly and unjust men.* If Peter was to change and begin to reach out to the heathen, the ungodly and unjust, he had to know that the instructions were from heaven, from God Himself.
- b. The vessel or platter (plate) upon which a meal was served was huge.
  - ⇒ It was a large receptacle, so large it looked like a large sheet (othonen), which in the Greek means linen cloth. This probably means it was white.
  - ⇒ The huge vessel or platter had four corners that were knit, that is, that were held by four ropes and let down from heaven, descending to earth and being set before Peter.
  - ⇒ The vessel or platter contained all manner of animals.
- c. The instruction to Peter was, "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat."
- d. Peter refused, for the animals were common and unclean according to the laws of Jewish religion (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 10:11-16 for discussion). Note the enormous spiritual struggle Peter was going through.
- e. Peter was clearly corrected: "What God has cleansed, that call not unclean."
- f. Peter experienced the event three times and then the trance ended with the platter being received up into heaven.
- g. Peter was perplexed. While Peter was thinking about the trance and wondering what it meant, the men arrived downstairs and asked for him.

- h. Peter's sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leadership is clearly seen from this point on. Note: it was the Holy Spirit who...
- told him the men were downstairs.
  - told him to go "with them" (Peter did not yet know they were Gentiles).
  - told him to "doubt nothing": do not waver, wonder, hesitate, question the thing to be done.
  - told him that He, the Holy Spirit, had sent the men after him.
- Note: Peter did not yet know the men were Gentiles. But the Holy Spirit had just told Peter exactly what to do. Peter could not question this fact. Peter was now ready to have his prejudice against Gentiles erased. Note also: Peter did not yet know the meaning of the trance. This would be made clear later.
- i. Peter received the Gentile servants. He obeyed the Holy Spirit, did exactly what the Spirit said. Peter even *lodged* them, an unheard of thing. (As a point of humor, imagine the kosher food they had that evening.)

**"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear" (Mt.13:16).**

**"Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day" (Ps.25:5).**

**"Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path" (Ps.27:11).**

**"Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness" (Ps.143:10).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(10:11-16) **Jews, Dietary Laws:** the Jews had all kinds of dietary laws (cp. Lev.11; 20:25-26; Dt.14:3-21). There were certain foods they could and could not eat. The words "common and unclean" (koinon kai akatharton) refer to being religiously or ceremonially unclean. The unclean animals were unhallowed, profaned. It was felt that eating them would not please God. Note two points.

1. The Jews were very strict, scrupulous in keeping the dietary laws. The laws were taught from earliest childhood, and a true Jew *never* ate an unclean animal. This can be clearly seen from Peter's experience.

⇒ He told the Lord emphatically, "No." And he said "no" three times right in the midst of a trance.

⇒ He told the Lord, "I have *never* eaten anything that is common or unclean."

Peter had never tasted an unclean food. Therefore, the Lord's command to eat such food caused an enormous struggle for him. Jews were strict in observing the rules and regulations governing what they could and could not eat. They would *never* touch a food that was unclean.

2. Eating unclean foods was one of the major reasons the Jews considered the Gentiles *unclean* and unacceptable to God. It was one of the major reasons they refused to have anything to do with the Gentiles. If a Jew had associated with a Gentile, the consequences would have been easily seen. The Jew would soon be influenced to try some Gentile food, and by so doing he...

- would become *unclean* religiously and ceremonially.
- would be breaking God's law.
- would lose his distinctiveness as being one of God's chosen people, one who follows and obeys God.
- would be eating meat that may have come from an animal sacrificed to an idol god. Once an animal had been sacrificed to an idol, the priests often sold the meat to merchants who made the meat available to the public. To eat meat offered to idols was considered idolatry, one of the worst offences in the minds of a Jew.

Note: what God was saying to Peter is not contradicting God's Word to Israel. God had given Israel many laws...

- to make Israel distinctive, the people who followed and obeyed God's law.
- to keep Israel separated from the ungodly and unjust behavior of other people, and from intermarriage.
- to give Israel guidance in taking care and protecting themselves both as a nation and as individuals. (Dietary laws protected their bodies and health.)

Israel was the custodian of God's Word to man. But when Christ came, God took another step, moved to another stage of His plan. Jesus Christ and His followers are now the custodians of God's revelation. It is no longer just Israel, just Jews who are...

- to receive,
- to know,
- to be responsible

...for God's revelation. It is both Jew and Gentile, all men everywhere. All men are now to rally around Jesus Christ and take the responsibility for proclaiming God's revelation (His Word, His law). It is no longer just Jews. It is all men of all nations—all who will follow Christ and take on the responsibility for making Him known.

**3** (10:23-33) **Lessons:** the confrontation and lessons learned by the Jew and the Gentile, the prejudiced of the world.

1. The preparation by Peter. He took six Jewish believers, orthodox Jews, with him (Acts 10:45; 11:12). Peter knew he was treading troubled waters by associating with Gentiles; he sensed he would need witnesses to what he was doing. Therefore, he was preparing himself against attack (cp. 11:1f).

2. The preparation by Cornelius. Note...

- He was expectant, excited, eagerly waiting for their arrival.
- He had "called together his kinsmen and close friends." There were many present.

Note also the faith of Cornelius. He *knew* Peter would be coming, that God would fulfill His Word (v.6) and do what He had promised.

**“The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate” (Ps.34:22).**

**“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass” (Ps.37:5).**

**“Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength” (Is.26:4).**

**Thought 1.** Cornelius was already witnessing by bringing people to hear the messenger from God.

3. The confrontation of the Jew and the Gentile, two men humbled by God.
  - a. Cornelius had been humbled by the vision from God. He had been mulling over the experience for four days now, being humbled and prepared more and more to receive the Jewish messenger. When he confronted Peter, he was so humbled he prostrated himself before Peter in an act of deep reverence.
  - b. Peter demonstrated humility as well. It was the custom to bow before men of high honor, showing reverence and respect for them. But God had humbled Peter too. Peter forbade the act, disallowed it. No man is to be idolized or revered in the sense of being held in awe. Peter rebuked Cornelius: “I myself also am a man.”

**Thought 1.** Jesus accepted such reverence and worship (cp. Mt.2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17; Lk.5:8), and He accepted it from Peter himself (Mt.8:2; Lk.5:8). But Peter says no man is to bow or reverence another man, no matter who they are. We are all mere men, each one saved by God’s wonderful grace.

**“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:4).**

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pt.5:5).**

4. The lesson learned by Peter. (See note—Acts 10:28-29 for more discussion.) Peter now knew that no man was common or unclean. He now knew...
  - that Christ had abolished the distinction between Jew and Gentile.
  - that Christ had abolished the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Temple—Jn.2:14*).
  - that Christ had abolished *all* distinctions between men, whether racial, social, or some caste system.

No man was to treat any other man with anything but love and care, mercy and forgiveness, concern and compassion. Peter’s prejudice was wiped out, erased, and overcome. It had been overcome by God. The door of salvation was about to be thrown open to the Gentiles forever.

Note Peter’s reference to how it was unlawful for a Jew to associate with a Gentile (v.28). This law was not in the Scripture. It came from the Scribal law (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.6:2).

**“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Mt.5:45).**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).**

**“But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth no man’s person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me” (Gal.2:6).**

**“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:27-28).**

**“And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph.6:9).**

5. The lesson learned by Cornelius was threefold.
  - a. The man who truly seeks God moves God. Cornelius declared that God answered his prayer.
  - b. The man who seeks God must listen to God and obey God. Cornelius declared that he listened and did exactly what God said, and that he did it immediately (v.33).
  - c. The man who seeks God must be receptive to the Word of God.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th.2:13).

**DEEPER STUDY # 4**

(10:28-29) **Religious Traditions—Church, Prejudice—Gentiles Vs. Jews:** Jews were forbidden to eat certain animals because they were said to be unclean. This was a symbolic vision. God was teaching Peter that Gentiles (represented by the unclean animals) were acceptable to Him and were to be as much a part of His church as were Jews (v.28). This is of extreme importance, for God was revealing that this had been His eternal plan for the church from the beginning. It was the revelation made to the “holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph.3:5). Note that “apostles” and “prophets” are plural. Paul was not the only apostle to whom the revelation was given. Peter later shared this experience with the Gentiles at Caesarea (Acts 10:24-29) and with the Jews at Jerusalem (Acts 11:1-11). Peter says very plainly in Acts 15:7-14 that God was calling out both Gentiles and Jews to make up the church.

This move on God’s part stirred one of the most revolutionary movements in human history. Both Jews and Gentiles were gripped with the deepest prejudice against one another (cp. Lk.10:25-37. See outlines and notes—Lk.7:4-5; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mk.7:27; note—Eph.2:11-12; cp. Gal.2:4; Eph.2:13-18; 2:19-22. See outlines and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.9:1-11:36. See notes—Mk.11:15; Eph.2:14-15 on the structure of the Jewish temple.)

Note the open invitation among the Gentiles: “We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded...of God” (v.33). The door for Gentile evangelism was thrown wide open!

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| <p><b>1 God is no respecter of persons—He accepts anyone who fears Him &amp; works righteousness</b></p> <p><b>2 God sent His Word to Israel; He sent Jesus Christ preaching peace</b><br/> a. He is Lord of all<br/> b. He has been talked about &amp; the news has been spread all around<br/> c. He began in Galilee after John’s ministry</p> <p><b>3 Jesus is God’s anointed Savior<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> a. With the Holy Spirit<br/> b. With miraculous power</p> | <p><b>D. A Worldwide Ministry—In Caesarea (Part II): Preaching Peace, 10:34-43</b></p> <p>34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:<br/> 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.<br/> 36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)<br/> 37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;<br/> 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and</p> | <p>healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.<br/> 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:<br/> 40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly;<br/> 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.<br/> 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.<br/> 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.</p> | <p>c. The proof: “We are witnesses”</p> <p><b>4 Jesus was crucified</b><br/> <b>5 Jesus was raised up by God</b><br/> <b>6 Jesus appeared to some who were chosen to be witnesses</b></p> <p><b>7 Jesus shall judge the living &amp; the dead</b></p> <p><b>8 Jesus is the prophesied Messiah</b><br/> <b>9 Believing in Jesus brings forgiveness of sin</b></p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: THE FIRST GREAT MISSION TO THE GENTILES—BY PETER, 9:32-11:18**

**D. A Worldwide Ministry—In Caesarea (Part II): Preaching Peace, 10:34-43**

(10:34-43) **Introduction:** this passage gives the first message ever preached to Gentiles by one of the apostles. It is the message that opened the door of salvation to all the people of the world, to the Gentiles. It gives the points that need to be preached to all the nations of the world.

1. God is no respecter of persons—He accepts anyone who fears Him and works righteousness (v.34-35).
2. God sent His Word to Israel; He sent Jesus Christ preaching peace (v.36-37).
3. Jesus is God’s anointed Savior (v.38-39).
4. Jesus was crucified (v.39).
5. Jesus was raised up by God (v.40).
6. Jesus appeared to some who were chosen to be witnesses (v.40-41).
7. Jesus shall judge the living and the dead (v.42).
8. Jesus is the prophesied Messiah (v.43).
9. Believing in Jesus brings forgiveness of sin (v.43).

**1** (10:34-35) **Favoritism—Partiality—Discrimination:** God is no respecter of persons. The term “respecter of persons” (prosopolemptes) means to regard with partiality and favoritism; to favor a person because of looks, position, or circumstances.

The great point of this chapter is that God has no favorites and no prejudice against anyone. He shows no partiality or discrimination whatsoever. He does not accept a person because of nationality, race, caste, social standing, or class. God does not favor a man because of...

- who he is
- what he does
- what he has

Person or appearance, possessions or position, abilities or works, health or stature—these things do not make a person acceptable to God. “God is no respecter of persons.” He has always said so; but men, including Peter, had not paid attention to Him (cp. Dt.10:17; 2 Chron.19:7; Job 34:10; Ro.2:11; Eph.6:9; Col.3:25; Jas.2:1; 1 Pt.1:17). They just went right on ignoring the truth of God’s Word and feeding their prejudices. Note that Peter said...

- God is no respecter of persons (v.34).
- God is no respecter of nations (v.35. Cp. Ro.2:27-29.)

Two things make a person acceptable to God. Peter covered them both.

1. Fearing God (see note—Acts 9:31 for discussion).
2. Working righteousness (see note 5 and DEEPER STUDY # 5,6, *Righteousness—Mt.5:6* for more discussion). In the Bible righteousness means two simple but profound things: *to be right and to do right*. (See note 5 and DEEPER STUDY # 5,6, *Righteousness—Mt.5:6* for more discussion.)

- a. There are those who stress *being righteous and neglect doing righteousness*. This leads to two serious errors.
- 1) False security. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he has *believed in Jesus Christ*. But he neglects doing good and living as he should. He neglects obeying God and serving man.
  - 2) Loose living. It allows one to go out and do pretty much as he desires. He feels secure and comfortable in his *faith in Christ*. He knows that what he does may affect his fellowship with God and other believers, but he thinks his behavior will not affect his salvation. He thinks that no matter what he does he is still acceptable to God.

The problem with this stress is that it is a false righteousness. Righteousness in the Bible means *being righteous and doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing about being righteous *without living righteously*.

- b. There are those who stress *doing righteousness and neglect being righteous*. This also leads to two serious errors.

- 1) Self-righteousness and legalism. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he does good. He works and behaves morally and keeps certain rules and regulations. He does the things a Christian should do by obeying the main laws of God. But he neglects the basic law: the law of love and acceptance—that God loves him and accepts him not because he does good, but because he loves and trusts the righteousness of Christ (see note 5 and DEEPER STUDY # 5,6—Mt.5:6).
- 2) Being judgmental and censorious. A person who stresses that he is righteous (acceptable to God) because he keeps certain laws often judges and censors others. He feels that rules and regulations can be kept, for *He* keeps them. Therefore, anyone who fails to keep them is judged, criticized, and censored.

The problem with this stress is that it, too, is a false righteousness. Again, righteousness in the Bible is both *being righteous and doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing of being acceptable to God without *being made righteous in Christ Jesus* (see note 5 and DEEPER STUDY # 5,6—Mt.5:6; Ro.5:1 for more discussion. Cp. 2 Cor.5:21.)

**“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Mt.5:45).**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).**

**“But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me” (Gal.2:6).**

**“And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph.6:9).**

**2** (10:36-37) **Jesus Christ, Ministry—Witnessing:** God sent His Word to Israel; He sent Jesus Christ preaching peace. Note exactly what is being said.

- ⇒ God sent His Word to Israel. Israel was the first nation to receive God’s Word. Salvation is of the Jews (see notes also DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22; Ro.9:3-5 for discussion).
- ⇒ God sent His Word to Israel *by Jesus Christ*, God’s very own Son. It was Jesus Christ who brought the message of God (see note—Jn.1:34 for discussion).

However, God’s Word was not meant for Israel alone. Jesus Christ did not come just for Israel’s salvation. God is no respecter of persons. God accepts people from *every nation*, all those who fear Him and work righteousness. Peter declared three facts.

1. He burst forth: “Christ is Lord of *all*.”

*Not only of...*

- the Jews
- the privileged
- the poor
- the religious

*but of...*

- the Gentiles, every nation
- the heathen
- the people who truly fear Him and work righteousness

**“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Ro.10:9).**

**“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor.1:9).**

**“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Cor.8:6).**

2. Peter declared that Jesus Christ had been talked about throughout all Judea. Peter told Cornelius: “You know. You have heard the Word.” Cornelius and the ones sitting there had just paid little or no attention to it.

**Thought 1.** Think how many hear and sit under the gospel and pay little if any attention to it.

**“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Mt.7:26-27).**

**“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side” (Mt.13:19).**

**“But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise” (Mt.22:5).**

3. Peter said that Jesus Christ began to preach God’s Word in Galilee right after John’s ministry of baptism.

**“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God” (Mk.1:14).**

**“And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent” (Lk.4:43).**

**“And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him” (Lk.8:1).**

**“To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).**

**Thought 1.** No one had an excuse for rejecting the gospel of God’s kingdom. Jesus Christ had travelled and preached the gospel everywhere, and He was the topic of conversation upon everyone’s lips. They were without excuse. So it is today with those who have heard the gospel. They are without excuse.

**3** (10:38-39) **Jesus Christ, Anointed One:** Jesus is God’s anointed Savior. His very name “Christ” (Messiah) means “the Anointed One of God” (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Christ*—Mt.1:18). Jesus was anointed by God in a very special way.

1. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. But note: He was anointed with the Holy Spirit in a way that no other person has ever been anointed: the Holy Spirit was given without measure to Christ. He received an unlimited measure of the Spirit, and it was once-for-all. That is, the Spirit’s fulness never left Christ, not for a moment. (See notes—Jn.1:32-33; 3:34 for more discussion.)

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Lk.4:18).**

**“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together” (Acts 4:27).**

2. Jesus was anointed with miraculous power. Power is the *presence and outworking* of the Holy Spirit within a person. Jesus declared this. He was very clear in declaring two things.
- a. He Himself was anointed with the Holy Spirit so that He could be anointed with the power to minister.

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk.4:18-19).**

**“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).**

Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit so that He could go “about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil,” oppressed by the devil’s...

- evil spirits and demons
- temptations and sins
- strategies and methods
- lying and deception
- bitterness and hatred
- killings and wars
- selfishness and greed
- enslavements and bondages
- indulgence and extravagance
- hoarding and storing up
- neglect and unconcern
- immorality and lust
- stealing and injustices
- laziness and complacency
- power over death (Heb.2:14-15)

- b. The believer receives the Holy Spirit so that he can have the power to be a witness to the world.

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**Thought 1.** Note: Jesus Christ did not come nor was He anointed to debate theories and theology with the ministers and priests of His day. He was anointed to “go about doing good” and helping people by delivering them from the oppressions of the devil.

3. There is proof that Jesus did these things. Peter and the earliest believers saw and knew Him.

⇒ “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full” (1 Jn.1:1-4).

**Thought 1.** Jesus Christ is still working in lives today, delivering from the oppression of the devil. The proof is clearly seen in the lives and witness of genuine believers.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(10:38) **Anoint - Anointing:** Scripture speaks of at least four kinds of anointing.

1. The anointing of respect or of hospitality. Oil was poured over the body of a person as a sign of respect and hospitality. Such took place when welcoming guests into one’s home (Lk.7:46) or when burying the dead (Mk.14:8; 16:1).
2. The anointing for service, such as prophets (1 Ki.19:16), priests (Ex.28:41), and kings (1 Sam.10:1).
3. The anointing for medical purposes (Is.1:6; Lk.10:34; Jas.5:14f; Rev.3:18).
4. The anointing of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. The words *Christ* and *Messiah* mean “The Anointed One.”

**“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).**

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk.4:18-19).**

**4** (10:39) **Jesus Christ, Death:** Jesus was crucified, slain, and hung on a tree (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:3; DEEPER STUDY # 2,3—2:23; DEEPER STUDY # 1—3:13; notes—3:13-15; 4:25-28 for discussion).

**5** (10:40) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** Jesus was raised up by God (see notes and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:3; DEEPER STUDY # 4—2:24; note—2:25-36 for discussion).

**6** (10:40-41) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** Jesus appeared to some people who were chosen and appointed to be witnesses. Three points are stressed about Jesus’ resurrection appearances.

1. God showed Jesus openly (emphane genesthai), which means that God set Jesus before people so that He could be visibly, openly, and publicly seen. God manifested, showed, and set Him forth as the Risen Lord. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Jesus, Resurrection*—Acts 1:3 for more discussion.)
2. Jesus appeared to chosen witnesses. The word “chosen before” (prokecheirotonemenois) means to be pointed out, to be designated, to be appointed (cp. Jn.17:6). Before Christ ever arose, God chose some people to be witnesses of His Son’s resurrection. They were chosen for the very purpose of proclaiming the resurrection to a world of dying men.
3. The witnesses did “eat and drink with Him *after* He rose from the dead.” They had close and intimate fellowship with Him. (Cp. 1 Jn.1:1-4.) Peter said this for two reasons.
  - a. To stress that he and the other witnesses *had real* contact with the risen Lord. They not only *saw* Him, they “ate and drank,” communed and fellowshiped with Him. They were as closely associated with Him as persons can be. They were true, verifiable witnesses.
  - b. To stress that Jesus actually arose from the dead. The Person they saw was the Jesus whom they knew. His body was real. It was really Him; His body had been resurrected. (See outline and notes—Jn.21:1-14 for more discussion.)

**“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:23-24).**

**“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses” (Acts 3:14-15).**

**“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).**

**“And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead” (Acts 10:39-41).**

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (Acts 17:2-3).

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).

**7** (10:42) **Judgment:** Jesus shall judge the living and the dead of all nations. He shall judge both Jew and Gentile, both...

- |                           |                         |                             |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • rich and poor           | • pretty and ugly       | • white and black           |
| • strong and weak         | • happy and unhappy     | • yellow and red            |
| • employed and unemployed | • industrious and lazy  | • dark and light            |
| • healthy and sick        | • employee and employer | • religious and unreligious |

God has ordained Jesus Christ to judge all men, no matter who they are or where they are, alive or dead. He and He alone shall judge every soul who has ever appeared on earth. (Cp. Jn.5:21-29.)

“He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31. Cp. Acts 24:25.)

Jesus Christ alone is ordained to be the Judge. He alone, as the risen Lord, has the right to determine judgment.

1. He determines the conditions of salvation: what a person has to do to be saved; how a person is saved; who is and is not saved.

2. He determines the conditions of eternity: what eternal life shall be like; what eternal death shall be like; the state, the environment, the reward and the punishment of both heaven and hell.

“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt.25:32).

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (Jn.5:22).

“Because he [God the Father] hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Jesus Christ] whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Ro.2:16).

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim.4:1).

**8** (10:43) **Jesus Christ, Messiah:** Jesus is the prophesied Messiah. (See notes—Acts 3:22-24; 13:23-41; DEEPER STUDY # 8—Mt.1:23; Lk.3:24-31; 3:32-38; 3:38; 4:17-21; DEEPER STUDY # 3—Jn.1:45 for discussion.)

“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt.16:15-16).

“But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Mt.26:63-64).

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Lk.2:11).

“And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ” (Lk.2:26).

“He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ” (Jn.1:41).

“The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he” (Jn.4:25-26).

“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (Jn.6:68-69).

“Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things” (Jn.8:28).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (Jn.11:25-27).

“But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ” (Acts 9:22).

“Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (Acts 17:3).

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn.5:1).

**9** (10:43) **Belief:** believing in Jesus brings forgiveness of sins (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Believing*—Jn.2:24; *Forgiveness*—DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 2:38).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn.11:25).

“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (Jn.12:46).

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:36-37).

“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.3:15).

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn.5:1).

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 The Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> a. They “heard the Word”<br/> b. While Peter spoke<br/> c. The Jewish believers were amazed</p> | <p><b>E. A Worldwide Ministry In Caesarea (Part III): Receiving the Holy Spirit, 10:44-48</b></p> <p>44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.<br/> 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured</p> | <p>out the gift of the Holy Ghost.<br/> 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,<br/> 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?<br/> 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.</p> | <p><b>2 The Gentile believers spoke in tongues &amp; praised God</b></p> <p><b>3 The Gentile believers were baptized</b></p> <p><b>4 The door to the Gentiles was opened</b></p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: THE FIRST GREAT MISSION TO THE GENTILES—BY PETER, 9:32-11:18**

**E. A Worldwide Ministry In Caesarea (Part III): Receiving the Holy Spirit, 10:44-48**

(10:44-48) **Introduction:** God and God alone saves the Gentiles, that is, the people of the world. No man can save another man. No man has the power to save anyone else; therefore no man has the authority to save. Salvation—the gift of the new birth and of God’s Spirit—is of God and God alone. This is made abundantly clear in this passage, the passage where the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit of God.

1. The Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles (v.44-45).
2. The Gentile believers spoke in tongues and praised God (v.46).
3. The Gentile believers were baptized (v.47).
4. The door to the Gentiles was opened (v.48).

**1** (10:44-45) **Holy Spirit:** the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles. Note four significant points.

1. The Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles when they “heard the Word.” Hearing the Word of God was necessary. It is one of the essentials for receiving the Holy Spirit. The unsaved (Gentiles) *had to hear the Word* before they could receive the Holy Spirit. The idea is that they heard and believed and received the truth of God’s Word into their hearts without Peter even telling them to believe. This is made clear in Acts 11:17. They heard and received the message, hungering and thirsting for the Word of God in their lives. Therefore, they believed it immediately. (See note, *Believe*—Ro.10:16-17 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** What a glorious testimony! A striking challenge to every unbeliever! To hunger and thirst so much for the Word of God and for His salvation that we do not wait for the invitation of the messenger. We just believe and receive while we are hearing.

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Mt.7:24-25).

“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Lk.8:15).

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th.2:13).

“The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise” (Pr.15:31).

2. The Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles “while Peter yet spake.” Peter was still preaching; he had not finished his message when the Holy Spirit fell. God and God alone caused the Holy Spirit to fall upon the Gentile believers, not the hands of Peter...

- anointing them
- being laid upon them
- baptizing them
- placing them into water

No man had anything to do with God pouring His Spirit upon these believers. The gift of the Spirit was the act of God and God alone.

3. “The Holy Spirit *fell*” (epepesen to pneuma to hagion) and was “poured out” upon the Gentiles. Peter said the Gentiles “*received* the Holy Spirit as well as we” (v.47). Note that God gave them the Holy Spirit after they “believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 11:17). Hearing the message (v.44) and “believing on the Lord Jesus Christ” are absolute

essentials for receiving the Holy Spirit. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 10:44; DEEPER STUDY # 1—2:1-4 for more discussion. Also see note 1—Acts 2:1 for the purpose of the Holy Spirit’s presence in a life.)

“And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him” (Lk.2:25).

“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them” (Acts 2:3).

“Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:17).

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word” (Acts 10:44).

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19:6).

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor.12:13).

“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (1 Jn.2:20).

4. The Jewish believers were astonished (exestesan) or amazed. This refers to the six Jewish believers who had come with Peter (Acts 10:23). They had been taught from earliest childhood that the Holy Spirit was available only to the Jews. But here before their very eyes they witnessed God accepting Gentile believers into the church. All their life these leaders, Peter included, had been taught and steeped in a bitterness that bordered on hatred for Gentiles (see note—Acts 10:1-33). What a radical course of events to see their God pouring His Spirit upon the Gentiles! The sight of such, and the gift of tongues, was the sign to these leaders that Gentiles were to be as much a part of the church as Jews. And the Jews were to accept the Gentiles as readily as they did each other.

**Thought 1.** The gospel is universal—for the whole world.

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Lk.11:10).

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(10:44) **Holy Spirit:** there seem to be at least two, perhaps three, historical times when God “poured out” or baptized a group of people with His Spirit. Each time fulfilled His promise to send the Spirit and each time served as a pivotal point in church history.

1. There was a Jewish Pentecost (see notes—Acts 2:1-13).
2. There was the Gentile Pentecost covered here. The least that can be said about this event is that it is an extension of the Jewish Pentecost to include the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48).
3. Perhaps there is also historical significance in the account of the half-Jew, half-Gentile Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-17). This may have been a transition Pentecost between the Jewish Pentecost and the Gentile Pentecost.

**2** (10:46) **Tongues:** the Gentile believers spoke in tongues and praised God. Note: the speaking in tongues led the Gentile believers into a glorious and joyful praise of God. They *magnified God* (megalunonton ton theon). They were caught up in an ecstatic praise of the Lord. The “speaking with tongues” seems to be the sign that the Holy Spirit had fallen upon the Gentiles. Both Peter and the Jewish believers needed a sign, a sign that would leave no doubt that the Gentiles were saved. Speaking in tongues, that is, breaking out in an ecstatic praise of God, was such a sign. It was the sign that would leave no doubt whatsoever. Note: it is this that utterly shocked the Jewish believers who were with Peter; for the Gentiles were, as Peter says, receiving “the Holy Spirit *as well as we*” (v.47. See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:1-4. Also see DEEPER STUDY # 4—*Tongues*—Acts 2:4 for more discussion.)

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues” (Mk.16:17).

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

“For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” (Acts 10:46-47).

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19:6).

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (1 Cor.12:8-11).

“I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying” (1 Cor.14:5).

- 3** (10:47) **Baptism:** the Gentile believers were baptized. Note that Peter asked a question. Apparently he was challenging the Jewish believers who were with him. There could be no question: the Gentiles had received the Spirit. No one present could deny it. Therefore, could “any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?” (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Baptism*—Acts 2:38 for discussion.)

“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Mt.28:19).

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk.16:16).

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Jn.3:5).

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

“And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days” (Acts 10:48).

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

- 4** (10:48) **Evangelism, World:** the door to the Gentiles was opened. Peter commanded (prosetexen) the Gentile believers to be baptized. Evidently he commanded the six Jewish brothers to baptize them. Note: the Gentiles...
- had “heard the Word” (v.44).
  - “believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 11:17).
  - experienced “the Holy Spirit” falling (v.44), and being “poured” upon them (v.45). They had “received the Holy Spirit” (v.47).
  - were “baptized in the name of the Lord” (v.48).

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Is.45:22).

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is.55:1).

“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage” (Mt.22:9).

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Jn.7:37).

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:4).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).

CHAPTER 11

**F. A Worldwide Ministry—In Caesarea (Part IV): Gaining a Worldwide Vision, 11:1-18**

**1 The church's early vision: Narrow & traditional**

- a. The church heard of the Gentiles' conversion
- b. The circumcised were aroused<sup>DS1</sup>
  - 1) Were contentious
  - 2) Were accusing: Charged Peter with going to the Gentiles, the worldly

**2 God's will for the church's vision: A worldwide mission**

- a. The vision

- b. The command from God

- c. The religious struggle

- d. The lesson learned

And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What

God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

- e. The Spirit's leadership

- f. The confrontation with Cornelius

- g. The Gentiles baptized with the Holy Spirit

**3 The church's response to God's will: The conviction of a worldwide mission**

- a. Peter's conviction
  - 1) The Lord's promise was fulfilled in the Gentiles
  - 2) A person must not stand against God
- b. The church's conviction: God grants repentance to all men
  - 1) Is a gift of God
  - 2) Is unto life
  - 3) Causes believers to glorify God

DIVISION IV

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: THE FIRST GREAT MISSION TO THE GENTILES—BY PETER, 9:32-11:18**

**F. A Worldwide Ministry—In Caesarea (Part IV): Gaining a Worldwide Vision, 11:1-18**

(11:1-18) **Introduction:** what happened in this passage is of critical importance to church history. The event needs to be carefully studied by every church and body of believers.

1. The church's early vision: narrow and traditional (v.1-3).
2. God's will for the church's vision: a worldwide mission (v.4-15).
3. The church's response to God's will: the conviction of a worldwide mission (v.16-18).

**1** (11:1-3) **Church:** the church's early vision was narrow and traditional. Note two points.

1. The apostles and brothers, that is, the whole church, heard about Peter's preaching mission to the Gentiles and about their having received "the Word of God." The news was bound to travel fast, for it was unheard of that a Jew would fellowship and eat with an idolatrous Gentile. And to top it off, Peter had baptized the Gentiles without first requiring them to be circumcised.

Remember: most if not all the believers at Jerusalem were Jews. They were circumcised as small children and had been committed to the law of Moses since childhood. When they accepted Christ, they did not forsake their Judaistic religion. They saw Christianity as an extension of Judaism. In their minds Christ had only added new teachings to their existing law and religion. Therefore, if a person wished to accept Christ, he had to become a Jew first...

- to be circumcised
- to commit himself to the law of Moses
- to observe all the ceremonies and rituals of Judaism

Once a person had done these things, that is, become a Jew, then and only then could he receive Christ and be baptized. Then and only then could he be accepted into the church. Peter had gone contrary to these beliefs and practices. He had...

- allowed Gentiles to receive the Word of God without circumcising them (v.1).
- broken the law of Moses by “going in to the uncircumcised [Gentiles] and eating” with them (v.3).

The news was bound to travel fast. The early believers, who were still loyal to their Judaistic religion, were shocked. The Jerusalem church was being shaken to its foundation. The basic belief of so many of the early believers—that Jesus had come only to enlarge and extend Judaism—was being challenged. Peter had to give an answer, and it had to be clearly explained and understood.

2. The circumcision *segment* of the church was especially aroused. Note that only “they of the circumcision contended with Peter.” (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *The Circumcision*—Acts 11:2.) The apostles and most of the Christian *brothers* felt no contention or divisiveness. They trusted Peter’s walk with the Lord and felt sure that he would have an adequate explanation when he had the opportunity to share the experience.

The word “contended” (diekrinonto) means to stand against, to take an opposite position, to take sides against, to oppose, to create a cleavage, a division. It is creating strife, struggle, and discord. They readily and willingly opposed Peter, and the idea is that it was repeated; it went on and on; the issue was prolonged.

Again keep in mind the issue: Peter had carried the Word of God to the Gentiles and...

- allowed the non-Jews to receive the Word of God without circumcising them (v.1).
- had broken the law of Moses by “going to the uncircumcised [non-Jews] and eating” with them (v.3).

**Thought 1.** Note three striking lessons.

- 1) Some hang on to their religious form, ceremony, rituals, rules, and regulations. These are placed before the lives and salvation of men.
- 2) Note the true spirit of these legalists. Their spirits should have been rejoicing that some people were now saved and brought to the knowledge of Christ. Instead their spirits were full of contention and divisiveness because some religious practices were violated.
- 3) Prejudice, discrimination, rituals, and rules can blind us to God’s purpose to reach out to *all* men in salvation. All men are to be reached no matter who they are. No church should exclude anyone. The church’s mission is to reach both the dirty and the clean, both the lower and the upper class.

**“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Mt.24:14).**

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Mt.28:19).**

**“And the gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mk.13:10).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Lk.24:47).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Rev.14:6).**

**Thought 2.** The disciple is called to do the Lord’s will, to reach and evangelize the world. He often has to break tradition and buck the tide of doing things the way they have always been done. When he does, he can expect criticism and contention from the legalist and the traditionalist. Nevertheless, the true disciple of Christ remains faithful even as Peter did. He does what God says. He does all he can to reach out and share Christ with a world filled with desperate needs.

**Thought 3.** Some churches commit a *terrible* crime: they monopolize the gospel, seldom if ever sharing it. They take the gospel and keep it to themselves, shutting all others out, never reaching out to bring others in. They build barriers of exclusiveness and prejudice, shutting themselves off from the rest of the world.

**“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).**

**“And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8-9).**

**“But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God” (Ro.2:10-11).**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ro.10:12-13).**

“And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph.6:9).

“I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality” (1 Tim.5:21).

“Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?” (Jas.2:4).

“He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons” (Job 13:10).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(11:2) **The Circumcision—Judaizers—Legalists:** these were Jews who professed Christ but still hung on to their Judaistic religion, in particular to the rite of circumcision and to the law of Moses (cp. Acts 5:1-35, esp. 1, 24-29). They believed a man became a Christian...

- by first becoming a Jew. The man was to be circumcised, embrace Judaism in all its rituals and ceremonies, and begin to obey the laws of Moses,
- then the man could accept Christ as his Savior.

In the mind of the circumcised, Christianity was a mixture of Judaism and the teachings of Christ. The law was just as important as Christ and Christ was no more important than the law. They failed to grasp...

- that Christ was the fulfillment of the law.
- that Christ had kept the law perfectly, thereby becoming the Ideal Man, the Perfect Pattern of what every man should be.
- that Christ was not only the embodiment of the law, but so much more—the very embodiment of God Himself, the Ideal Man, the Perfect Pattern to whom *all men* were to look for their salvation and standard.
- that Christ, as the Son of God and as the Ideal Man and the Perfect Pattern, is the One to whom *all men* are now to look and obey.

Some Jews were impressed with Christ and professed Him, but they were never able to understand or else were unwilling to accept Christ as the fulfillment of the law and as the Savior of *all men*. Therefore, they never turned to Christ alone, never broke away...

- from their legalistic religion.
- from requiring men (Gentiles) to become Jews before they could become Christians.

This was the great battle the church had to fight in its beginning. It was the great problem that faced God: how to break the church away from its Judaistic roots and from excluding and shutting out the other people of the world (Gentiles). This had always been the problem with the Jews—the problem of keeping the Gentiles away from God and the glorious salvation God had planned for all men. Now, since Christ had come, God had to lead the early church away from the Judaistic approach, away from making a man become a Jew before he could accept Christ. This was not the will of God. He sent Christ into the world to save all men, not just the Jews. The message had to be carried to all men. God had to break the early Jewish believers away from their legalism, away from their...

- making distinctions between themselves and others.
- making others become religionists before accepting Christ.
- discrimination against others.
- building barriers and walls for others to cross (legalistic rules).
- being separatists and divisive.
- prejudices and bigotry.

However, note this: all through the history of the church, extending from the early church up to the present time, there have been some who have refused to follow Christ *alone*. They have laid the burden of the law (legalism, becoming a religionist, a Jew) upon people. They are known as the circumcision, the Judaizers, or in modern terms, the legalists or religionists.

“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised [undergo a ritual] after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1).

“Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised [undergo a ritual], and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment” (Acts 15:24).

“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage” (Gal.2:4).

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

**2** (11:4-15) **Missions—Evangelism—Church, Vision:** God’s will for the church’s vision was a worldwide mission. Peter reached out to the contentious. He explained as clearly and straightforwardly as he could. He simply shared what had happened. The outline is sufficient in reviewing the experience (see outline and notes—Acts 10:1-48). But note what Peter stressed: *God’s will* is a worldwide mission, the door of salvation is to be thrown open to the whole world (Gentiles). The stress is upon God’s intervention: God acting, moving, revealing, and making His will clear. Peter stressed...

- a trance and vision *from God* (v.5).
- a vessel or platter descending *from heaven* to him (v.5).
- the *Lord speaking* to him (v.7-8).
- the *Lord commanding* him *three times* (v.10).
- the vessel ascending back *into heaven* (v.10).
- the *supernatural timing* in the arrival of Cornelius’ servants (v.11).
- the *Holy Spirit’s instructing* him to go to the Gentiles (v.12).
- the *angel’s visit* to the Gentile and his instructions to send for Peter (v.13).
- the *Holy Spirit falling* on the Gentiles even before he had finished (v.15).
- the *Holy Spirit fell* on the Gentiles just as “on us” (v.15).
- the *Holy Spirit fell* just as the Lord promised (v.16).
- *God gave* the Holy Spirit to Gentiles just “as He did to us” (v.17).

Now note four things.

1. Everything that happened to Peter in opening the door to the Gentiles was of God, initiated and controlled by God. Peter was merely the instrument God used. It was God’s will, God’s work, God’s activity, God’s carrying of the gospel to the world (Gentiles), not Peter’s.
2. There were six witnesses to what happened, each one verifying that the event was all of God. And note: they were Jewish believers themselves.
3. The words “nothing doubting” (meden diakrinanta, v.12) mean making no distinction. God tells Peter in no uncertain terms, “Go with them [the Gentiles] making no distinctions.”

**Thought 1.** The same command is given to all believers of all generations. Believers are not to make distinctions, not to discriminate in proclaiming the gospel. What an indictment against so many! How many *withdraw* from the poor? How many do not reach out to people of other races and social classes? (For verses, see note above—Acts 11:1-3.)

4. Note the amount of space and detail given by the author (Luke) to this event. He stresses the event more than any other in the book of Acts. Add to it the long discussion and chapter dealing with the same subject in Acts 15 and its importance becomes even more significant. The importance of God’s will, that the gospel be preached to the whole world, can never be overstressed.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

**3** (11:16-18) **Missions—Church, Vision:** the church’s response to God’s will was the conviction of a worldwide mission.

1. There was Peter’s conviction. He was convinced of three clear *truths*.
  - a. The Lord’s promise was fulfilled in the Gentiles; the Gentiles were being baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; Jn.14:26).

**Thought 1.** Note a significant point: Peter saw that the most significant of the two baptisms (the baptism of water by John and the baptism of Jesus) was the baptism of Jesus, that is, the baptism of the Spirit. He was clearly saying that this was what he saw and understood.

- b. Peter was convinced of another truth: he could not withstand (stand against) God. The Greek is emphasized, “*I, who was I that I could withstand God?*” Peter had absolutely nothing to do with giving the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles. The gift of the Holy Spirit is God’s doing, and one thing is sure: no man is going to stop God from doing what He purposes to do. It was God’s will that the door of salvation be swung open to the Gentiles and God was doing it.
- c. It is not circumcision—not some ritual, not some ceremony, not religion—but belief that caused the Holy Spirit to enter a life. “God gave them [the Holy Spirit]...[they] who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” (v.17).
2. There was the church’s conviction: God grants repentance to all men. Note three significant points.
  - a. Repentance is the gift of God and of the Holy Spirit. If there should be no God, no Holy Spirit, there would be no opportunity to repent. Since both God and the Spirit do exist and are actively working to save men, there is such a thing as repentance. Men have the privilege of repenting, of actually turning from their sin to God. Note what God expects of men: not religion, not some ritual or ceremony, not social standing or success, not race or knowledge, but repentance (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Repentance*—Acts 3:19; 17:29-30).

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).

“Let the wicked forsake his way, the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron.7:14).

- b. Repentance is unto life; that is, it leads to life. Abundant life and eternal life are the end, the consummation, the experience of repentance. The person who repents experiences life immediately, and lives on experiencing life to the fullest—forever. He never has and never will taste death.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (Jn.11:25-27).

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal.6:8).

- c. God has thrown open the door of salvation to the world (Gentiles). This is the church’s first *magna charta of missions*, its first stamp of approval to worldwide evangelism. (Note: the battle is far from over. Selfishness and self-centeredness are difficult to erase from depraved human nature. The battle had to be constantly fought in the early church, and the struggle has continued on down to the present time. How many churches and believers still resist world missions and evangelism either through simple neglect and unconcern or through direct opposition?)

“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage” (Mt.22:9).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God” (Lk.9:60).

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Lk.24:47).

“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21).

“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

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| <p><b>1 The church was born</b><br/> a. Born through witnessing &amp; preaching</p> <p>b. Born by sharing Christ with all: Gentile as well as Jew</p> <p>c. Born through the hand of the Lord</p> <p><b>2 The church was followed up &amp; taught</b><br/> a. A mother church showed interest<br/> b. A missionary disciple was commissioned<br/> 1) His ministry: Exhortation</p> | <p><b>V. THE CHURCH SCATTERED: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CHURCH, 11:19-12:25</b></p> <p><b>A. The First Great Gentile Church: God's Pattern for All Churches,<sup>DS1,2</sup> 11:19-30</b></p> <p>19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.</p> <p>20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.</p> <p>21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.</p> <p>22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.</p> <p>23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God,</p> | <p>was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.</p> <p>24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.</p> <p>25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:</p> <p>26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.</p> <p>27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.</p> <p>28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.</p> <p>29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:</p> <p>30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.</p> | <p>2) His character</p> <p>c. A tremendous result: Many added</p> <p><b>3 The church sought after additional teaching staff</b><br/> a. Had to seek<br/> b. Did find</p> <p><b>4 The church (many) met consistently for intensive training</b></p> <p><b>5 The church developed an unbelievable heritage—for itself and for Christ: Called Christians</b></p> <p><b>6 The church launched its own worldwide mission<sup>DS3</sup></b><br/> a. A prophecy of great need</p> <p>b. A sharing of money—every one according to his ability</p> <p>c. A sharing of ministers</p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE CHURCH SCATTERED: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CHURCH, 11:19-12:25**

**A. The First Great Gentile Church: God's Pattern for All Churches, 11:19-30**

(11:19-30) **Introduction:** there is no question—this passage covers one of the most significant events in history. It is the founding of the first great Gentile church. The church was founded under God's sovereignty, control, and will. The church is set forth very simply, yet as a dynamic pattern for all churches and believers to copy.

1. The church was born (v.19-21).
2. The church was followed up and taught (v.22-24).
3. The church sought after additional teaching staff (v.25-26).
4. The church (many) met consistently for intensive training (v.26).
5. The church developed an unbelievable heritage—for itself and for Christ: believers were called Christians (v.26).
6. The church launched its own worldwide mission (v.27-30).

(11:19-30) **Another Outline:** The First Great Gentile Church.

1. The birth of the church (v.19-21).
2. The nourishment of the church (v.22-24).
3. The growth of the church (v.24<sup>b</sup>).
4. The intensive training of the church (v.25-26).
5. The effect of the church's witness: Called Christians (v.26<sup>c</sup>).
6. The beginning ministry of the church (v.27-30).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(11:19-30) **Antioch:** was the third greatest city of the Roman world, following only Rome and Alexandria in size and importance. The city had over a half-million citizens.

1. Note the secular history and nature of the city. The city...
  - was founded by Seleucius Nicator around 300 B.C. He named the city after his father Antiochus.
  - became the capital of Syria when Rome conquered Syria.
  - was dominated by Greek culture and language; however it had a large Syrian and Jewish population.
  - was about fifteen miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea, lying on the mouth of the Orontes river. The seaport that supplied the city was Seleucia (cp. Acts 13:4).
  - was the third major commercial and cosmopolitan center of the world, always active with the hustle and bustle of worldwide trade and an influx of salesmen, businessmen, laborers, and visitors.
  - was tolerant of all religions, forbidding none. But it was the home of the great temple of Daphne, which was the worship of an immoral god. The prophetesses of the temple were sacred prostitutes.
  - was a great center for sport and the pursuit of pleasure. It was known as a city *gone mad* over sport and pleasure. It was a cesspool of license and pleasure, and because of this the name of Antioch became a byword around the world for sensual pleasure. It was *bustling* day and night with whatever pleasure man desired.
2. Note the importance of the city to Christian history.
  - ⇒ Antioch was the city of the first great Christian church among Gentiles (Acts 11:19-30).
  - ⇒ Antioch was the city and church from which the first worldwide missionaries were sent (Acts 13:1-3). It was the city from which the great mission thrust of Christianity was launched.
  - ⇒ Antioch was the church where believers were first called “Christians” (Acts 11:26).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(11:19-30) **Preaching—Witnessing—Exhortation—Teaching:** in this passage there are three different Greek words used for witnessing and sharing the Word. They show the ministry of the church, just how believers are to go about sharing Christ.

1. There is the word “preaching” (*lalountes*, v.20). This word really means *speaking* and should be translated *speaking*. It is the simple sharing of conversation among people. As the believers scattered and travelled about, they “spoke the Word,” shared Christ in ordinary conversation. The picture is that of witnessing one on one, of scattering the *seed* wherever they went. Christ was the topic of their conversation. They were saved and had received life, both abundant and eternal, and were rejoicing in the glory of the greatest hope imaginable. Their salvation, the presence and power of Christ in their lives, was what was upon their mind; therefore, they were talking about Christ and sharing Him, scattering the glorious message of the gospel everywhere they went.

**“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them” (Acts 8:5).**

**“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus” (Acts 8:35).**

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

**“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)” (Acts 10:36).**

**“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Cor.1:23).**

2. There is the word “preaching [*euaggelizomenoi*] the Lord Jesus” (v.20). This word means to declare and proclaim the gospel; to preach the glad tidings of Jesus Christ; to proclaim the Word, the truth about Jesus Christ. It means that the believers who went to Antioch actually entered the city preaching and proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The picture is...

- that of their entering the city to *bring* the Lord Jesus to its residents. The believers were set on reaching the city for God, and their method was preaching the Lord Jesus.
- that of facing a person or persons, of standing before people and preaching Christ.

3. There is the word “exhorted” (*parekalei*, v.23). This word means to admonish, advise, challenge, entreat, call upon, beseech, urge, warn, comfort, and encourage.

a. Note what the message of exhortation concerns: that people “would cleave unto the Lord.” The very focus of exhortation is to challenge, encourage, and warn believers to “cleave unto the Lord.”

b. Note how closely the Greek word is associated with the Greek word for the Holy Spirit (*paraclete*, see note—Jn.14:16). The very ministry of the Holy Spirit *is* exhortation. His very presence and power within the genuine believer is for the purpose of urging, comforting, helping, and warning believers to “cleave unto the Lord” and to bear testimony to His glorious salvation.

c. Note that the minister’s ministry was that of exhortation. Even as the Holy Spirit stood within the church as *Another Helper* to Christ, so Barnabas was to stand as another helper to Christ. Barnabas was to challenge and encourage and warn the people: they must “cleave unto the Lord.”

**“And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying” (Mt.5:2).**

**“And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

**“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Tit.1:9).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from**

all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:11-15).

**1** (11:19-21) **Church, Founded:** the church was born. This passage tells what happened to the believers who were forced to flee Jerusalem after the death of Stephen. Saul had launched a terrible persecution against them, attempting to stamp out the name of Christ (see outline and notes—Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-9 for discussion). They scattered all over...

- Phoenicia, which included the important cities of Tyre and Sidon.
- Cyprus (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 13:4 for discussion).
- Antioch (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Antioch*—Acts 11:19-30).

The point is striking: as the believers scattered, they preached Christ. The picture is that there was not an area left untouched by the gospel. Wherever the believers went, they shared Christ. However, the focus is upon Antioch, the great church that was founded there. Note what it was that gave birth to the great church. There were three essentials.

1. The church was born through lay believers, through their witnessing (v.19) and preaching (v.20). (See note, *Preaching*, pts. 1 and 2—Acts 11:19-30 for discussion.)

2. The church was born by lay believers sharing Christ with everyone, no matter who they were, both Gentile and Jew. Note that some believers witnessed to the Jews only (v.19), but other believers witnessed to the Gentiles in Antioch (v.20). The gospel of Christ is for the whole world. It may have begun with the Jew, but God is the God of the universe, of all men. Therefore, He longs for all men to know about the coming of His Son into the world and to be saved through Him. Note also the message preached: the Lord Jesus.

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Is.45:22).

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is.55:1).

“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage” (Mt.22:9).

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Jn.7:37).

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:4).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).

3. The church was born through the hand of the Lord, by His sovereignty and control. God overruled all the trials and opposition and caused the church to be born.

⇒ God overruled the persecution.

⇒ God overruled the fear and trauma of the believers who were having to flee for their lives, to leave their homes and friends and businesses. Discouragement, questioning, unbelief, desertion, denial, silence, and failure to witness—all could have set in upon the persecuted believers who were losing all they had. But God overruled and held them dear to His heart, giving them a very special grace to endure and march through all triumphantly, proclaiming the name of the Lord Jesus.

⇒ God overruled the pleasure-madness and sins of Antioch.

⇒ God overruled and stirred the believers to witness and preach Christ despite all the trials and opposition. God caused the church to be born. His sovereignty, His control, His power—“the hand of the Lord was with them.” The result: “a great number *believed, and turned to the Lord.*” The first great Gentile church was born, and it was born through God’s sovereignty.

“To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Lk.1:79).

“The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way” (Ps.25:9).

“I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles” (Is.42:6).

(11:22-26) **Another Outline:** A True Disciple or Minister.

1. Must see something: the grace of God (v.23<sup>a</sup>).
2. Must do something: exhort (v.23<sup>b</sup>).
3. Must be something (v.24).
4. Must recognize something: he needs help (v.25-26).

**2** (11:22-24) **Church, Followup—Minister:** the church was followed up and taught. Note three significant events that happened.

1. The mother church heard about the witness of the scattered believers. Remember, both the apostles and the first leaders of the church were still in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was still considered the mother church, the one to whom the scattered churches looked for leadership. The church and its leaders wanted to help the new churches springing up all around. The purpose is clearly seen in what Barnabas did. The mother church wanted the new churches...

- to have ministerial help (v.22).
- to be exhorted (v.23).
- to be taught (v.26).

2. A missionary disciple was commissioned to help the new churches. Again, the focus is upon Antioch. Note three things about the missionary Barnabas.

- a. His ministry was exhortation (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Preaching*, pt.3—Acts 11:19-30 for discussion). The message was...
- “with purpose of heart”: a determined, set, focused, resolute, steady, purposed heart.
  - to “cleave unto the Lord”: to continue, be constant, loyal, steadfast, persistent, persevering, faithful.

“But cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day” (Jos.23:8).

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal.5:1).

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).

“Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pt.5:9).

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).

b. His character was striking.

⇒ “Good” (agathos): upright, just, moral, honorable, and pleasing to God. He was what he should be inwardly and outwardly.

⇒ Full of the Holy Spirit: conscious and aware of the spirit’s presence and power, control and discipline, will and purpose, guidance and direction—all the fruit of the Spirit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23; cp. Ro.8:1).

“Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph.5:18).

⇒ Full of faith: believing both in the Lord and in His purpose and power to do whatever He willed and led one to do.

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Mt.21:22).

“But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead” (Ro.4:24).

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).

**Thought 1.** No disciple of the Lord, certainly no minister of the gospel, should be any less than Barnabas.

3. A tremendous result was experienced. Many were added to the Lord (cp. v.21, 24, 26).

**Thought 1.** New churches will reach people—in fact any church will reach people...

- when believers are witnessing faithfully.
- when churches are showing interest in the witnessing of believers elsewhere.
- when disciples and ministers are exhorting and demonstrating such godly character.

**3** (11:25-26) **Church—Staff:** the church sought additional staff—to have an adequate teaching staff. Barnabas is the one who is the focus of attention in this point, but the church was bound to have sensed the need for additional staff and given its approval. The point is this: the need was sensed and the decision was made to seek for help. The only question was who should be secured. A unique person was needed, a person who not only had a Jewish background, but who knew the Greek language and culture and could relate to both Gentile and Jew alike. The person also needed to be fearless and bold in his witness for Christ because of the godless, immoral society of Antioch.

Barnabas knew such a man: Saul of Tarsus. So he set out to find him. The word “seek” (anazeteo) means to search for, to search back and forth, up and down; to make a thorough search. Paul had been busy throughout Syria and Cilicia preaching Christ (Gal.1:21). Apparently Barnabas had difficulty finding him. But note: he knew God’s will, so he did not give up the search. He kept searching until he found God’s choice.

**Thought 1.** What a dynamic lesson for all churches in seeking help and in building a church staff!

“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt.4:19).

“He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone” (Jn.1:41-42).

“Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (Jn.1:45).

“Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves

with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:25-26).

**4** (11:26) **Church, Training:** the church—many of the believers—met consistently for intensive training (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Preaching*, pt.4—Acts 11:19-30 for more discussion and verses). Note three facts that are self-explanatory.

1. The purpose for the church meeting together was to be *taught* about the Lord...
  - His death according to the Scriptures (1 Cor.15:3).
  - His resurrection according to the Scriptures (1 Cor.15:4).
  - His teachings, doctrines, and instructions (Mt.28:19-20; cp. Acts 17:11).
2. “Many people” were taught, not just a few. The believers hungered to learn the truth.
3. The church met together consistently for a *whole year*.

**5** (11:26) **Christian:** the church developed an unbelievable heritage for itself and for Christ. The believers at Antioch were the first to be called “Christians.” Note:

- ⇒ The name was a nickname given to believers by the unsaved people at Antioch.
- ⇒ The title was a name for people belonging to Christ, for the followers of Christ.
- ⇒ The title is used only two other times in the New Testament (Acts 26:28; 1 Pt.4:16).
- ⇒ Believers took the name *Christian* and began applying it to themselves. It was to become the name adopted by the whole world for the followers of Christ.

**Thought 1.** What a heritage the believers of Antioch left to the world, the very name of being *followers of Christ*.

**Thought 2.** Every person who calls himself a Christian should be a *true* follower of Christ. How tragic that so many are not (Col.2:6; 1 Jn.2:6)!

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Pt.2:21).

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).

**6** (11:27-30) **Mission—Evangelism—Church, Vision:** the church launched its own worldwide mission. Very simply, some prophets from Jerusalem came to help in the ministry of Antioch. We do not know what led them to come: an invitation from Antioch or a commissioning by the Jerusalem church or some direction from the Holy Spirit. Neither do we know how many came, but this one thing is sure: it was God’s will that they came. This is known by what follows.

1. There was a prophecy of great need. One of the prophets, Agabus, predicted a worldwide famine. (Cp. Acts 21:10 for another reference to Agabus.)

- ⇒ The prophecy was not a deduction, not of the reasoning ability of Agabus. The prophecy was of the Spirit.
- ⇒ The famine took place during the reign of Claudius Caesar who ruled between A.D. 41-54.

2. There was a sharing of money and supplies. Everyone sent relief to Jerusalem “according to his ability.” The point to note is this: the newly born church at Antioch was now seen launching its own mission project. They were now helping the mother church, the church that had originally helped them (v.22-24).

3. There was the sharing of ministers. Note who was sent by the church: their two chief ministers, Barnabas and Saul. They delivered the offering to the elders at the Jerusalem church (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Elders*—Tit.1:5-9). Paul was later to encourage constant giving to the needs of God’s people (Acts 24:17; Ro.15:25-27; 1 Cor.16:1-4; 2 Cor.8:1-15; Gal.2:10).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).

“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim.6:18).

“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed” (Ps.37:3).

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(11:27) **Prophets:** this is the first time the title *prophets* is mentioned in the early church. The function of a New Testament prophet was primarily threefold: to edify, exhort, and comfort (1 Cor.14:3; cp. Acts 15:32). However, he was also given the grace to foretell the future as God willed to reveal it. In the list of New Testament gifts, prophets are listed in order of priority next to apostles (1 Cor.12:28-29; Eph.4:11).

- ⇒ Some early prophets are named (Acts 13:1; 15:32; 11:28; cp. 21:10).
- ⇒ Prophets were given the spiritual gift of teaching (Acts 13:1).
- ⇒ The gift of prophecy can be exercised at will by the prophets (1 Cor.15:32).
- ⇒ Prophets face a great danger: super-spirituality or pride (1 Cor.15:37).
- ⇒ The early prophets were considered as part of the foundation of the church—right along with the apostles (Eph.2:20).
- ⇒ The understanding of the mysteries of the church was given to the early prophets by special revelation from the Holy Spirit (Eph.3:5-6).

CHAPTER 12

**B. The Jerusalem Church is Miraculously Protected: God's Pattern For Deliverance from Persecution,<sup>DS1</sup> 12:1-25**

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through

one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode.

20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was

**1 There was the first political attack against the church**

- a. By persecution
- b. By murder

- c. By imprisonment<sup>DS2</sup>

**2 There was God's pattern for deliverance**

- a. The pattern of prayer

- b. The pattern of confidence in God's will

- c. The pattern of God's miraculous work & the disciple's obedience
- 1) "Arise"—"chains fell off"

- 2) "Gird"—"so he did"

- 3) "Follow"—"He... followed"

- d. The pattern of God's sovereign will

- e. Results

- 1) Reunion of believers<sup>DS3</sup>

- 2) Gladness, joy

- 3) Utter astonishment

- 4) A declaration of God's sovereign deliverance
- 5) Relief from anxiety among the leaders: James & the other leaders

- 6) Escape & safety

**3 There was God's sovereign wrath, His vindication of the church**

- a. The terrible sins of Herod

- b. The terrible death of Herod

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
|  | <p>nourished by the king's country,<br/>                 21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.<br/>                 22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.<br/>                 23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him,</p> | <p>because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.<br/>                 24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.<br/>                 25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.</p> | <p><b>4 There was the church marching on triumphantly</b><br/>                 a. The Word multiplied, v.24<br/>                 b. A young man is disciplined, a young man destined for greatness<sup>254</sup></p> |
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DIVISION V

THE CHURCH SCATTERED: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CHURCH, 11:19-12:25

**B. The Jerusalem Church is Miraculously Protected: God's Pattern for Deliverance from Persecution, 12:1-25**

(12:1-25) **Introduction:** God always delivers His people either through or from the trials of this life, including persecution and martyrdom. This passage gives a picture of God's pattern for deliverance through persecution.

1. There was the first political attack against the church (v.1-4).
2. There was God's pattern for deliverance (v.5-17).
3. There was God's sovereign wrath, His vindication of the church (v.18-23).
4. There was the church marching on triumphantly (v.24-25).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(12:1-25) **Herod Agrippa I** (A.D. 41-44): the facts concerning Herod Agrippa I are interesting.

- ⇒ He was the grandson of Herod the Great who had tried to kill the baby Jesus by murdering all the children (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Mt.2:3-4).
- ⇒ He was the nephew of Herod Antipas who had John the Baptist killed (see DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Mt.14:1-14).
- ⇒ He was born about 10 B.C., reared and educated in Rome.
- ⇒ He became king over Palestine and ruled between A.D. 41-44.
- ⇒ He sought the popularity of the Jewish people by pretending to be a Jewish convert. He publicly kept the Jewish law and feasts, seeking the support and loyalty of the people. It was this that caused him to turn against the church. He was seeking the favor of the people, their approval and loyalty (cp. Acts 12:3). Herod was a shrewd politician, able to maneuver and manipulate people to his advantage.

Note this: for some time the Jewish people had begun to turn against Christian believers. The public misunderstood the teaching and the evangelistic fervor of Christians. The idea of reaching out to Gentiles and converting the whole world to Christ was just unheard of. Apparently a terrible animosity had built up against the Christian church. Herod sought to capitalize upon the animosity to gain more support and loyalty of the people by destroying the leaders of the church. He felt such action would gain their favor and help tremendously in maintaining peace throughout Palestine—all of which would solidify his power and esteem in Rome.

**1** (12:1-4) **Persecution:** there was the *first political attack* against the church. It had been about *eight years* since Stephen's death and the first persecution against the church. The persecution had been squelched by the hand of God in converting the arch-persecutor himself, Saul of Tarsus (see notes—Acts 9:1-9). However, throughout the eight years, feelings against the church had been growing until they reached the present peak (cp. "all the expectation of the Jews," v.11). The people were filled with animosity toward Christian believers. There were two primary reasons for their hatred. The public just did not understand...

- the teachings of Jesus and His followers: how the teachings fulfilled the law; how they could be reconciled with Jewish religion.
- the evangelistic outbreak of the church: that Jewish believers would be so full of fervor for Christ that they would reach out to convert the whole world. Apparently, the conversion of Cornelius and the founding of churches throughout the Gentile world upset some of the Jews to no end.

Herod, being the shrewd politician he was, saw an opportunity to please the Jews by persecuting and seeking to destroy the church. If he could please the Jews, it would help...

- keep the Jews quiet, keep them supporting Rome's policies.
- solidify his own prestige and power with the authorities back in Rome.

Herod launched the government's attack against the leaders of the church. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Herod Agrippa I—Acts 12:1-25* for more discussion.)

1. Persecution. The word “vex” or “persecute” (kakosai) means to oppress, to torment, to harm, to do evil against. Certain leaders in the church were arrested and imprisoned and apparently tortured. A person can just imagine the believers being man-handled and molested as the persecuted of every generation so often are, their homes and property being destroyed and confiscated or stolen.

2. Murder. One of the persons killed was James, the brother of John, one of the three leading apostles of the Lord (see also DEEPER STUDIES # 4-6—Mt.10:2). Nothing is said about James in the book of *Acts* except that he was martyred. But the fact that Herod would attempt to silence him is clear evidence that James was very active in serving Christ. Christ had told James he would suffer martyrdom (Mt.20:23). God makes a glorious promise to the believer who is persecuted.

**“If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:17).**

3. Imprisonment. The persecution of the church’s leaders pleased the Jews, especially the murder of one of the Lord’s leading apostles. Herod’s plan seemed to be working. Note three things.

- a. It was the Passover season, the days of unleavened bread. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.26:17; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.22:1.) Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims had flooded into the city of Jerusalem. As on any festive occasion, there was a party-like atmosphere hovering over the city. The people were filled with a festive, merry spirit. Herod had a unique chance to really gain popularity among multitudes of people.
- b. Herod was so elated with the response of the Jews, he lurched forward with the boldest plot imaginable: the arrest and jailing of *the leader* himself, Peter the apostle. Note: Herod was planning to execute Peter after the Passover. Jewish law did not allow executions during the Passover Feast. Also note: this was Peter’s third imprisonment for the sake of his Lord (cp. Acts 4:3; 5:18; 12:4-5).
- c. Herod had Peter heavily guarded (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 12:3-4).

**“But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues” (Mt.10:17).**

**“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” (Mt.24:9; cp. Lk.21:12-13).**

**“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn.15:20).**

**“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me” (Jn.16:1-3).**

**“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).**

**“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev.2:10).**

**“O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me” (Ps.7:1).**

**“My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me” (Ps.31:15).**

**“All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me” (Ps.119:86).**

**“For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead” (Ps.143:3).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(12:3-4) **Prisoners:** Peter was probably guarded by sixteen different soldiers. Four soldiers at a time served two separate three-hour watches within a twenty-four hour stretch. One wrist of the prisoner was usually chained to the wrist of a guard. Note the extra security with Peter: both wrists were chained (Acts 12:6). The reason for the extra security with Peter was the huge throng of pilgrims visiting the city during the Passover. In the midst of the mass confusion within the city, Herod felt some of Peter’s friends might attempt a rescue.

**2** (12:5-17) **Persecution—Deliverance:** there was God’s pattern for deliverance. Note a significant point: God’s providence saved Peter but not James. Why? Very simply, it was time for James to join his Lord and receive the fruit of his labor for work done here on earth. Peter’s work was not yet done. Believers must always remember, the day when they are to go to their Lord does come. God’s will may be for the believer to suffer and bear martyrdom for His name’s sake. God’s plan may be to use the persecuted believer’s faithfulness as a testimony to reach others.

God’s pattern for delivering believers through or from persecution is fourfold.

1. There is the pattern of prayer. Church-wide prayer delivered Peter (v.5). Note three points.
  - a. The whole church was praying.
  - b. The church was doing all it could do, praying *specifically* for Peter’s deliverance.
  - c. The words “without ceasing” (ektenes) mean fervently and earnestly continuing in prayer. The idea is intense prayer, prayer that captivates and focuses a person’s concentration. The root meaning of the word is “to stretch out.” The picture is that the church was stretched out, prostrate before God, earnestly and

ferently crying out to Him for God's sovereign deliverance of Peter. The church could do nothing and they knew it. Peter's only hope was God.

2. There is the pattern of confidence. Confidence in God's will and care delivered Peter (v.6). Note that Peter was asleep, and it was the very night before his execution. Christ was meeting His dear servant's need, infusing him with His very special grace and peace. Peter sensed the very special trust and care of his Lord.

**Thought 1.** The Lord infuses His strength, peace, care, understanding, and marvelous grace to go through whatever trial confronts His dear servant.

**"There hath no temptation [trial] taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor.10:13).**

**"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever" (2 Tim.4:18).**

**"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pt.2:9).**

**"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" (Ps.31:19).**

**"The Lord redeemeth the souls of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate" (Ps.34:22).**

**"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Ps.37:5).**

**"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (Ps.118:8).**

**"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (Is.26:3-4).**

3. There is the pattern of God's miraculous work and the believer's obedience. Both were involved in delivering Peter (v.7-10). Note the Scripture and outline.

- a. The angel did not do for Peter what Peter could do for himself. Peter had to act; he had to obey the commands of the angel.
- b. Once Peter was safely delivered out of danger, he was left on his own, left to work out his own deliverance. He was to continue his "walk by faith"...
  - to return to the church and to the believers on his own.
  - to seek the Lord about remaining or leaving Jerusalem and in making any other decisions that needed to be made.

The point is this: God's miraculous deliverance involved only *what Peter could not do for himself*. When Peter was helpless, God then took over. This is the point of miracles. Miracles are acts of God, acts that men cannot do for themselves. They are worked by God and by Him alone; therefore, He and He alone gets the praise and honor.

4. There is the pattern of God's sovereign will (v.11). It was God's sovereign will for Peter to be delivered. It was not His will for James to be delivered. The true believer rests in God's sovereign will, knowing that God's will results in the greatest blessings. Peter thought he was having a vision (v.9), that he was in some semi-conscious state, dreaming of God delivering him. Peter was startled; it took a moment to collect his thoughts and grasp what had happened. When he did, he realized...

- that God had delivered him by His sovereign will.
- that God still had a purpose for him on earth.
- that he still had a ministry to perform for the Lord.

He quickly sized up the situation and fled the city, for he knew Herod would have the soldiers searching for him as soon as his escape was discovered. But before fleeing, Peter decided to quickly visit the house of Mary (the mother of John Mark), hoping some of the believers were gathered there. He needed to let them know God had delivered him and where he was fleeing.

**Thought 1.** Again, note how God expects His people to *work out their own salvation* (deliverance) when it is in their power to do so. Now note the result of God delivering His dear servant. The Scripture and outline points are sufficient to see the results. Every miracle performed by God causes the same results—of course, all to varying degrees.

Note how the church had been praying ever so fervently, yet not really expecting a miracle. We must not be too critical, however. They had already witnessed the death of some outstanding leaders, two of which are named, Stephen the deacon and James the apostle.

**"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Mt.18:19).**

**"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mk.11:24).**

**"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (Jn.15:7).**

**"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 Jn.3:22).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(12:12) **Mary, Mother of John Mark:** Mary was also the aunt of the missionary Barnabas (cp. Col.4:10). This is the only clear mention of her in Scripture. She was probably a widow, for her husband is never mentioned. She was apparently wealthy, the owner of considerable property. She owned a huge house large enough for believers to hold services there. There was also a gate and a portress to greet guests who entered the home. This may point to a palace-like house (v.13. Cp. the high priest's palace, Jn.18:16.)

Apparently Mary was a very godly woman, a dynamic example for all women of every generation. As will be seen she was also a godly mother, rearing her son John Mark in the gospel. She eventually encouraged him to commit his life to missions just as Paul and Barnabas, his cousin, had done.

**3** (12:18-23) **Herod, Death of—Judgment:** there was God's sovereign wrath, His vindication of the church. God never has and never will allow the persecution of His followers to go on and on. God is longsuffering, wanting all to repent and to turn to Him, but He tolerates evil for only so long. Every man has to give an account for his evil deeds. Herod's time had now come. The judgment of God fell and fell swiftly.

1. The sins of Herod were very serious. He was guilty...
  - of opposing God. He violently persecuted God's church, which was equal to persecuting the Lord Himself. He was determined to wipe the church off the face of the earth (v.1-4; cp. Lk.10:16; Acts 9:4; 1 Cor.8:12).
  - of murder: killing the servants of God, apparently plotting to kill them all (v.2-4).
  - of loving the world: its power, position, and influence (v.3).
  - of hypocrisy and deception: pretending to be religious—all for power and position.
  - of wrath and lack of compassion (v.19): it was Roman law that the keepers of escaped prisoners were subject to bear the same punishment as the prisoner.
  - of hostile and unwise leadership (v.20): the dispute with Tyre and Sidon is not explained, but Herod's nature is seen in the word "displeased" (en thumomachon). The word means to be inflamed, to be filled with violent hostility. It is very hot anger, an emotion that should never characterize the leader of a nation.
  - of pride: the pride of office, position, and person (v.21).
  - of self-glory and self-exaltation (v.22): he willingly received the declaration that he was a god (v.22).

2. The death of Herod was under the sovereign will of God. Herod's time had run out; his sin could not be allowed anymore. The day of God's wrath against a heart so hardened in sin had arrived. Sitting there on the throne, Herod was immediately stricken down with a severe stroke of some sort. His body was being "eaten of worms" (genomenos skolekobrotos). The word "skolex" was used by the Greeks to refer to intestinal worms. Josephus, the renown historian of that day, reported that Herod lingered for five days, suffering great pain in the area of the stomach (Flavius Josephus. *Josephus Complete Works*. Translated by William Whiston. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1960. *Ant.* 19.8.2).

**"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Ro.6:23).**

**"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Heb.2:3).**

**"As righteousness tendeth to life; so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death" (Pr.11:19).**

**"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezk.18:4).**

**4** (12:24-25) **Church:** there was the church marching on triumphantly.

1. The words "grew and multiplied" (euxanen kai eplethuneto) mean that the church kept on growing and multiplying. The progress of God's Word could not be stopped. Men and governments might try to stop it. They might persecute, imprison, and kill those who proclaim God's Word; but their efforts to silence the Word will always be to no avail. God overrules all and always will.

⇒ He has ordained His Word to be proclaimed, and it shall be by all those who are truly His.

**"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Ro.1:16).**

⇒ He has ordained His Word to bear fruit, to grow and multiply, never to return to Him void (Is.55:11).

**"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps.126:6).**

**"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Is.55:1).**

2. A young man was discipled, a young man destined for greatness. Barnabas and Saul had brought relief goods from Antioch to the famine-stricken churches throughout Judea and Jerusalem (cp. Acts 11:27-30). They were now returning to Antioch, and note what happened. John Mark, a young disciple, had joined them. (See DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Mark—Acts 12:25*.) This was a young man who was destined by God...

- to be discipled by three of God's greatest servants: Paul, Barnabas, and Peter.
- to write one of the four gospels of the New Testament, the Gospel of Mark.

“Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples, Greek] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).

**DEEPER STUDY # 4**

(12:25) **John Mark:** John Mark had a godly mother (Acts 12:12). It seems that her home was the center of the Christian church (Acts 12:12). In fact, her home may have been the Upper Room which Jesus used for the Last Supper (Lk.22:10f) and for Pentecost (Acts 1:13). John Mark was related to Barnabas (Col.4:10) and was a disciple of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 12:25). As a young man and disciple something happened that caused his faith to weaken, and he forsook Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:13; 15:38). However, he later recommitted his life to missionary service and became so staunch in his commitment that he was willing to let Paul and Barnabas argue over his seriousness and divide their team efforts over him (Acts 15:36-40). Scripture is silent about what happened after this. Mark is seen only as a man who had redeemed himself in the eyes of Paul (Col.4:10; Phile.1:24; 2 Tim.4:11). And Peter said Mark was serving with him (1 Pt.5:13). When writing to the churches of Asia Minor, Peter sent his special greetings from Mark. This points toward the churches knowing Mark personally. Mark apparently joined Peter on his missionary journeys. This is significant, for it means that much of what is in Mark’s gospel probably comes from what Peter had told him. The Gospel of Mark, which Mark wrote, was probably the preaching material of Peter. (See note—Acts 13:13.) John Mark also may have been the man carrying the pitcher of water as a sign for the disciples to approach him in order to secure a room for the Passover (Lk.22:10f). He was probably the young man who fled the scene of Jesus’ arrest (Mk.14:51-52).

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| <p><b>1 They were members of a great church, a church that reached out to all</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 13</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>VI. THE FIRST GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO CYPRUS AND GALATIA,<sup>DS1</sup> 13:1-14:28</b></p> <p><b>A. The First Missionaries, Barnabas &amp; Paul: The Most Challenging Call Ever Given, 13:1-3</b></p> <p>Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teach-</p> | <p>ers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Man-aen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.</p> <p>2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.</p> <p>3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.</p> | <p><b>2 They were noted as gifted<sup>DS2</sup></b></p> <p><b>3 They were called while ministering &amp; fasting</b></p> <p><b>4 They received a specific call: They were “set apart” by the Holy Spirit</b></p> <p><b>5 They bathed their mission in prayer &amp; fasting</b></p> <p><b>6 They were commissioned by the church</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**THE FIRST GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO CYPRUS AND GALATIA, 13:1-14:28**

**A. The First Missionaries, Barnabas and Paul: The Most Challenging Call Ever Given, 13:1-3**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(13:1-14:28) **Paul, Mission Tour:** see Map—Introduction of Acts.

(13:1-3) **Introduction:** this passage begins the most daring and challenging step ever taken by any organization in the history of the world. The Christian church launched forth, making a deliberate effort to carry the gospel to the whole world. It commissioned its first two missionaries for the deliberate purpose of going to meet the world’s desperate need for Christ.

1. They were members of a great church, a church that reached out to all (v.1).
2. They were noted as gifted (v.1).
3. They were called while ministering and fasting (v.2).
4. They received a specific call: they were “set apart” by the Holy Spirit (v.2).
5. They bathed their mission in prayer and fasting (v.3).
6. They were commissioned by the church (v.3).

**1** (13:1) **Church:** the first missionaries were members of a great church, a church that reached out to all. The greatness of the Antioch church is seen in two facts.

1. The Antioch church was God’s choice to become the mission and evangelistic center of the world. God was now ready to send His Word to the whole world. The first three phases of the *great commission* had been launched. The disciples of Christ had borne and left a witness in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria. Now it was time for a witness to go into all the world, reaching out even to the uttermost part (Acts 1:8).

But note a significant fact, a fact that stands as a warning to every church: God had to choose some church other than the Jerusalem church to launch the worldwide mission. The Jerusalem church was too narrow and traditional to do the job (see note, *Salvation vs. Ritual*—Acts 15:1-3 for discussion). Too many of its members (Jews) were too prejudiced and held too many feelings against the rest of the world (Gentiles). They refused to freely and wholeheartedly commit themselves to world missions and evangelism. They refused to repent of their *exclusiveness and their traditional, formal approach to God*. God had to bypass the Jerusalem church and raise up another church to become the center of His mission upon earth.

Note what this means, for it is a warning to every believer. Some leaders other than the Jewish leaders had to be chosen to launch God’s purposes on earth. The Jewish leaders had proven too slow in launching out in the full liberty and freedom of God’s Spirit. They, too, had waited too long to repent of their sins. God was ready to move out into the world and the leaders in Jerusalem were not ready. God had no choice but to raise up other leaders who would commit their lives fully to the gospel and to carry the gospel to the whole world in an uninhibited and free spirit.

2. The Antioch church was diverse, a church that reached out to everyone. This is clearly seen in the men mentioned.

- a. Barnabas: he was a wealthy Cyprian, a man born and reared on the island of Cyprus. (See note—Acts 4:36-37 for discussion.)
- b. Simeon or Niger: the name “Niger” means black, referring to the complexion of his skin. He was probably from Africa. The name is also a Roman name which shows that he moved about in Roman society. Some commentators suggest he was the Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross for Jesus (cp. Mk.15:21).
- c. Lucius of Cyrene: he was probably one of the poor persecuted believers who had fled to Antioch for safety. If so, he was one of the founders of this great church. When he arrived in Antioch, he and the others began to share Christ immediately (cp. Acts 11:19-20).

- d. Manaen: he was of the higher class of society, being a foster brother to Herod Antipas. This is the Herod who had tried Jesus and murdered John the Baptist.
- e. Saul of Tarsus: he was one of the religionists of society. He is mentioned last as though he was considered least important among the leaders. However, Saul's deep love for the Lord and his driving commitment to the Lord's cause would soon lead God to use Saul beyond imagination.

The point is this: these men, with their diversity of backgrounds and social standings, show just how much the church at Antioch reached out to everyone throughout the community. It reached out to all classes of people, all needs, all nationalities and races. No one was excluded; everyone was invited to Christ and welcomed into the fellowship and ministry of the church. The church at Antioch was a ministering church, a great outreach church, just the kind of church God needed to launch and support the first missionaries to the world.

**“Go ye [the church] therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage” (Mt.22:9).**

**“Go ye [the church] therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“But ye [the church] shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ro.10:12-13).**

**“So we, being many, are one body [church] in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Ro.12:5-8).**

**“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:4).**

- 2** (13:1) **Gift, Spiritual:** the first missionaries were gifted with the very special gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- 1. They were gifted as prophets (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 11:27; DEEPER STUDY # 7—Mt.1:22; DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Cor.14:3 for discussion).
  - 2. They were gifted as teachers (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Teachers*—Acts 13:1; DEEPER STUDY # 2 *Preaching*, pt.3—Acts 11:19-30).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(13:1) **Teaching - Teachers:** teaching is a high calling, one of the greatest of callings. Teaching is ranked second only to the spiritual gifts of apostle and prophet (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor.12:28; Eph.4:11). Every apostle and prophet and pastor has the gift of teaching, but not every teacher is an apostle or prophet or pastor. The gift of teaching bears one of the largest responsibilities given by God; therefore, the teacher will be required to give a strict account to God for his faithfulness in using his gift (see note, *Teachers*—Jas.3:1).

The spiritual gift of teaching is the gift of understanding and communicating the Word of God, of edifying believers in the truths of God's Word. It involves understanding, interpreting, arranging, and communicating the Word of God. The gift of teaching is given to the believer who commits his life to the Word of God, to sharing its glorious truths with God's people.

**“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).**

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).**

**“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).**

**“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).**

**“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Pt.2:2-3).**

- 3** (13:2) **Ministers—Missions:** the first missionaries were called while ministering and fasting. This is critical to see.

1. The chosen men were faithful in their ministry *right where they were*. They were not waiting to serve when they reached the fields of the world; they were serving right then and there, right where they were. They did not overlook nor turn away from needs around them, in their own community. They were the Lord's. His followers, and as such they were commanded to minister even as He had ministered—right where they were (Jn.20:21; Mt.20:28).

**“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col.3:23-24).**

**“For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men” (Ro.14:18).**

It was because of their faithfulness where they were that God *knew* He could trust these men to do greater things for Him.

**Thought 1.** God calls those who are faithful where they are.

**“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:2).**

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pt.4:10).**

2. The men chosen were men of prayer and fasting. Apparently they had come together to discuss the matter of world evangelism and were fasting and praying over the matter. The point is clear: God can use only those who sense the desperate needs of the world, sense the needs so deeply that they will set food and everything else aside in order to seek God’s face.

**Thought 1.** How desperately God needs men and women who will fill the gap as these men did. What a tragedy! Generation after generation has rolled in upon the other and the world is still unreached. Where are those...

- who will be faithful in ministering right where they are?
- who will be so concerned they will set food and everything else aside for prayer?

**“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk.18:1).**

**“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).**

**“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).**

**“Pray without ceasing” (1 Th.5:17).**

**4** (13:2) **Call—Holy Spirit:** the first missionaries received a specific call. The call came from the Holy Spirit: they were to be set apart for “the work” chosen by God. Note several facts that are critical for every believer and minister of the gospel.

1. It is the Holy Spirit that calls the believer to serve God. Paul and Barnabas were not called...
  - by the church.
  - by the other leaders.
  - by their own determination.

The words of Christ were as true for Paul and Barnabas as they were for the first apostles and for us today:

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (Jn.15:16).**

Now note: the Holy Spirit was not calling Paul and Barnabas to a life of witness. Every believer is called to be a witness for God. The Holy Spirit was calling the men to a specific task, to a lifetime commitment to ministry. The two men were never again to be lay believers, but were to give their lives to serving God as full time worldwide evangelists or missionaries.

2. The call of the Holy Spirit comes at a specific time. There is a definite time when the Holy Spirit speaks to the believer’s heart and mind, and the voice and will of God are unmistakable.

3. The call of the Holy Spirit is for the believer to be His, to be possessed by God’s Spirit. The called believer is *separated to belong* to the Holy Spirit: to allow the Spirit to live and move and have His being within the believer’s body; to be possessed, infilled, and guided by the Spirit; to be controlled completely by the Spirit; to be completely surrendered to the Spirit’s will and use.

4. The call of the Holy Spirit involves “work”—the work He has chosen for the believer to do. The believer is...
  - “separated...to work,” to do the work of the ministry.
  - “[to do] the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:12).

**5** (13:3) **Prayer—Fasting:** the first missionaries bathed their mission in prayer and fasting. They did not launch out immediately. The *new call* was too momentous. The face of God had to be sought...

- for a deep sense of His presence and power.
- for the direction of His will.
- for the praise of His name.

(See notes, pt.2—Acts 13:2; *Fasting*—Mt.6:16-18 for more discussion.)

**6** (13:3) **Commission—Church:** the first missionaries were commissioned by the church. Note two points.

1. This was apparently an official meeting of the church called for the specific purpose of commissioning Saul and Barnabas.
2. The church was not calling and setting these two men apart. It was the Holy Spirit who had called and set these two men apart to the ministry. The church was...
  - acknowledging the Holy Spirit's call by the laying on of hands. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 6:6.)
  - committing its support and prayers to the two God-sent men.
  - obeying the Holy Spirit's leadership and allowing the men to be *separated* from the Antioch church.

However, note that the church was called upon to *acknowledge and commission* these men to the work of God (v.2).

**“Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them” (Acts 6:6).**

**“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery” (1 Tim.4:14).**

**“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure” (1 Tim.5:22).**

**“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Tim.1:6).**

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| <p><b>1 There was the leading of the Holy Spirit</b><br/> a. To Cyprus<sup>DS1</sup><br/> b. To Salamis<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p><b>2 There was the work of missions &amp; evangelism</b><br/> a. Preaching the Word<br/> b. Making disciples</p> <p>c. Reaching out to new areas: Paphos<sup>DS3</sup></p> <p>d. Confronting false prophets</p> <p><b>3 There was the desire to hear the Word of God</b></p> <p><b>4 There was the pronouncement of judgment</b><br/> a. The man: Elymus, the sorcerer</p> | <p><b>B. Cyprus, the Island: The Beginning of Missions &amp; Evangelism, 13:4-13</b></p> <p>4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.</p> <p>5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.</p> <p>6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:</p> <p>7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.</p> <p>8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the</p> | <p>deputy from the faith.</p> <p>9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,</p> <p>10 And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?</p> <p>11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.</p> <p>12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.</p> <p>13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.</p> | <p>b. The main reason: "Withstood them"</p> <p>c. The judgment: From the Spirit of God, not from Paul<sup>DS4</sup></p> <p>1) A deceiver &amp; a fraud<br/> 2) A child of the devil<br/> 3) An enemy of righteousness<br/> 4) A perverter—a distorter</p> <p>d. The judgment is a judicial judgment</p> <p><b>5 There was conversion</b></p> <p><b>6 There was desertion<sup>DS5,6,7</sup></b></p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**THE FIRST GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO CYPRUS AND GALATIA, 13:1-14:28**

**B. Cyprus, the Island: The Beginning of Missions and Evangelism, 13:4-13**

(13:4-13) **Introduction:** this is the first picture of missionary action in the world. As such it paints a graphic picture of just what missions and evangelism involve.

1. There was the leading of the Holy Spirit (v.4).
2. There was the work of missions and evangelism (v.5-6).
3. There was the desire to hear the Word of God (v.7).
4. There was the pronouncement of judgment (v.8-11).
5. There was conversion (v.12).
6. There was desertion (v.13).

**1** (13:4) **Missions—Holy Spirit:** there was the leading of the Holy Spirit. Picture the scene: Seleucia was the seaport of Antioch. It lay fifteen miles to the west of Antioch. Barnabas and Saul with all their luggage were being escorted to the port by some of their Christian friends from Antioch. Imagine the conversation and excitement as they shared their plans and dreams of what lay ahead. But note: this is not what Scripture stresses. What Scripture stresses is simply stated, but it is critical.

The servants of God were "sent forth by the Holy Spirit." They were not striking out on their own. They were not going because of a *feeling*, an inner idea that told them they should go. They were not going because the church was sending them forth. They were not going because they had chosen missions as a profession. The source of their call and mission was the Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit of God that had called them and was sending them forth (cp. Acts 13:1-3).

The leadership of the Spirit is critical to the servant of God. If he is led by the Spirit, he is filled with the greatest encouragement; but if he is not led by the Spirit, he is often filled with the greatest discouragement. Paul and Barnabas were led by the Spirit; therefore, they were able to march forth triumphantly. They knew five encouraging things.

⇒ They were *sons of God*.

**"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Ro.8:14).**

⇒ The Holy Spirit would be *abiding* with them.

**"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth**

him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).

⇒ The Holy Spirit would be *guiding them*.

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).

⇒ The Holy Spirit would be *giving them the words to say*.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn.14:26).

⇒ The Holy Spirit would be *giving success*, convicting the hearers.

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (Jn.16:8-11).

Note that the Holy Spirit leads Barnabas and Saul to the island of Cyprus, the home of Barnabas (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, Cyprus—Acts 13:4). Salamis was the largest city on the island. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, Salamis—Acts 13:5 for discussion.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(13:4) **Cyprus**: the island lay in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea (see Map—Introduction to Acts). It was a stopping off place for the commercial fleets of that day. It was famous for its copper mines and shipbuilding industries. But most of all it was known as a resort area, being blessed with a warm, appealing climate. The population was primarily Greek and Phoenician, but there were a large number of Jews there as well. The capital, Paphos, was famous for its worship of Venus, the goddess of love or lustful immorality. The immorality and the superstitious nature of the people show the depth of degradation and evil that had gripped the people of the island. Note that it was the society from which Barnabas came. It was his home. And it was the first society Paul set out to penetrate with the gospel right after committing his life to worldwide missions. The island had been under Roman rule for about one hundred years when Paul arrived.

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(13:5) **Salamis**: the largest city on the island of Cyprus. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) It lay on the southeast coast facing Syria. The city was the commercial center of Cyprus, boasting an excellent harbour. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1 Cyprus—Acts 13:4 for more discussion.)

**2** (13:5-6) **Missions, Work of—Discipleship**: there was the work of missions. The primary work of missions is clearly seen in these two verses.

1. The Lord’s servants preached the Word (see note, *Preaching*—Acts 14:21 for discussion. See outline and notes—Acts 13:14-41 for the message Paul preached.)

2. The Lord’s servants made disciples. They took John Mark with them. The word “minister” (*hupereten*) means attendant, assistant, helper. Mark was ministering under Barnabas and Paul, being disciplined by them—helping, serving, ministering right with them, learning all he could. Apparently he was somewhat younger. Note the word “also”: this could be saying Mark was doing some preaching as well as helping in other areas.

Making disciples of young men was one of the major ministries of Paul. He was usually seen with at least several disciples accompanying him. Even on this mission, he seemed to have several whom he was discipling, although they were not named (cp. “his company,” v.13).

Just how Paul went about making disciples of others can be seen in the words of the great commission: “Go ye...and teach [make disciples of] all nations...” (Mt.28:19). The word “teach” (*metheteusate*) means to *make disciples*. Thus the verse accurately reads, “Go ye therefore and ‘make disciples’ of all nations...” The point to note is this: our Lord is not only telling us *to go and evangelize*; He is telling us *how* to go and *how* to evangelize. He is not only giving His ultimate *objective* and overriding purpose; He is giving *the method* to use in evangelizing the world.

Think about the word “metheteusate” (make disciples). What does our Lord mean by *make disciples*? Is He not telling us to do exactly as He did?

What *did* He do? Christ “came to seek and save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10). He sought the lost, those who were willing to commit their lives to Him. And when He found such a person, He saved that person. When Christ found a person who was willing to *commit* his life, Christ attached Himself to that person. Christ began to mold and make that person into His image. The word *attach* is the key word. It is probably the word that best describes discipleship. Christ made disciples of men by *attaching* Himself to them; and through this *personal attachment*, they were able to observe His life

and conversation; and in seeing and hearing, they began to absorb and assimilate His very character and behavior. They began to follow Him and to serve Him more and more closely.

In simple terms this is what Paul did. This is the way he made disciples. This was his mission and his method, his obsession. There is another way to describe what Paul did. Paul envisioned something beyond himself, beyond his day and time. He envisioned an *extension* of himself, an *extension* of his very being, and an *extension* of his mission and method. The way he chose to extend himself was discipling; he *attached himself* to committed persons, and through *attachment*, the persons absorbed and assimilated the Lord's very character and mission. Then they in turn *attached* themselves to others and discipled them. They, too, expected their disciples to make disciples of others who were willing to commit their lives to Christ. It was by this method that the glorious message of Christ marched down through the centuries until it reached us. And it is by this method that the message of Christ is to march down to the generation that is to follow us (2 Tim.2:2).

There is no question what our Lord's commission is: we are to go; but more than that, we are to make disciples, to attach ourselves to those persons who will follow our Lord until they in turn can make disciples (2 Tim.2:2).

**"Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Mt.28:19-20).**

**"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting [equipping] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph.4:11-12).**

**"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim.2:2).**

3. The Lord's servants reached out to new areas. Note the two men went through Cyprus, to the city of Paphos. The idea is that they evangelized and preached the Word from town to town, village to village as they moved about the island. They reached out to every area, carrying the glorious gospel to those who were even in the *back areas* of the island.

**"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk.16:15).**

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).**

**"For thou shalt be his witness unto *all men* of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22:15).**

4. The Lord's servants confronted a false prophet. If there were no false prophets, there would be no false teaching. False teaching exists because of false prophets. Therefore the servants of Christ will not only be confronting false teaching, they will be confronting the false prophet himself. This is important to note, for it is usually much more difficult to confront a person than just an idea. A person can stand toe to toe with a person, threatening and persecuting him. The false prophet and teacher is usually in rebellion and opposition against God; therefore some form of evil attack is almost sure to happen.

The point is this: the Lord's true servant will run across false prophets and teachers. And so he must be walking in the Spirit, relying upon His leadership, care, presence, and power in order to stand against false teachers and their teaching.

**"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mt.7:15).**

**"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).**

**"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Ro.16:18).**

**"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim.4:1-2).**

**"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pt.2:1).**

**"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 Jn.2:22).**

**"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 Jn.7).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(13:6) **Paphos:** the capital of Cyprus. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) It was a thriving city, the seat of Roman government on the island. It was also a pagan stronghold for the worship of Venus, the Roman goddess of love. Because of the excellent climate, the seashore, and the sensuous rites of the goddess Venus, pilgrims travelled from all over in order to share in the *fun and stimulations* of the flesh. Paphos burned with what might be called the *bright lights of beach and nightclub life* twenty-four hours a day.

**3** (13:7) **Word of God:** there was the desire to hear the Word of God. Sergius Paulus was the governor, the “deputy” (anthupatoi), the Roman proconsul of the country. The Roman proconsuls were appointed and controlled by the Roman Senate. He was the highest ranking official, the man of power and influence on the island. Note what Scripture stresses about the man.

1. He was a prudent, intelligent man, that is, a man of understanding and reason. He was controlled more by his mind than by feelings and emotions.

2. He was a man seeking truth. Apparently he had been seeking the truth in philosophy, science, and religion. This explains why a man of his understanding had Elymas in his palace. As shall be seen, Elymas was an unusual breed, a unique mixture of truth and error that would appeal to a man who was seeking truth.

Note: Sergius Paulus sent for Barnabas and Saul. He had heard about the Word of God these preachers were proclaiming and he wanted to hear it for himself.

**Thought 1.** The Lord’s servant will find some who are seeking the truth, some who desire to hear the Word of God. It was because Barnabas and Saul were proclaiming the Word, because they were faithful in their proclamation, that Sergius Paulus heard about the Word of God. If believers are not out witnessing, the world will never hear the Word of God.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Ro.10:13-14).

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th.2:13).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

**4** (13:8-11) **Judgment:** there is the pronouncement of judgment. Most believers would never pronounce judgment upon another person, not like Paul did. But judgment is pronounced by the Word of God and judgment is to be declared upon all who reject and oppose God.

1. Elymas was the official title of a sorcerer. It probably means “wise man,” His name was Bar-Jesus, which means son of Jesus or Joshua. Remember Jesus was a common name among certain nationalities. The sorcerer was a religious priest, a Jew who was teaching the truth of monotheism, that there is only one God. But he was mixing the truth with philosophy, science, astrology, and the magic of eastern religions.

2. The one thing that brought immediate judgment upon the man is clearly stated. He “withstood them,” stood face to face *against* the preaching of God’s Word. The idea is continuous and persistent opposition. He tried his best to keep the governor from turning to Christ.

**Thought 1.** There is enormous danger in trying to stop someone from accepting Christ. (Cp. Mk.9:42.)

3. The judgment is from the Holy Spirit, not from Paul. What Paul did was not of himself: not of his emotions, not of personal resentment. The judgment came from the Holy Spirit. God had tolerated enough of the man’s sin, hostility, and destruction. His sins were great. There was...

- the sin of all subtlety (pantos dolou): full of all craftiness, guile, trickery, deceit, treachery, seeking to bait and catch, to enslave in error and untruth.
- the sin of all mischief (pases rhaidiourgias): full of all wickedness, fraud, villainy, and sleight of hand; moving about with ease and working against good; doing all kinds and forms of evil.
- the sin of being a child of the devil: being possessed and controlled by the devil; doing and working the will and works of the devil (cp. Jn.8:44; 1 Jn.3:10).
- the enemy of all righteousness: opposing all that is right and honest and just; all that is pure and moral and clean.
- the perverter of “the right ways of the Lord”: distorting, twisting, adding to and taking away from the character of God and His Word, the holy Scriptures. (Paul is quoting Hos.14:9. Cp. Is.40:4; 42:16; Lk.3:5.) The man was taking the “right ways” of God and making them crooked.

Note the word “all.” The false prophet was totally depraved, giving himself over to *all sin*.

4. The judgment upon the man was by “the hand of the Lord.” It was God and His power that executed the judgment. And note: the judgment was judicious, a just judgment. It was blindness for blindness; darkness for darkness. The false prophet had blinded himself to the truth all his life, choosing to walk in darkness instead of the light. (He was a Jew, possessing the privilege of the Scriptures.) And not only this...

- he had deliberately chosen to become a prophet of false doctrine.
- he had now been confronted with the claims of Christ and had shut his eyes to the truth.

Being stricken blind and having to be led about by others would silence his claim to be a minister of light. It would also be a sign to him that he must repent or be condemned to an eternal hell of darkness without the presence of the living and true God.

**Thought 1.** The judgment is a picture of the blindness and darkness of all religions, philosophies, sciences, and sorceries *apart from Christ*. If God is not at the center of the system of thought, the system at best is peppered with erroneous teaching.

“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Mt.6:23).

“And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (Jn.1:5).

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn.3:19).

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).

**DEEPER STUDY # 4**

(13:9) **Paul—Saul**—The name “Saul” was his Jewish name; the name “Paul” his Roman or Gentile name. Paul was born in Tarsus as a free man, a Roman citizen from birth. He was probably given both names as a baby. Why the switch of names now? Up to this time, Paul had been ministering primarily to the Jews, and while among them it was only natural to use his Jewish name, Saul. But *now* a significant thing happened. The Spirit of God moved upon Paul, not Barnabas, to rebuke Elymas, the false prophet. Paul’s ministry to the Gentile world was being launched at this very moment. He was standing in the court of a Roman proconsul (governor), not in a Jewish synagogue, and the Spirit of God was leading him to proclaim the gospel to a Gentile who needed Christ. From this point on he would become known as Paul, the great minister of the Gentiles. Paul would henceforth be carrying the gospel to the Gentiles who so desperately needed Jesus Christ and His salvation.

**5** (13:12) **Conversion:** there is the conversion of the proconsul. Note why the proconsul believed: he was “astonished,” stricken, quickened by the “doctrine of the Lord.” It was not the judgment upon the false prophet that astonished him, although such judgment was bound to affect him, but it was the message of salvation in Christ.

Note: much is made over the fact that his being baptized was not mentioned as it was with Cornelius. The idea in the verse is that his belief was genuine and he did become a follower of Jesus. If not, what is the point of mentioning his belief? In fact, what is the point of sharing the event?

“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:3).

“But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Lk.22:32).

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jas.5:19-20).

**6** (13:13) **John Mark:** there was desertion. Why did John Mark leave Paul and Barnabas? Several reasons have been suggested. Perhaps he was jealous. Barnabas was Mark’s uncle, and Barnabas was turning the leadership reins over to Paul. Mark could have been opposed to the mission to the Gentiles, or he could have been so overshadowed by Paul that it was unbearable. Perhaps he felt the original commission was intended only for the island of Cyprus. Or he could have simply been homesick.

However, Paul’s attitude seemed to indicate that Mark just did not have the stamina. He could begin things but could not finish them (see DEEPER STUDY # 4—Acts 12:25). He feared and shrank from the dangerous and hard trip up the rocky mountain pass to Antioch of Pisidia. The pass was infested with thieves and the terrain was a barren, rocky, forsaken place subjected to flash floods. (See 2 Cor.11:26 for some of the threats that probably refer to this journey. See note—Acts 12:25 for Mark redeeming himself.) The point is this: every servant of the Lord experiences some disciples deserting the ministry of the Lord. They are just unwilling to pay the price of discipleship (Lk.9:23).

“And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece” (Lk.9:3).

“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk.9:62).

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Lk.16:13).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).

“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein” (Heb.13:9).

“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed” (Jas.1:6).

“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (Jas.1:8).

**DEEPER STUDY # 5**

(13:13) **Pamphylia:** was a country on the south coast of Asia Minor (Turkey), bordered by Cilicia on the East, Lycia on the west, and walled in by the Taurus mountains on the north. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) The country was really nothing more than a long narrow strip of isolated coastline, stretching about eighty miles long and only twenty-five miles inland. It was a major haven for pirates, and it was safe. In fact the citizens of Pamphylia were mainly a mixture of Greeks and barbarian pirates. Only the hardest souls could survive in its harsh climate. Note: from the very first, the gospel was being carried into one of the most difficult situations.

**DEEPER STUDY # 6**

(13:13) **Perga:** was the major city of Pamphylia. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) It was located about twelve miles inland from the coastal port of Attalia. Attalia was a Greek colony, but Perga was somewhat left alone. It was a low-lying land, known for its marshes and disease carrying insects. The mosquito in particular must have infested the area because malaria was a common disease among its citizens. The city was also known for its worship of Artemis, or Diana, the Asian nature goddess. She was known as the “queen of Perga.” Of course, the worship of nature led to all forms of immoral behavior and debauchery. Keep in mind that the population was primarily Greek colonists and barbarian pirates seeking refuge. A person can just imagine the wicked nature of the city.

**DEEPER STUDY # 7**

(13:13) **Paul:** note there is no mention of preaching in Perga. But Acts 14:25 says that Paul “preached the word in Perga” on his return trip. This seems to show that the city was not evangelized until the return journey of Acts 14. Why is there no mention of Paul preaching in Perga in this verse? Why does the Scripture seem to be saying that Paul struck out at once for Antioch of Pisidia? Why the apparent spur of the moment decision? Were the men upset over Mark’s departure? Paul became very sick when he first arrived in Galatia (Gal.4:13-14). Perga was a low-lying area characterized by marshes, a hostile climate, and disease carrying insects. Is this where Paul became sick with his “thorn in the flesh” (a fever that was occasionally to strike him throughout life), and he had to seek the healing altitude of the mountains? The answer is unknown.

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| <p><b>1 Paul &amp; Barnabas entered Antioch of Pisidia<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p>a. They entered the synagogue on the Sabbath</p> <p>b. As strangers, they were invited to speak</p> <p>c. Paul took the lead, addressing the Jews &amp; followers of God</p> <p><b>2 God has been working throughout all history: He suffered &amp; bore with the ways of Israel (&amp; of the world) (cp. v.18)</b></p> <p>a. God chose Israel</p> <p>b. God delivered Israel</p> <p>c. God <i>put up</i> with Israel's weaknesses through the wilderness</p> <p>d. God led Israel to conquer Canaan</p> <p>e. God gave Israel judges</p> <p>f. God gave Israel prophets</p> <p>g. God gave Israel a king of their own choosing: Saul</p> <p>h. God raised up a special king of His own choosing: David<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p><b>3 God has consummated history: He has given the world a Savior, Jesus</b></p> <p>a. The Savior was proclaimed by a forerunner, John the Baptist</p> | <p><b>C. Antioch of Pisidia, the Main City of South Galatia, (Part I): The Preaching of Paul, 13:14-41</b></p> <p>14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.</p> <p>15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.</p> <p>16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.</p> <p>17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.</p> <p>18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.</p> <p>19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.</p> <p>20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.</p> <p>21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.</p> <p>22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.</p> <p>23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:</p> <p>24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to</p> | <p>all the people of Israel.</p> <p>25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.</p> <p>26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.</p> <p>27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.</p> <p>28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.</p> <p>29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.</p> <p>30 But God raised him from the dead:</p> <p>31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.</p> <p>32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,</p> <p>33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.</p> <p>34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.</p> <p>35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.</p> <p>36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:</p> | <p>b. The Savior is "the word of salvation" being proclaimed to you</p> <p>c. The Savior was rejected &amp; crucified</p> <p>1) Men did not know Him</p> <p>2) Men did not accept nor believe the prophecies about Him</p> <p>3) Men rejected &amp; crucified Him—fulfilling the prophecies</p> <p>4) Men fulfilled all prophecy written about Him</p> <p>d. The Savior was raised from the dead by God</p> <p>1) The proof: Eyewitnesses saw Him—close associates who could not be deceived</p> <p>2) The purpose: To bring glad tidings to men—the glorious message of incorruption<sup>DS3,4</sup></p> |
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| <p>e. The Savior forgives sin</p> <p>f. The Savior justifies all who believe; justifies apart from the law</p> | <p>37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.</p> <p>38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:</p> <p>39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could</p> | <p>not be justified by the law of Moses.</p> <p>40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;</p> <p>41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.</p> | <p>g. The Savior brings judgment upon men</p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**THE FIRST GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO CYPRUS AND GALATIA, 13:1-14:28**

**C. Antioch of Pisidia, the Main City of South Galatia (Part I): The Preaching of Paul, 13:14-41**

(13:14-41) **Introduction:** this is the only full length message of Paul in Scripture. It gives a panoramic view of history, of God's glorious plan for man.

1. Paul and Barnabas entered Antioch of Pisidia (v.14-16).
2. God has been working throughout all history: He suffered and bore with the ways of Israel (and of the world) (v.17-22).
3. God has consummated history: He has given the world a Savior, Jesus (v.23-41).

**1** (13:14-16) **Missions—Evangelism:** Paul and Barnabas entered Antioch of Pisidia. The facts are stated very simply.

1. The two ministers entered the synagogue on the Sabbath (Saturday). This was the method of evangelism adopted by Paul (see -DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 13:46-47 for more discussion). Paul knew something: the faithful among the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles would be there. He and Barnabas would have a ready-made audience, so they grasped the opportunity.

**Thought 1.** Note how deeply Paul and Barnabas were committed to their call and mission. They were consumed with making Christ known and with meeting the desperate needs of men for life. They existed for this very purpose and for this purpose alone. Note the scene: they entered a city and grasped the opportunity that was available to share Christ.

**Thought 2.** The method of evangelism must always be to go where people are.

2. As strangers, they were invited to speak. This was the common practice of synagogues, to invite visitors to share a word of exhortation if they wished. Remember: Paul was a rabbi, so an invitation to speak would naturally be extended to him. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Synagogue*—Mt.4:23.)

3. Paul took the lead, addressing the Jews and the Gentiles who feared God. The people sitting before Paul would be the Jews who were faithful to their Old Testament Scriptures and the Gentiles who...

- had become sick of the immoral and wicked society and religion of their day.
- had seen some truth in the Jewish Scriptures and worship of one God.

**Thought 1.** Note: since Paul had been in Paphos, the capital of the island Cyprus, he had been taking the lead instead of Barnabas. He would continue to be the leader, the apostle to the Gentiles. Just imagine the character of Barnabas, the strength and humility of his love and trust in the Lord. When he saw the Lord moving Paul ahead in leadership, Barnabas willingly encouraged the move and fully supported Paul in his ministry. What a rebuke to so many who allow jealousy and envy to enter their hearts against others who are moved ahead. We must serve where God has placed us, serve in love, supporting and pushing others ahead. (Cp. Ph.2:3-4.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(13:14) **Antioch of Pisidia or Pisidian Antioch:** the city is called Antioch of Pisidia to distinguish it from Antioch of Syria, the home base of Paul and Barnabas. (See *Introductory Notes, Special Features*—Galatians for more discussion. Also see Maps—Introduction to Acts.)

- ⇒ The city sat on a high plain about 3600 feet above sea level. It was a cultural and commercial center, by far the most important city of Galatia (modern day Turkey).
- ⇒ The city was a city of Asia Minor founded around 300 B.C. by Seleucus Nicator, the founder of the Seleucid empire, named after his father Antiochus.
- ⇒ The city was made a free city by Rome in 25 B.C. and made a part of the rough province of Galatia.
- ⇒ The city was made the military center of the district by Rome to control the surrounding wild tribes of native people.
- ⇒ the purpose of business and culture.

⇒ The city was a great commercial city, the most important trade city in Galatia. The major commercial route between the west and Ephesus and the Cilician cities (Syria) ran right through Antioch.

A church was established in Antioch of Pisidia, but with great difficulty. Many of the Gentiles received the Word of God, but the Jews rejected Christ, stirring up influential women in particular to arouse the city officials against Paul and Barnabas. The two servants of God were forced to leave the city under attack. (See outline and notes—Acts 13:42-52.) The strict Jews, the vicious Judaizers from Antioch of Pisidia and later Iconium, opposed Paul so strongly that they began following and arousing the people throughout Galatia against him. They even led people to attack and stone him (Acts 14:19). But Paul and Barnabas remained faithful and many were reached for Christ. Churches were established and a strong witness was firmly rooted throughout Galatia (cp. Acts 14:21-22). Note: the church...

- was founded by Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:14f).
- was revisited by Paul on his return journey to root them more deeply in the Lord (Acts 14:21-22).
- was apparently visited by Paul on his second and third missionary journeys (Acts 16:6; 18:23).
- was one of the churches to whom Paul wrote *The Book of Galatians*.

**2** (13:17-22) **Israel, History of—God, Plan—History, Overall View:** God has been working throughout all history. He suffered and bore with the ways of Israel and of the world (cp. v.18). The message preached by Stephen just about covers the same points Paul proclaimed. It is helpful to look at Stephen's message for development of Paul's points (see outline and notes—Acts 7:1-53). Note how Paul's emphasis was God Himself...

- God's working with man throughout all of history
- God's working with man through the nation of Israel

The thrust of Paul's message (v.18) was that God had suffered and put up with the behavior of man from the very beginning. The words "suffered he their manners" (etropophoresen) mean...

- that God has suffered and put up with man's behavior
- that God has borne and nourished man along just as a loving and caring father (cp. Dt.1:31)

Note the emphasis again: it is upon God Himself and how He has borne and suffered with man all through history.

1. God chose Israel (see outline and note—Acts 7:2-8 for discussion).
2. God delivered Israel. They had stayed in Egypt too long, becoming complacent and worldly, perfectly satisfied with the pleasures of Egypt. In fact, they stayed so long that an evil Pharaoh arose who enslaved them. But God loved and cared and delivered them (Ex.6:1, 6. See outline and notes—Acts 7:17-29.)
3. God *put up* and suffered with Israel through the wilderness. God gave Israel glorious provision, the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night (Ex.13:21-22) and manna for food (Ex.16:15, 33-35). Yet they grumbled, murmured, and rebelled against Him. But still He "suffered" and put up with them, nourishing them right along (Dt.1:31. See outline and notes—Acts 7:30-41.)
4. God led Israel to conquer Canaan. He constantly protected them, leading and guiding them to victory after victory despite their lack of trust and constant disobedience (Dt.17:1; 20:17. Cp. Num.13:26-33 for an example of Israel's distrust in taking the land. Cp. Acts 7:5-6 for God's promise that He would give the land to Israel.)
5. God gave Israel judges. Once the land was conquered, Israel slipped into complacency, selfishness, and sin, forgetting God and His call. Nations marched against Israel. But despite Israel's sin, God heard the cry of the faithful few and raised up deliverers called judges (see *The Book of Judges*).
6. God gave Israel a man who was not only a judge, but the first of the great prophets, Samuel (cp. 1 Sam.7:6, 15-17; 1 Sam.3:20; Acts 3:24; 13:20). Yet Israel was dissatisfied with God's choice and leadership. They looked at the world and desired what the world had—a king.
7. God gave Israel a king of *their own choosing*, a man named Saul. Saul was everything that men would choose, a very physical man who stood head and shoulders above everyone else (1 Sam.9:1-2, 16; 10:17-25).
8. God raised up a special king of His own choosing. Man's (Israel's) choice failed: Saul mismanaged God's will and the government that God wanted established. God removed him and set His own choice upon the throne, a man named David. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 13:22-23 for discussion.)

### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(13:22-23) **David—Jesus Christ, Davidic Heir:** God is the One who "raised up" David to be King of Israel (1 Sam.16:12-13). Note several points.

1. God "found David." The picture is that of God seeking a man to fill the gap. God sought throughout Israel for a man who would obey and fulfill His will (Ps.89:20).
2. The man needed was a man who had a heart set on God and His will alone: "a man after God's own heart," a man who would seek to fulfill all God's will (1 Sam.13:14; Ps.40:8; Is.44:28).
3. The choice of God was divine. Note:
  - ⇒ The divine choice: God provides the man.
  - ⇒ The divine heart: a man after God's "own heart."
  - ⇒ The divine behavior or obedience: a man who will fulfill "all God's will."

All of this, of course, points toward Christ. David was a type of Christ. God "gave testimony," that is, God made a covenant (v.22) and promised David that He would send a Savior to Israel and the world, a Savior that would come through his seed (v.23. See notes—Lk.3:24-31; note and DEEPER STUDY # 3—Jn.1:45; DEEPER STUDY # 4—1:49. Cp. Ro.1:3.) It was the seed of God's King, the promised Savior, that Paul began to proclaim.

**Thought 1.** Note how God is still the One who is working and suffering and bearing with man, reaching out to save and deliver all who will be saved.

**3** (13:23-41) **Jesus Christ, Savior—History, Pivotal Point:** God has consummated history. He has given the Messiah to the world—given the Savior Jesus Christ. Note that Paul...

- had reached the point toward which he had been moving.
- had reached the consummation of history.
- had reached the point when God *sent* the Savior Jesus Christ into the world.

Paul launched right into his major thrust: the Savior is Jesus. The name Jesus is significant to the Jews. It means Savior, God will save. The Hebrew form is Joshua (yasha), which means Jehovah is salvation; He is the Savior. The idea is that of deliverance, of being saved from some terrible disaster that leads to perishing (cp. Jn.3:16; Ro.8:3; Gal.1:4; Heb.2:14-18; 7:25).

From this point on the sermon Peter preached on the day of Pentecost should be read. Paul's points are about the same as Peter's (see outline and notes—Acts 2:14-24; 2:25-36). Paul's message about Jesus Christ includes seven points.

1. The Savior was proclaimed by a forerunner, John the Baptist (v.24-25). The world was not caught off guard. God prepared the world for the coming of the Savior (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.4:4). He sent John the Baptist, the forerunner, to proclaim...

- the baptism of repentance (Mk. 1:4).

**“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).**

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**

**“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).**

**“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).**

- the coming of the Savior, of Him whose shoes John was not worthy to loose (Mt.3:11; Mk.1:7; Jn.1:19f).

**“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:4).**

**“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Jas.4:10).**

**“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Is.57:15).**

2. The Savior is “the word of salvation” being proclaimed to you (v.26). Salvation means deliverance from both the power and penalty of sin, death, and judgment. Paul declared that Jesus is “the word of salvation.” He Himself is the salvation of man, the salvation which God sent to man (cp. v.23).

- a. Jesus is the One whom “God raised from the dead” (v.30-33).

**“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:3-4).**

- b. Jesus is God's Son, the One begotten of God (v.33).

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

- c. Jesus is the “Holy One” who did not suffer corruption (v.35, 37).

**“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).**

**“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11; cp. 1 Cor.15:12-19).**

- d. Through Jesus is “the forgiveness of sins” (v.38).

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

- e. By Jesus “all that believe are justified from all things” (v.39).

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

**“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).**

3. The Savior was rejected and crucified (v.27-28). The outline above with the following notes covers this point adequately (see outlines and DEEPER STUDY # 2,3—Acts 2:23; DEEPER STUDY # 1—3:13; note—3:13-15).

4. The Savior was raised from the dead by God (v.31-37). (See outline and DEEPER STUDY # 4—Acts 2:24 for discussion.)

- a. There was the proof of eyewitnesses and of close associates who could not be deceived or mistaken (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:3 for discussion).
- b. There was the purpose of Jesus' resurrection, the glad tidings of resurrection and incorruption for believers. God's promise has been fulfilled (v.32-37). Believers shall be raised from the dead just as Christ was.

**“But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me” (Ps.49:15).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (Jn.5:25; cp. Jn.6:40).**

**“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn.11:25).**

**“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15).**

**“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).**

**“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Th.4:16).**

5. The Savior forgives sins (v.38). The only Person who can forgive sins...
  - is He who died for sins in order to gain the right to forgive (Jn.1:29).
  - is He who arose and is *now* living.
  - is He who is living for the *purpose* of forgiving sins.

**“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).**

**“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 13:38).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn.1:9).**

(See DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Forgiveness*—Mt.26:28 for discussion.)

6. The Savior justifies all who believe, justifies apart from the law (see DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Ro.4:22).

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

**“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).**

**“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).**

7. The Savior brings judgment upon men. Since He has come, men must beware lest what the prophet declared come upon them (Hab.1:5).
  - ⇒ They can be “despisers” (kataphronetai): to look down upon; think lightly of; act against.
  - ⇒ They can wonder and perish: the idea is that a man can perish wondering if Jesus is truly the Savior and if the Word preached is true (v.38-39). (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Perish*—Jn.3:16.)

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(13:32-37) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection of:** the purpose of Jesus' resurrection is incorruption, that is, He arose to make it possible for man to escape the corruption of death. Long before Jesus ever came, God foretold that He would send the Savior into the world and that the Savior would not be allowed to see corruption. Paul declared:

**“God hath fulfilled the same [promises] unto us...in that he hath raised up Jesus again” (Acts 13:33).**

Paul covers three prophecies in particular.

1. “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (v.33; Ps.2:7; cp. Heb.1:5; 5:5). The resurrection of Christ is proof that Jesus is the Son of God (Ro.1:4).

2. “I will give you the sure mercies of David” (v.34; Is.55:3). The sure mercies of David refer to the promises and the everlasting covenant given to David (see note, Lk.3:24-31 for a discussion of the Davidic promises). Paul was declaring that the resurrection of Christ fulfilled and sealed these promises.

3. “Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (v.35; Ps.16:10). Paul was saying that David died and was buried and left in the grave. He saw corruption (v.36). Therefore, the prophecy could not be referring to him. But there was a Person whom God raised from the dead: Jesus Christ. He saw no corruption; therefore, the prophecy refers to Him. He is the Son of God (v.33), the Holy One (v.35), the Savior (v.23). (See outline and notes—Acts 2:25-28; 2:29-31 for discussion. See DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Corruption*—Acts 13:32-37.)

### DEEPER STUDY # 4

(13:32-37) **Corruption:** to decay, deteriorate, perish. In no place does Christ promise a new body to the unbeliever, to the unsaved and lost. A person's body and flesh can be destroyed forever. The unsaved die without any hope of ever receiving a new and glorified body that lives forever. (This is a fact seldom pointed out.)

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| <p><b>1 The people's response to the gospel</b></p> <p>a. Some non-religionists desired to hear more</p> <p>b. Some who were hungry for God desired to hear more immediately</p> <p>c. Some who never attended came to hear the Word of God</p> <p>d. Some rejected &amp; opposed</p> <p>1) Reacted against the crowds</p> <p>2) Spoke against Paul's message</p> <p><b>2 The preacher's response to the people</b></p> | <p><b>D. Antioch of Pisidia, the Main City of South Galatia (Part II): Various Responses to the Gospel, 13:42-52</b></p> <p>42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.</p> <p>43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.</p> <p>44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.</p> <p>45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.</p> <p>46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been</p> | <p>spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.</p> <p>47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.</p> <p>48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.</p> <p>49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.</p> <p>50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.</p> <p>51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.</p> <p>52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.</p> | <p>a. They rejected the rejecters of the gospel<sup>DSZ</sup></p> <p>b. They turned to willing hearers</p> <p>1) Jesus was the One sent to be the light and salvation of the world</p> <p>2) The Gentiles rejoiced &amp; glorified the Word</p> <p>3) Some were ordained to eternal life &amp; believed<sup>DSZ</sup></p> <p>4) The Word was spread abroad</p> <p>c. They were persecuted &amp; forcibly expelled from the city &amp; surrounding area</p> <p>d. They dramatically turned away from the rejecters</p> <p>e. They were sustained by God: Despite rejection &amp; persecution</p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**THE FIRST GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO CYPRUS AND GALATIA, 13:1-14:28**

**D. Antioch of Pisidia, the Main City of South Galatia (Part II): Various Responses to the Gospel, 13:42-52**

(13:42-52) **Introduction:** this passage is an eye-opener, very informative in picturing how people respond to the gospel. It shows exactly what the witnessing believer can expect as he proclaims Jesus to a lost and needful world.

1. The people's response to the gospel (v.42-45).
2. The preacher's response to the people (v.46-52).

**1** (13:42-45) **Gospel, Response to:** the people's response to the gospel was fourfold.

1. Some non-religionists (Gentiles) desired to hear more. The non-religionists were Gentiles. They were heathen men and women who had become sick of the immoralities and injustices of their society. Their *empty religions* had left them empty. In their hunger for something more they were attracted by the Jew's morality and worship of One Supreme Being. Therefore, they sometimes attended Jewish services. However, they understood little about the Scripture. This is the point of what happened now. They had understood little about what Paul had preached. Their childhood had not included the teaching of Scripture.

- ⇒ Their friends and neighbors knew little if anything about the Scripture.
- ⇒ Their religions had taught little of the truth about God.
- ⇒ Their environment and society were anything but godly.

But their hearts had been touched by the gospel. The Holy Spirit was working within them, stirring them to crave...

- forgiveness of sins (v.38).
- justification from all things (v.39).

Note the word "besought" (parekaloun). It is continuous action: the heathen continued to beseech. The picture is that they begged and begged Paul to share more about the forgiveness of sins which is in Jesus.

**Thought 1.** Note two significant points.

- 1) There are many who are ignorant of the Scriptures, who know little about what we preach. They did not have Christian parents, nor have they ever been exposed to genuine Christian believers. They just have

never had the opportunity and exposure to the gospel that some of us have had. Because of this, their hearts are fertile and soft to the gospel. When they hear the truth, the Holy Spirit is able to convict and convert them much more easily than He is a *gospel-hardened* heart.

- 2) This is great encouragement to the witnessing believer. It should challenge every one of us to get to the task, for the world is full of such people. They may be steeped in religion, but they are ignorant of the truth about Christ. They are soft and ready to respond, to hear more and more of the glorious truth that Jesus saves, forgives, and justifies (v.23, 38, 39).

**“Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh” (Lk.6:21).**

**“My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Ps.42:2).**

**“I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments” (Ps.119:131).**

**“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Ps.126:5-6).**

**“I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land” (Ps.143:6).**

**“With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Is.26:9).**

**“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is” (Ps.63:1).**

2. Some who were hungry for God desired to hear more immediately. These were mainly proselytes, heathen Gentiles who had become so impressed with Judaism they had actually become converts to the Jewish religion. Many of these and many of the Jews (genuine religionists) followed Paul and Barnabas from the preaching service. They could not wait until next week. They were too convicted, too drawn to Christ and the hope of forgiveness. They had to hear more right then.

- a. Note the word “many.” The worship service was filled with many who were familiar with the Scripture. They had sought God by studying the Scripture. Therefore when Paul preached the truth of Christ, the Holy Spirit took their hearts and drew them to Christ. Their hearts which hungered to know the truth hungered to hear more, to hear that Jesus is the Savior...
- the One whom God raised from the dead (v.30).
  - the One who fulfilled prophecy (v.33-37).
  - the One who forgives sins (v.38).
  - the One who justifies from all things (v.39).

**Thought 1.** The truth of Christ and the Scripture should always be the message preached and the lesson taught. God has naturally put within man a hunger to know the truth, a craving to know Him. Within every congregation there are those who have sought God and have read and studied the Scripture day and night. They have also sought Him in their churches and synagogues and temples. Their hearts are eagerly ready to receive the truth of Christ and the Scripture. But note what is needed: a believer who lives and preaches and teaches as Paul, a believer...

- who prays much.
  - who studies the Scripture much.
  - who diligently seeks to live righteously.
  - who preaches Jesus the Savior.
- b. Note that Paul persuaded them to “continue in the grace of God.” While Paul preached, they apparently made a decision to trust Christ for forgiveness and justification (v.38-39). They were seeing for the first time how Jesus was the fulfillment of God’s promises. They were hungering to know more and more. They could not wait until the next week. They followed the preacher then and there. They wanted to learn more immediately. The picture is that of urgency, hunger, and thirst after the truth. Paul strongly exhorted them to continue in “the grace of God.”

**“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Mt.5:6).**

**“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:33).**

**“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is” (Ps.63:1).**

**“My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times” (Ps.119:20).**

**“I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments” (Ps.119:131).**

3. Some who never attended came to hear the Word of God (v.44). They came to the worship service on the next Sabbath. What brought them?

- ⇒ The natural hunger within the human heart for God and the truth.

- ⇒ The news being spread abroad about the preaching of the truth.
- ⇒ The faithful work and witnessing of Paul and Barnabas and the other Christian believers throughout the week.

**Thought 1.** How many churches would be filled with people desiring to hear the Word of God...

- if we preached the truth like we should?
- if we were witnessing and leading our people to witness as we should?

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).

“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul” (Ps.66:16).

“I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses” (Is.63:7).

“But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer.20:9).

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name” (Mal.3:16).

4. Some rejected and opposed. There were three primary reasons for their rejection and opposition (v.45).
  - a. They were filled with envy toward the people who were coming. The place was filling up with people...
    - who were different.
    - who were thought unclean and dirty.
    - who were sinful and unjust and derelict.
    - who were *outsiders* to the regular congregation.
    - who usually did not attend or show interest in attending and therefore did not support the permanent priests and their ministry.
  - b. They were filled with envy toward the preachers, Paul and Barnabas. The preachers were preaching a message that was meeting the needs of the people and the people were flocking to them. The regular priests and teachers (rabbis) were jealous of their success, for the people did not support their ministries like they were supporting Paul and Barnabas.
  - c. They opposed “those things,” both what Paul was doing and teaching. They opposed both his ministry and the doctrine and teachings of Paul. They actually spoke against the truth, contradicting what Scripture proclaimed. They even blasphemed the name of Christ.

**Thought 1.** Note the seriousness of opposition against the message of Scripture and the ministry of the Lord’s servants.

**Thought 2.** The servant of the Lord can expect rejection and opposition, just as he can expect openness and reception to the gospel.

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn.15:20).

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).

“O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me” (Ps.7:1).

“All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me” (Ps.119:86).

**2** (13:46-52) **Ministers, Response to Persecutors:** the preachers’ response to the people was fourfold.

1. The preachers rejected the rejecters of the gospel. It is important to note why the rejecters were rejected.
  - a. The Word of God had been clearly proclaimed to them. They had received every opportunity.
  - b. They had pushed the Word away. They vigorously and strongly reacted; they rejected the Word.
  - c. They judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life. It was not God who counted them unworthy. God actually counted them worthy. He had the gospel taken to them. It was they who condemned themselves; they who brought judgment upon themselves.

**“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is *condemned already*, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (Jn.3:18).**

**Thought 1.** The disciples of the Lord were instructed to turn away from rejecters (Lk.10:10-16). The fields are white unto harvest. There are too many who will open their hearts and homes to the Lord to waste precious time on those who are so evil that they contradict and blaspheme Christ.

**“Then said he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy” (Mt.22:8).**

**“But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me” (Lk.10:10-16).**

**“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (Jn.3:19-21).**

**“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46).**

2. The preachers turned to willing hearers. Note several significant points.

- a. Christ is the One whom God has *set*, *fixed*, and *purposed* to be...
  - “the light of the Gentiles.”
  - “the salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Is.49:6; cp. Lk.2:32).

Christ is to be proclaimed to the Gentiles, to the whole world. Therefore Paul declared loudly that he and Barnabas were obeying God’s will; they were turning to those who would readily receive the glorious gospel of salvation.

- b. The Gentiles (the heathen) rejoiced and glorified the Word of the Lord. Note the reason: salvation—they were to be saved. They experienced the thrill of being saved, of coming to know Jesus personally and receiving the assurance of life eternal.
- c. Some were ordained to eternal life and believed (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Predestination*—Acts 13:48 for discussion).
- d. Both the preachers and the new believers were faithful to God’s calling. They published (diephereto), that is, spread abroad and proclaimed the Word throughout all the region. The new believers became faithful witnesses immediately.

3. The preachers were persecuted and forcibly expelled from the city and surrounding areas. Religious leaders stirred up some prominent women (honorable) who were also very devout or religious. Apparently the women were either wives of city officials or prominent in society and business. In either case, they had enough influence to turn the city officials against Paul and Barnabas. The preachers were persecuted rather severely. Paul referred to this later when writing Timothy.

**“But thou hast fully known my...persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me” (2 Tim.3:10-11).**

4. The preachers dramatically turned away from the rejecters. This was exactly what Christ had said to do when people rejected the gospel. It was a symbol that people were unworthy of the gospel because of their obstinacy, their continued rejection and hostility to the gospel.

**“And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet” (Mt.10:14).**

**“And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city” (Mk.6:11).**

**“And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them” (Lk.9:5).**

5. The preachers were sustained by God, filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit—despite terrible rejection and persecution.

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).

“For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever” (Ps.37:28).

“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Dt.33:27).

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(13:46-47) **Paul, Method:** this is a very significant passage. Paul emphatically stated that he was turning from the Jews to the Gentiles *in this particular city*. The significance is this: Paul’s *method of evangelism* was to do exactly what Christ said, to go the Jews first, then to the Gentiles.

“It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you” (Acts 13:46).

“He [Paul] reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath...Paul was pressed in the spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles” (Acts 18:4-6).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Ro.1:16).

“Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile” (Ro.2:9-10).

Note Peter’s words:

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto *you first* God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:25-26).

This is the reason Paul adopted the method of going into the synagogues first. (See note—Acts 13:14-16 for more discussion.) Christ had commanded that the Jews be the first to hear the gospel. If they rejected, Paul then turned away and preached to the public or world at large, that is, to the Gentiles.

Note: Paul said the Lord commanded the preachers to adopt this method (v.47).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(13:48) **Predestination:** this verse shows both God’s part and man’s part in salvation. Jesus Himself had said:

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (Jn.6:44).

The man who comes to Christ is a person who has been drawn *by God*, a person who has experienced the *divine initiative*. A man does not act alone and come to Christ by his own effort and energy, not by his own works, whether mental (thought or will, Jn.1:13) or labor (good deeds, Eph.2:8-9). A man is a dead spirit; therefore, he can do nothing spiritually just as a dead body can do nothing physically. The natural man prefers self and sin; therefore, if a man with a dead spirit is to come to Christ, he has to be acted upon and drawn by God. Both God and man have a part in salvation.

⇒ God’s part is to draw men.

⇒ Man’s part is to believe.

(See note, *Draw*—Jn.6:44-46 for more discussion.)

| CHAPTER 14   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <b>E. Iconium, the Ancient City: God's Pattern for Preaching &amp; Witnessing, 14:1-7</b>   | <p>timony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.</p> <p>4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.</p> <p>5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,</p> <p>6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:</p> <p>7 And there they preached the gospel.</p> |
| <b>1 Step 1: A unified spirit &amp; effort<sup>DSI</sup></b> | And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. | <b>preacher</b>  |
| <b>2 Step 2: Following the God-given method</b>              | 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.  |  |
| <b>3 Step 3: Experiencing results</b>                        | 3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave tes-   |  |
| <b>4 Step 4: The grumbling opposition</b>                    |   |  |
| <b>5 Step 5: The boldness &amp; perseverance of the</b>      |   |  |
|  |   | <b>6 Step 6: The divided opinions</b>  |
|  |   | <b>7 Step 7: The turning away to willing hearers</b>   |

## DIVISION VI

### THE FIRST GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO CYPRUS AND GALATIA, 13:1-14:28

#### E. Iconium, the Ancient City: God's Pattern for Preaching and Witnessing, 14:1-7

(14:1-7) **Introduction:** this passage is striking. It gives a clear picture of God's pattern for preaching, for bearing witness to His name. The pattern is seen in what Paul and Barnabas experienced. Their experience shows exactly what God expects of His servant and exactly what the servant can expect as he preaches the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus.

1. Step 1: a unified spirit and effort (v.1).
2. Step 2: following the God-given method (v.1).
3. Step 3: experiencing results (v.1).
4. Step 4: the grumbling opposition (v.2).
5. Step 5: the boldness and perseverance of the preacher (v.3).
6. Step 6: the divided opinions (v.4-5).
7. Step 7: the turning away to willing hearers (v.6-7).

**1** (14:1) **Preaching:** the first step in preaching is a unified spirit and effort. There is emphasis upon the word "together" and the fact that the men were ministering and serving *together*. Remember: the Spirit of God had moved Paul ahead of Barnabas in the ministry (see DEEPER STUDY # 4—Acts 13:9; 13:14-16). This speaks volumes on the spirit of Barnabas. He must have been a most unusual man, a strong servant of the Lord. Several factors gave the men a unified spirit.

- ⇒ They served the same Lord.
- ⇒ They were called to the same field.
- ⇒ They bore the same message.
- ⇒ They loved each other as brothers in the Lord. Therefore, they wished to encourage and support each other as they fulfilled God's call.
- ⇒ They knew that love was the primary witness to the world.

**"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn.13:34-35).**

**Thought 1.** The same factors are true of all ministers of the Lord; therefore, the same unified spirit should be true of all. All God's servants should be serving *together*, working together in His Spirit and for His cause.

**"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor.1:10).**

**"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph.4:3).**

**"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Ph.1:27).**

**"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Pt.3:8).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(14:1) **Iconium**: this city was located in the Roman district of Galatia or modern day Turkey. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) The city was about ninety miles east of Antioch Pisidia. It was called the Damascus of Asia Minor. The city actually claimed to be older than Damascus. It lay along the edge of the great central plain of Asia Minor, one of the most fertile plains imaginable. It was known for its plum and apricot orchards. The major road between the west and Syria passed through the city; therefore, it was a commercial center. A person can just picture Paul and Barnabas. They had suffered persecution and been kicked out of Antioch of Pisidia, but as they walked along the great Roman road in the midst of the beautiful fertile plain and lush orchards, they were rejoicing in the Lord and in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. They were victorious in Jesus their Lord. They marched forward to claim Iconium for Him.

A large church was established in Iconium; a “great multitude” of both Jews and Greeks believed (Acts 14:1). But again, the church was founded in the midst of unbelief and persecution (Acts 14:2, 4-6). Despite the opposition, Paul and Barnabas were able to remain in the city for a long time, rooting and establishing the believers in the faith. Eventually however, their lives were threatened and they were forced to flee (Acts 14:6). Some of the same Jewish persecutors hounded Paul, following and arousing the people throughout Galatia against him (Acts 14:19). Paul mentioned the terrible persecutions which he suffered at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra (2 Tim.3:11). The Iconium church...

- was founded on Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 14:1-6).
- was revisited by Paul on his return trip (Acts 14:21-22).
- was visited by Paul and Silas and Timothy on Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-5). He also visited the city on his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23).
- was one of the churches to whom Paul wrote the *Book of Galatians*.

**2** (14:1) **Witnessing—Preaching**: the second step in preaching is following the God-given method. The method of God is twofold.

1. First, the servant of God is to *speak*. He is to speak by bearing witness and preaching the Lord Jesus Christ, the salvation that is in Him. God’s method is *verbal witness* (see outline and notes—Acts 13:14-41).

“It pleased God by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe” (1 Cor.1:21).

“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.10:7).

“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops” (Mt.10:27).

“Go ye therefore and *teach* all nations” (Mt.28:19).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God” (Lk.9:60).

“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

2. Second, the servant of God is to go where the people are. Note that the first place Paul and Barnabas went was the synagogue (see notes—Acts 13:14-16; DEEPER STUDY # 1—13:46-47 for discussion). This was their method...

- to go first where the people were, where a ready-made audience was.
- to go first where the religionists (Jews) were, the people who were already familiar with the Scripture.

“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage” (Mt.22:9).

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Jn.7:37).

“Go, stand and speak in the *temple* [church] to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).

**3** (14:1) **Preaching**: the third step in preaching is the experience of results. Both Jews and Greeks were reached, and the idea is that they were reached immediately. Note: there was no partiality or favoritism shown to anyone. The evangelistic thrust was to all people throughout the whole city. All were put on the same level; there was no class or social distinction between any. Paul and Barnabas reached out to all who would listen to the glorious gospel. They were obedient to their Lord; therefore, God was able to honor His word and many were reached—many believed the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:4-6).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Is.45:22).

**4** (14:2) **Persecution**: the fourth step in preaching is the grumbling opposition. Note three things.

1. It was the unbelieving religionists (Jews) who stirred up the trouble over the preaching of the gospel. The word “unbelieving” (apeithesantes) means disobedient. The idea is they were *unwilling* to believe or be persuaded. They deliberately withheld belief, *disobeying* God.

**“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 Jn.3:23).**

2. The picture is this: they went about stirring up the city against the Lord’s servants. The religionists made a deliberate attempt to arouse the people. The religionists...

- spread rumors
- made false suggestions
- poisoned opinions
- made insinuations

They tried to embitter and provoke the people and the officials of the city to get rid of the preachers.

3. They opposed the preachers for three reasons (see note, pt.4—Acts 13:42-45 for discussion).

**5** (14:3) **Boldness—Perseverance—Minister**: the fifth step in preaching is the boldness and perseverance of the preacher. Note three things.

1. Despite the persecution and evil feelings against their preaching, they continued ministering and witnessing for Christ. They did not...

- withdraw or flee.
- soften their preaching.
- compromise their message.
- seek to please the officials.

But note the source of their boldness. They spoke boldly “in the Lord”; that is, they relied upon and trusted Him and His strength to bear them along, looking after their welfare.

**Thought 1.** Paul and Barnabas must have spent much time in prayer, for boldness is given in answer to prayer.

**“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word” (Acts 4:29).**

**“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).**

**“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:7-8).**

2. The preachers were instruments in the hands of the Lord. Note the words, “gave testimony [witness] to the word of his grace.” In the Greek the subject of this sentence is Christ, not the preachers. Christ is the One who gave witness, who did the preaching through the lives and voices of the two ministers. They were so surrendered, so yielded to the Lord, He was able to use them to the fullest as His servants to bear witness to the Word of His grace.

**“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).**

**Thought 1.** Imagine a person being so surrendered, so yielded to Christ that He is able to speak and minister through that person. This is exactly what He expects and demands. We are to be His instruments, His servants, through whom He can live and bear testimony to Himself.

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col.3:3).**

3. Note the words, “The Lord...granted signs and wonders to be done *by their hands*” (v.3). Again, the signs and wonders are worked *by Christ* through the hands of the preachers. He is the Source, the Power, the Minister, the Healer. They were only the instruments and servants in the hands of the Lord. (God grant that we be so yielded to Him!)

“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus” (Acts 4:29-30).

“God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will” (Heb.2:4).

**6** (14:4-5) **Ministers—Persecution:** the sixth step in preaching was the divided opinions about the preachers. Preachers can *expect* divided opinions. Some people will support them; others will not support them. No preacher has ever been acceptable to all persons. Note three points.

1. The greatest impact that a preacher can make is to be so surrendered to Christ that he becomes the very instrument and voice of Christ. The whole city had heard about Christ and they were affected by the message and ministry.

**Thought 1.** What a challenge the dedication of Paul is to preachers...

- his dedication in the study of the Word.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).

- his dedication in prayer.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18. See outline and notes—Eph.3:14-21 for what Paul prayed.)

- his dedication in preaching.

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine...But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim.4:2, 5).

- his dedication in making disciples.

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).

It was because of Paul’s commitment to all the duties of a minister that God was able to use him so dynamically.

2. The people were divided over the preachers. They formed cliques and factions over the Lord’s servants. Some favored; some opposed.

**Thought 1.** Christ came to bring division to the earth.

“For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law” (Lk.12:52-53).

3. The opposition won out and actually made an assault (horme) upon the two men. The word means an impulse, a rush upon. Apparently a mob gathered and headed for the men, either rushing into their residence or rushing about trying to find them. Note: both Gentiles and Jews were involved, that is, both non-religionists and religionists, both those who were unfamiliar and those who were familiar with the Scriptures.

**Thought 1.** There are two facts the Lord’s servant must never forget.

- 1) Again, Christ came to bring division to the earth.

“For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law” (Lk.12:52-53).

- 2) The servant of the Lord shall suffer persecution.

“Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn.15:20).

“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things will they do unto you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you” (Jn.16:1-4).

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).

“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (1 Jn.3:13).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” (1 Pt.4:12).

**7** (14:6-7) **Ministers:** the seventh step in preaching is turning away to willing hearers. Very simply, the preachers discovered that the opposition was about to attack them. More harm to the gospel would be done if they remained, and the important thing was for the gospel to go forward in its saving power. So the preachers turned away and fled for the sake of the gospel. They turned to willing hearers and continued to preach the gospel.

**Thought 1.** Note two stirring lessons.

- 1) When facing opposition, the Lord’s servant must carefully weigh what is best for the spread of the gospel. Sometimes taking a stand will bring greater results; sometimes leaving will bring greater results. The servant must always do what is best for the gospel.
- 2) The Lord’s servant is not to become defeated and give up the ministry because of opposition. He must always go forth, looking for new fields in which to preach Christ.

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations *for my name’s sake*” (Mt.24:9).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).

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| <p><b>1 Paul preached on the city streets<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p><b>2 The nature of a superstitious people, the nature that necessitates a special message</b></p> <p>a. They are subject to great faith in Christ</p> <p>b. They are prone to deify men</p> <p>c. They believe myths</p> <p>d. They offer the wrong sacrifice</p> <p><b>3 The message to a superstitious people</b></p> | <p><b>F. Lystra, the Frontier Town: Preaching to a Heathen &amp; Superstitious People, 14:8-20</b></p> <p>8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:</p> <p>9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,</p> <p>10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.</p> <p>11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.</p> <p>12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.</p> <p>13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.</p> <p>14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their</p> | <p>clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,</p> <p>15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:</p> <p>16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.</p> <p>17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.</p> <p>18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.</p> <p>19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.</p> <p>20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.</p> | <p>a. Point 1: Men are only men</p> <p>b. Point 2: There is only one living God</p> <p>c. Point 3: The living God is the Creator of all</p> <p>d. Point 4: God permitted men to walk as they willed</p> <p>e. Point 5: God has always given witness to Himself</p> <p><b>4 The minister needed to reach superstitious people</b></p> <p>a. A minister who is willing to suffer persecution, even martyrdom<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>b. A minister who is faithful in bearing disciples<sup>DS3</sup></p> <p>c. A minister who trusts God's delivering power</p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**THE FIRST GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO CYPRUS AND GALATIA, 13:1-14:28**

**F. Lystra, the Frontier Town: Preaching to a Heathen and Superstitious People, 14:8-20**

(14:8-20) **Introduction:** there are people all over the world who know very little about God and Scripture, people in both industrialized and primitive societies. They are the lost of the world, people gripped with heathen and superstitious beliefs and philosophies, people without God and without hope for the future. How can they be reached? What is the message that needs to be preached to a heathen and superstitious people?

1. Paul preached on the city streets (v.8).
2. The nature of a superstitious people, the nature that necessitates a special message (v.8-13).
3. The message to a superstitious people (v.14-18).
4. The minister needed to reach superstitious people (v.19-20).

**1** (14:8) **Preaching—Witnessing:** Paul preached on the city streets. There is no mention of a synagogue in Lystra, but there were at least a few Jewish citizens living in the city. Scripture mentions Timothy's mother who was apparently Jewish (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Timothy*—Acts 16:1-3).

If the Jews had been meeting together, Paul would have joined them and begun his preaching ministry among them. But as is seen in this passage, he was apparently preaching in the streets and sharing Christ with whoever would stop and listen. The statement "there sat a certain man at Lystra" seems to point also to open air preaching. The man was most likely a beggar.

Note another fact: Paul and Barnabas had to struggle against a language barrier. They did not know the Lyconian dialect, and only the educated Jew would know Greek and Aramaic, Paul's natural languages (v.11). Note the immense dedication of these men. Despite a language barrier they struggled to make Christ known to everyone.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(14:8) **Lystra:** this was was a frontier town, much less civilized than most of the other areas evangelized by Paul. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) The city was twenty some miles southwest of Iconium. Just when the city was founded is not

known. However, around 6 B.C. Augustus established a Roman colony there as a frontier defense. Very little Grecian culture and influence ever took hold, and very few people of culture were ever attracted to the city. In a real sense, it was a city built as a military outpost, a city constructed out in the wilds solely for protection. The great military highway of Rome, the "Imperial Road," ran through the city; and because of this and the large population necessary to maintain the military colony, the city had a thriving economy. This of course meant a capable core of aristocratic businessmen. Paul and Barnabas had a very successful ministry in Lystra, establishing a solid church that *continued on* in the Lord. The church...

- was founded on Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 14:8f).
- was visited by Paul on all three missionary journeys, and he apparently visited it a fourth time (Acts 14:6f; 14:21; 16:1; 18:23).
- was the home church of Timothy (either Lystra or Derbe) (Acts 16:1).
- was one of the churches of Galatia to which Paul wrote the *Book of Galatians*.

**2** (14:8-13) **Superstition—Humanism:** the nature of superstitious people, the nature that necessitated a special message. What happened gives clear insight into the nature of superstitious people.

1. Superstitious people are open to faith in Christ. This is pictured in the cripple sitting on the side of the street. It seems the cripple was one of the few who took time to stop and listen to Paul. This is concluded from the loud shout of Paul, which was apparently to attract an audience.

- a. The man was utterly helpless; both feet were crippled and had been from birth. He had *never walked*.
- b. The man listened to the gospel. He "heard Paul speak."
- c. The man's heart was opened to the gospel; therefore...
  - he was affected.
  - he sensed that the message was from heaven.
  - he experienced the stirring of faith in Christ.
- d. The man actually "had faith to be made whole" (echei pistin tou sothenai). The words "made whole" mean both to be cured and to be saved. Paul, of course, was preaching the gospel, and the man's heart was stirred to believe and trust Jesus to save him. Paul noticed this; he saw a faith rise up in the man, a faith strong enough to heal him as well as save his soul. All the man needed was to be pointed toward such power in the name of Jesus.
- e. Paul *shouted out* with a loud voice (megalei), "stand upright on thy feet." And the man leaped up and walked. Note: Paul did not reach out for the man; he did not touch the man at all. He simply spoke to the man. The power was of Christ and the faith was within the man. The man had to exercise his faith, believe in and really trust in the Lord Jesus to be healed just as he did to be saved.

The point is this. The heathen and superstitious people of the world can and are to be reached for Christ. Their hearts are just like the hearts of the civilized and educated of the world. Their hearts...

- are of the same nature.
- are in just as much need.
- are just as open and subject to the truth.

**Thought 1.** Note: there are even heathen and superstitious people in civilized and industrialized societies. Any person ignorant of the Scripture and the truth about Christ...

- is a heathen: a pagan, an irreligious person, a foreigner toward God.

**"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph.2:19).**

- is trusting his fate and destiny to some form of superstitious and false belief.

2. Superstitious people are prone to deify men. Practically everyone within earshot of Paul would naturally run to see what was causing such a commotion. It appears the incident took place in a very busy section of the city. The picture is that of a large crowd running together, stunned, shocked, and excited. They began to run all about the city shouting the belief that "the gods" had come to visit them in the form of men. Of course with so much excitement the whole city soon heard about the miracle and became involved in *making gods* out of the two miracle workers. The point is this: there is a tendency within the world to deify both *mankind* and certain people, to hold to the superstitious and heathen belief of humanism...

- to deify mankind, worshipping the ability and feats of men whether in science and technology or in magic and sorcery. There is a tendency to worship and believe man is the one who determines his own fate and destiny.
- to deify certain persons, esteeming them too highly, putting them upon pedestals and places of honor because of their apparent power, achievements, knowledge, fame, or ability to read the future.

Such deification of men is idolatry, superstition, and heathenism. Worshipping self is the tendency of man's heart, whether a heathen in the wilds of a jungle or a heathen in the most industrialized society.

**"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves**

to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Ro.1:20-23).

"And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness" (Ro.2:19).

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev.3:17).

"I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me" (Job 33:9).

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: in the place of control I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Is.14:13-14).

"For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me" (Is.47:10).

"Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God" (Ezk.28:2).

"Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD" (Obad.4).

3. Superstitious people believe myths. The people of Lystra identified Paul and Barnabas with two man-made gods, Zeus (Jupiter) and Hermes (Mercury). The widely held myth ran like this.

Long ago the two gods disguised themselves as men and came to earth seeking people who would welcome and entertain them. Their search was futile. Everyone rejected them except two peasants, Philemon and his wife, Baucis. Disappointed and angered, the two gods destroyed the whole population, but they rewarded and honored Philemon and his wife.

Note how quickly the people of Lystra associated the two gods with Paul and Barnabas. The two gods were thought to have visited the earth in the region of Lystra. Seeing such a phenomenal event—a crippled man healed by the shout of Paul, a crippled who had never walked—stirred the imagination of the Lystrians. They made the connection between the two preachers and the mythical gods.

They were not about to make the same mistake again. They wanted the favor and blessings of the gods, not their judgment and condemnation. They called Barnabas Zeus, the king of the gods; and they called Paul Hermes, the god of speech and the messenger of the other gods. The points to note are these:

- a. The heathen believed in myths: they held to false ideas about reality and truth, the origin and power of the world, the nature and presence of God.
- b. The heathen mistook man's ability and power for God's ability and power: they were immediately ready to pay homage to man in honor of his achievements.

4. Superstitious people offer the wrong sacrifice. The people were wildly excited. They rushed to pay honor to the two *god-like* men. They were ready and even prepared to make sacrifice to the two. Why? To secure their favor and blessings.

Note the idea of sacrifice or of giving oneself in order to secure favor and blessings is not just an idea of religion. It is a fact of all reality, a fact that holds true for everything man does. A man has to sacrifice and give himself to any endeavor if he wishes to reap the benefits of the endeavor (its favor and blessings). Whatever the project, a man's being, time, energy and effort are required if he wishes to have the blessings. The point is threefold.

- a. The heathen, the lost of the world, sacrifice and give themselves to men of power, ability, wealth and achievement. They give themselves to such men, treating them as *god-like* men. They do it to secure the favor and blessings of their power, ability, wealth, and achievements.
- b. The humanists, the heathen who follow the basic myth of the world, sacrifice and give themselves to men of science and industry, ability and achievement. Why? To secure the favor and blessings wrought by their *god-like* hands.
- c. There are only two genuine sacrifices.

⇒ There is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for man, the giving of His life in order to save man.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro.5:8).

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pt.2:24).

⇒ There is the sacrifice of man to Jesus Christ, the giving of his life in order to be acceptable to God.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Lk.9:23).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Ro.12:1-2).

**3** (14:14-18) **Preaching—Message:** the message to superstitious people. Note what Paul and Barnabas did. The people had been shouting and carrying on their activities of worship in their native tongue. Many of the people would be bilingual, speaking both their own language and Greek. But Paul and Barnabas could not understand what they were saying in their native Lyconian tongue (v.11). When they finally grasped what was happening, they courageously protested against such heathen behavior. They ran into the midst of the crowd tearing their clothes. The tearing of one's clothes was a sign of holy indignation against sin. By this symbol the people would know immediately the two men were protesting.

⇒ Paul *cried out* (v.14), declaring exactly what a heathen people needed to hear. The people were ignorant of the Scriptures, so Paul had to approach them on the basis of "the living god, which made heaven and earth" (v.15). Paul declared five points.

1. Men are only men: "We also are men of like passions with you." The word "passions" (homoioipatheis) means the same nature. It means that all men have the same...

- heart (Ps.33:15)
- feelings
- infirmities
- temptations (1 Cor.10-13)
- sufferings
- aging and dying bodies (Heb.9:27)

a. Note who is declaring this: one of the greatest men who ever lived...

- the man chosen by God Himself to be the witness and pattern for all men.

**"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1 Tim.1:16).**

- the man who could say to all other men, "Be followers of me" (1 Cor.4:16; 7:7; 11:1; Ph.3:17; 4:9; 2 Th.3:7; 1 Tim.1:16; 2 Tim.1:13).
- the man who was the epitomy, the supreme example, of human religious achievement.

**"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more....concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" ((Ph.3:4, 6).**

**"And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal.1:14).**

This man, Paul, rejected the honor and homage of men; he declared that all men are mere men. No man is a *god*.

b. Note that Paul knew who he was: he was not a *god-like* man; he was a messenger who preached to men. He was a preacher declaring that men should repent and turn from their vanities, turn from the empty things and man-made idols of this earth.

**"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).**

**"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22).**

**"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).**

**"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Is.55:7).**

**"But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die" (Ezk.18:21).**

2. There is only one living God. The people were worshipping one of two things:

- ⇒ man-made idols which were lifeless and totally helpless in saving men from sin, death, and judgment.
- ⇒ man himself who was aging, suffering, and dying, totally unable to save himself from sin, death, and judgment, much less save anyone else.

There is only one living God, only one God who possesses the very...

- energy of life
- power of life
- force of life
- essence of life
- principle of life
- quality of life

Therefore, *the living God* is the only God who is to be worshipped.

**"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Th.1:9).**

**"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb.10:31).**

3. The living God is the creator of *all* things, of “heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.” He is the Creator of man, everything about man, and everything surrounding man. Therefore, *the God of creation* is the only God who is to be worshipped.

“Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee” (Neh.9:6).

“But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:7-10).

“The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Ps.24:1).

“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Ps.33:6).

“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding” (Is.40:28).

“I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded” (Is.45:12).

“Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?” (Acts 7:49-50).

4. God permitted men to walk as they willed. Note the point: Paul was explaining why people worship idols, that is, “these vanities,” the empty things of earth. Men worship the empty things of earth because God has given man a free will. Man is allowed to walk in his “own ways.” God “suffers,” that is, allows, puts up with man, longs and aches for man to turn to Him as the only living and true God, the only God who deserves the honor and worship of men.

Note: the Book of Romans explains what happened to man (cp. Ro.1:18-32).

5. God has always given witness to Himself. No man has ever been left without witness. There is the evidence...

- of *good* in the world (ontology, being).
- of rain.
- of fruitful seasons.
- of food.
- of gladness (joy).

The laws of nature do not just happen. They were given and are controlled by the only living and true God. He is behind all the good that happens to man.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas.1:17).

“Nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim.6:17).

Note: Scripture teaches that man has always had at least two witnesses of God...

- the outward witness of natural revelation stressed by Paul in this passage.

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Ro.1:19-20).

- the inner witness of both conscience and thoughts.

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (Ro.2:14-15).

“They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities” (Dt.32:21).

“Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things” (Jer.14:22).

“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device [imagination, thoughts]. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:29-31).

**4** (14:19-20) **Minister:** the minister needed to reach a heathen and superstitious people. Note three qualifications needed by the minister who seeks to reach the heathen of the world:

1. The minister must be willing to suffer persecution, even martyrdom. Antioch of Pisidia and Iconium were the two cities that had threatened and expelled Paul and Barnabas. Some Jews were so incensed over the preachers—over their ministry and message—they were now hounding and dogging their steps, arousing the people against them.

Note how fickle, changeable, and impulsive the heathen were, and how carnal and evil the religionists (Jews) were. Yet the minister was willing to suffer in order to *help them*, the very ones who opposed him. The people stoned Paul and left him for dead.

2. The minister must be faithful in witnessing and in bearing disciples. Note some disciples were standing around Paul as he lay upon the ground, assumed to be dead! (See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 14:20 for list of the disciples.)

3. The minister must trust God’s delivering power. Note: Paul “rose up” (anastas). This points toward a miraculous recovery by God.

**Thought 1.** Paul had given everything to God; therefore, he was God’s. His life was in the hands of God to do as He willed.

“There hath no temptation [trial] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).

“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb.13:6).

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations [trials], and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).

“But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God” (Ps.40:17).

“For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling” (Ps.116:8).

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

“And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar [gray] hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Is.46:4).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(14:19) **Stoning, Death by:** this was a cruel and inhuman means of death. Stones large enough to crush a man’s bones and head, yet small enough to be thrown with force, were used. It was a slow, painful death, unless a vital spot in the head was immediately hit. After the stoning, the body was dragged by the heels outside the city gates and left for the savage dogs and beasts that ran wild through the wilderness.

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(14:20) **Discipleship:** Paul bore a faithful witness in Lystra and disciplined the believers. The believers of Lystra who are mentioned in Scripture are the lame man (Acts 14:8-10), Timothy (1 Tim.1:2; 2 Tim.3:11), Lois and Eunice, Timothy’s mother and grandmother (2 Tim.1:5).

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| <p><b>1 Task 1: Preach the gospel &amp; make disciples<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p><b>2 Task 2: Be committed to strengthening the church</b><br/> a. By confirming believers<br/> b. By exhorting believers<sup>DS2</sup><br/> c. By warning of persecution<br/> d. By organizing elders<br/> 1) Ordaining<sup>DS3</sup><br/> 2) Praying &amp; fasting<br/> 3) Commending them to the Lord</p> | <p><b>G. Derbe &amp; the Return Journey: How Churches Are Made Strong, 14:21-28</b></p> <p>21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,<br/> 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.<br/> 23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom</p> | <p>they believed.<br/> 24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.<br/> 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:<br/> 26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.<br/> 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.<br/> 28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.</p> | <p>e. By visiting all around &amp; preaching the Word<sup>DS4</sup></p> <p><b>3 Conclusion: Reviving one's own spirit</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**THE FIRST GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO CYPRUS AND GALATIA, 13:1-14:28**

**G. Derbe and the Return Journey: How Churches are Made Strong, 14:21-28**

(14:21-28) **Introduction:** there are two great ministries in the church—that of preaching the gospel and making disciples, and that of strengthening the church. There is terrible neglect in both evangelism and strengthening the church. Just how are churches made strong? This is the lesson of this passage. However, believers must undertake and give themselves to both tasks.

1. Task 1: preach the gospel and make disciples (v.21).
2. Task 2: be committed to strengthening the church (v.21-27).
3. Conclusion: reviving one's own spirit (v.28).

(14:19-28) **Another Outline:** The Great Call and Price Paid by the Missionary.

1. The great cost of ministry: Personal danger (v.19).
2. The great courage required to preach (v.20).
  - a. Paul reentered the city.
  - b. Paul travelled to Derbe.
3. The great price of travelling about (v.21).
4. The great task of confirming the believers (v.21b).
  - a. By exhortation—to continue in the faith (v.22).
  - b. By warning of hardships (v.22).
  - c. By organizing the church (v.23).
  - d. By praying and fasting (v.23b).
  - e. By committing the church to the Lord (v.23c).
5. The great mission of preaching—consistently (v.24-25).
6. The great responsibility to the local church (v.26).
7. The great demand of giving all honor to God (v.27-28).

(14:22-28) **Another Outline:** The Great Call and Price Paid by the Missionary.

1. Exhortation—to continue in the faith (v.22).
2. Warning—must suffer hardship (v.22).
3. Organization (v.23).
4. Praying and fasting (v.23).
5. Trusting—committing the church to the Lord (v.23).
6. Visiting about—where the believers are (v.24).
7. Preaching the Word—consistently (v.25).
8. Acknowledging and reporting to the mother church (v.26-27).
9. Giving all glory to God (v.28).
10. Reviving one's own spirit (v.28).

**1** (14:21) **Preaching—Making Disciples:** the first great task was to preach the gospel and make disciples. Note two challenging facts.

1. The ministry of the preachers (Paul and Barnabas) was to *preach* the gospel (euaggelismenoi). And that is exactly what they did.

“When they were at Salamis, they *preached* the Word of God” (Acts 13:5).

“Paul stood up [in Antioch of Pisidia], and beckoning with his hand *said*, ‘Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, *give audience...*’ “ (Acts 13:16).

“We *declare* unto you glad tidings” (Acts 13:32).

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is *preached* unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things” (Acts 13:38-39).

“Paul and Barnabas...*speaking* to them [of Antioch] *persuaded* them to continue in the grace of God” (Acts 13:43).

“And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city [Antioch] together to *hear the word of God...*and the word of the Lord was *published* throughout all the region” (Acts 13:44, 49).

“In Iconium...they went...into the synagogue...and *so spoke*” (Acts 14:1).

“They *speaking boldly* in the Lord” (Acts 14:3).

“Lystra and Derbe...there they *preached* the gospel” (Acts 14:6-7).

“And when they had *preached* the gospel to that city [Derbe]” (Acts 14:21).

2. The ministry of the preachers (Paul and Barnabas) was to make disciples. The words “had taught many” (matheteusantes hikanous) mean *had made many disciples*. They not only preached, they had taken the believers and made disciples out of them (see note, *Discipleship*—Acts 13:5-6 for discussion).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching [making disciples] them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting [equipping] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:11-12).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(14:21) **Derbe**: the city was the furthestmost frontier city of the Roman empire in Galatia. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) It was about thirty miles from Lystra and lay on the major road running back through the country into Lystra. The Derbe church...

- was founded by Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:20-21).
- was visited by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1) and probably on his third (Acts 18:23).

Gaius, who travelled with Paul to Jerusalem, was a leader in the church at Derbe (Acts 20:4).

**2** (14:21-27) **Minister, Duty—Church—Salvation**: the second great task was to strengthen the churches. A real commitment was needed to accomplish this task. The reasons are clear.

First, the excitement of a new work, that is, of large numbers of receptive people and conversions was over. The remaining people in a community are just not as receptive as the first persons who made decisions. And the longer a church waits to reach out, the more difficult it is to reach people with the gospel. The work of day by day ministry *in the same community* and preaching to and teaching the *same people* are just not as exciting as reaching out into new areas and establishing new works.

Second, strengthening and making true disciples of believers are much more difficult than leading them to Christ. Leading people to Christ involves a one-time decision, but strengthening and making disciples involves...

- many decisions
- many days and months and sometimes years
- the same people over and over
- varied personalities
- different levels of spiritual growth
- different levels of commitment
- different emotions
- different ages
- opposing thoughts and ideas

Note Paul’s commitment. In Derbe he was only 160 miles from his hometown, Tarsus. When he left Derbe, he could have continued on toward Tarsus by travelling over the mountain pass or the Cilician Gates. Remember: when he had first begun to preach, he had ministered in his hometown and throughout Syria for about eleven years. The pull to visit his home and the churches he had established there must have been strong. But the *need* lay with the churches he had more recently founded, and Paul belonged to the Lord. Therefore, he had to return to the churches just established and strengthen them. His return trip gives a clear picture of what is involved in strengthening churches.

1. There was confirming (episterizontes) which means strengthening, making firm, establishing. New converts and churches always stand in danger of...

- wavering
- being lured away
- returning to religious tradition
- slipping back
- not praying faithfully
- being tempted by wordly friends
- not studying the Scripture consistently
- not witnessing

2. There was exhortation (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Preaching*, pt.3—Acts 11:19-30; DEEPER STUDY # 2—14:22 for discussion).

3. There was warning about persecution. The true believer passes through many trials and afflictions while entering into the Kingdom of God. (See outline and notes—Lk.21:12-19 for more discussion.)

- a. The believer will suffer persecution. He must be warned lest he become discouraged and fall away when persecution strikes.

**“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn.15:20).**

**“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that ye doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you” (Jn.16:1-4).**

**“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).**

**“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto” (1 Th.3:3).**

**“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).**

**“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (1 Jn.3:13).**

**“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13).**

- b. The believer is given the most glorious assurance: he shall *pass through* the tribulation or trial. The tribulation will end. The believer will not be swallowed up by the persecution and cast into eternity lost and perishing. If the trial does not end on earth, God will take the believer on to heaven to live in His glorious presence forever.

**“Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim. 4:17-18).**

**“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb.13:6).**

**“And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (Ex.33:14).**

**“But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is.43:1-2).**

4. There was the organizing of the church (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 14:23; also see note, DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Elder*—Tit.1:5-9 for discussion).

5. There was visiting all about and preaching the Word (v.24-25). No doubt believers had been reached throughout the whole district of Galatia. The first believers were bearing testimony with the travelling public as well as with their neighbors. The point to note is this: Paul and Barnabas were *busy*, as busy as they could be moving about and preaching the Word. They were just as busy in following up and strengthening the churches as they had been in establishing them.

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk.4:18-19).**

**“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of**

power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor.2:2-5).

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor.4:5).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

6. There was an acknowledging and reporting to the mother church (v.26-27). Note what was done when Paul and Barnabas returned to the mother church of Antioch.

- a. The church was called together for the most glorious missionary meeting imaginable, the very first missionary report ever given to a mother church.
- b. The two missionaries rehearsed and shared *all that God had done* with them.

**Thought 1.** This is a crucial point: ministers, preachers, and missionaries—all are to be mere instruments in the hand of God. (See note, pts.2, 3—Acts 14:3 for more discussion.)

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).

“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15).

- c. The door of faith was now opened to the Gentiles, that is, to the whole world.

**Thought 1.** This meant three very significant things.

- 1) The door of faith, faith in Christ, was being proclaimed as the presence of God (Jn.14:6; 1 Tim.2:5).
- 2) God was the One who had opened the door. He was the One who had quickened the gospel to their hearts and minds. No man could do that; only God could.
- 3) It was proven that every person can be saved, no matter who they are. And they can be saved by *faith*...
  - apart from law.
  - apart from ritual (circumcision).
  - apart from worldly speculations and myths.
  - apart from humanistic imagination.
  - apart from novel ideas.
  - apart from philosophy.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ro.10:13).

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:4-5).

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit.2:11-12).

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pt.3:9).

#### DEEPER STUDY #2

(14:22) **Faith, The:** the term “continue in the faith” probably means more than just *believing* in Jesus. Paul was probably referring to the *belief* and doctrines of the Christian faith. We must remember that Paul most likely wrote out the basic beliefs for the churches he established. It is difficult to imagine him not leaving them with the written will of God. If pen and parchment were available, as they often were, he certainly would not have left such an important matter as the basic beliefs of Christianity dependent upon the frail memory of human minds. There is little question that he wrote out the doctrines for the Colosse church (Col.1:23) and that he refers to a creed or a set of doctrines when writing to Timothy (1 Tim.5:8). The term “the faith,” that is, teaching the basic beliefs and doctrines of God’s Word (Scripture), tells the minister his task: the minister is to exhort the church, exhort the believers, to continue, persevere, and be steadfast in the faith, in the basic beliefs of the faith.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal.5:1).

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(14:23) **Ordination** (cheirotoneo): to appoint, to elect, to choose by stretching out the hand. The word is used to refer to both God and men's choosing others. Two examples are:

- ⇒ "witnesses *chosen* before of God" (Acts 10:41).
- ⇒ "the brother...who was *chosen* of the churches to travel with us" (2 Cor.8:18-19).

Now note that the seven deacons were first elected by the church and then appointed by the apostles (Acts 6:3-6). The apostles ordained or laid hands upon them.

The same plan was most likely followed by Paul and Barnabas in ordaining elders. (Cp. Tit.1:5.) However, it should always be remembered that the elder or minister was first *chosen* by *the Holy Spirit* (Acts 20:28; 13:2).

Note that ordaining elders or ministers involves three very significant steps.

1. Ordination involves the appointment itself. As just discussed, this involves being ordained or chosen by the Spirit of God, the church, and other ministers.

2. Ordination involves praying and fasting. Choosing and being chosen to be an elder or minister is a serious matter—so serious that prayer needs to be accompanied by fasting. Everything needs to be set aside so that the appointment of the minister may be concentrated upon. God's *choice* must be known, and only His choice must be ordained. The ministry must be protected and safeguarded from false teachers. (See note, *Fasting*—Mt.6:16-18 for more discussion.)

3. Ordination involves commending the minister to the Lord. The word means to entrust, to deposit, to commit into the Lord's keeping. The elder believes in the Lord Jesus, the sovereign Majesty of the universe. Therefore, if the church and other ministers have prayed and fasted and been led by the Lord in ordaining the minister, they can entrust the new minister into the keeping of the Lord's care. And they can be assured that the Lord will keep the new minister.

**"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Lk.10:19).**

**"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Ro.14:4).**

**"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament" (2 Cor.3:6).**

**"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor.9:8).**

**"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Ph.1:6).**

**"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Ph.4:13).**

**"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim.1:12).**

**"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever" (Jude 24-25).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 4**

(14:25) **Attalia**: a seaport of the province of Pamphylia. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) Paul closed out his first missionary journey and sailed back home to Antioch from the city.

**3** (14:28) **Faithfulness**: Paul and Barnabas spent a long time in Antioch reviving their spirits, and no doubt they were also ministering to the believers.

**"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (Jn.21:16).**

**"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal.6:10).**

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| <p><b>1 The basic question about salvation: Is a ritual or ceremony necessary to be saved?</b></p> <p>a. The dissenters<br/>b. The dissension<sup>DS2</sup><br/>c. The decision to seek counsel from the Jerusalem church</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 15</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>VII. THE GREAT JERUSALEM COUNCIL:<sup>DS1</sup><br/>PAUL'S MISSION CALLED INTO QUESTION, 15:1-35</b></p> <p><b>A. The Problem Arises: Two Questions About Salvation, 15:1-5</b></p> <p>And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.</p> <p>2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should</p> | <p>go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.</p> <p>3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.</p> <p>4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.</p> <p>5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.</p> | <p>d. The glorious march of a great church, encouraging &amp; loving God's ministers<br/>e. The utilizing of opportunities to preach</p> <p><b>2 The enlarged question arising about salvation: Does a man have to accept the whole law before he can be saved?</b></p> <p>a. The Antioch messengers were received, &amp; they reported at the first meeting (cp. v.6)<br/>b. The Jerusalem dissenters<sup>DS3</sup><br/>c. The enlarged discussion<sup>DS4</sup></p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**THE GREAT JERUSALEM COUNCIL: PAUL'S MISSION CALLED INTO QUESTION, 15:1-35**

**A. The Problem Arises: Two Questions About Salvation, 15:1-5**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(15:1-35) **Jerusalem Council:** if this is the same council covered in Gal.2:1-10, then the men who opposed Paul included Peter (Gal.2:11; cp. Gal.2:2-10) and Barnabas (Gal.2:13). However, it must be noted that this passage says that Barnabas stood with Paul against the Judaizers. This is one of several reasons why some commentators hold that Paul's private meetings with the apostles took place during his famine or second visit to Jerusalem (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.1:17-24. Cp. Gal.2:1.)

(15:1-5) **Introduction:** this is the story of the great Jerusalem council. It is called great because...

- all the apostles were involved in its discussion and decision.
- the council declared forever that a man is saved apart from ritual, saved by the grace of God through faith alone.

Two questions arose about salvation.

1. The basic question about salvation: Is a ritual or ceremony necessary to be saved? (v.1-3).
2. The enlarged question about salvation: Does a man have to accept the whole law before he can be saved? (v.4-5).

**I** (15:1-3) **Salvation vs. Ritual:** the basic question arising about salvation. Is a ritual or ceremony necessary to be saved? Note five significant points.

1. The dissenters from the Judean churches were a powerful force, so powerful that their argument and emphasis have continued down through the centuries. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Judaizers*—Gal.2:4 for more discussion.) Note that the visitors from Jerusalem moved among the Antioch believers and taught their own ideas. The dissenters were...

- teachers and leaders.
- well-versed in the Scripture.
- some of the very first believers, considered mature.
- elder statesmen.
- esteemed highly.

Therefore, what they said was considered very important. The problem was this: if the dissenters were allowed to continue, the believers of Antioch were bound to become upset and confused. The result would have been explosive and devastating: the Antioch church would have been split and its ministry and witness made ineffective.

2. Scripture clearly declares what the dissension was; there can be no mistake about what was being said: "Except ye be circumcised [undergo this ritual]...ye cannot be saved." Note three critical facts.

- a. A person's eternal fate was at stake. The dissenters did not say you should undergo the ritual...
- to be obedient to Scripture
  - to please God
  - to please the church
  - to demonstrate your love
  - to identify with believers
  - to keep from being a stumbling block

The dissenters were saying believers must undergo the ritual and be circumcised *to be saved*. They were saying it was the ritual, the circumcision that *saved* them; a believer was just not saved unless he was *ritualized*. They were claiming salvation was...

- God's grace plus a ritual.
  - God's grace plus man's own hand.
  - God's grace plus man's own work.
  - a spiritual thing (God) plus a physical thing (circumcision).
- b. The issue was not whether a believer should be circumcised. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Circumcision*—Acts 15:1; 10:1-33 for more discussion.) Paul never said that circumcision was wrong. He maintained that since Christ had come, circumcision was a personal matter and a matter of conscience. If a person wished to be circumcised, let him be. Down through the centuries a host of Gentile believers (even two thousand years after Christ) have been circumcised and not become Jews. The physical act of circumcision does not make a person a Jew any more than any other physical ritual makes a person a member of any other race. It is the *nature and commitment* of one's body, mind, and soul that makes a person a true member of a race or of anything else.
- Again, the issue was not whether a person should be circumcised or *ritualized*, but whether a ritual was necessary to be saved. The answer was critical, affecting all generations of believers. The answer would determine a man's *primary* relationship to Jesus Christ: Is a man's confrontation and saving experience to be focused upon Jesus Christ *or* upon *Jesus Christ and something else*?
- ⇒ Is a person's mind and attention to be upon Jesus *alone*, or upon Jesus and a ritual?
  - ⇒ Is a person's faith to be in Jesus *alone*, or in Jesus and a ritual?
  - ⇒ Is a person's profession to declare Jesus *alone*, or Jesus and a ritual?
  - ⇒ Is a person's life to bear testimony to Jesus *alone*, or to Jesus and a ritual?
  - ⇒ Is a person's witness to be Jesus *alone*, or Jesus and a ritual?

Does God save a person whose body, mind, and soul are focused upon His Son *alone* or upon Jesus *and*...

- some ritual?
- some ceremony?
- some act?
- some work?
- some human effort?
- some physical substance?

The answer should be clear to all who think and are *honest and unselfish*. God has *only* one Son who loves Him supremely, only one Son who has proven His love by obeying God supremely, even to the point of suffering for all the sins of the world. And God loves His dear Son supremely.

- ⇒ Could God add anything to the plan of salvation, add anything that would divert man's attention from His Son, especially in the very first moments of confrontation?
- ⇒ Could God want a man's mind to be upon anything other than His Son, to be upon rushing to *experience* some ritual instead of focusing his attention solely upon His dear Son?
- ⇒ Is it possible that something else is needed other than Jesus Himself?
- ⇒ Is there *honestly* some physical substance needed in addition to God's only Son?
- ⇒ Is there really a ritual, an ordinance, that has a heart that can reach out and save a man from death? Or, do people alone have hearts, and the Person of God alone have the heart of salvation?

This does not mean a person is not to be baptized or not to share in any other ritual or ordinance. A person who has his eyes upon Jesus Christ is focusing upon Jesus Christ, and that means he is immediately following Jesus through the very first act of the Christian life—being baptized. But in every instance, the man is saved and owes his salvation to the Lord Jesus Christ and to Him alone. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Baptism*—Acts 2:38 for more discussion.)

- c. Paul and Barnabas argued time and again against this teaching, declaring that ritual (circumcision) is not necessary for salvation. Note the words, "no small dissension and disputation [questioning]." The arguments...
- were frequent and long.
  - involved the questioning and challenging of each other as well as dissension.
  - were unyielding, with neither side giving an inch.

The issue was bound to be critical to Paul or else he would not have gone to such limits in arguing the point. Paul's great commitment to the Lord would not allow him to waste time in useless argument (cp. 2 Tim.2:16, 23-26). This fact alone should speak to the hearts of any who stand on the other side.

3. There was the decision of the Antioch church to seek counsel from the Jerusalem church. The Antioch church had no doubt about its position. Note that the Antioch church was not seeking for the Jerusalem church to enlighten them on the doctrine of salvation. The church sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem for three reasons.
- a. God told Paul to go: "I went up by revelation" (Gal.2:2). God willed a great church council (one that would include the earliest apostles)—a council that would issue a great verdict proclaiming the truth to every generation.
  - b. A declaration by the apostles would carry great weight and help tremendously in silencing those who would add a ritual to the requirements for salvation.
  - c. A declaration by the Jerusalem church would provide a great weapon to use in the struggle against "ritual salvation." The Jerusalem church was the *ritual* center, the home base of those preaching the error. Therefore, if the Jerusalem church would issue a strong verdict denying the necessity of ritual for salvation, the position of "salvation by grace" alone would be greatly strengthened.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).

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

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:4-5).

4. There was the triumphant and glorious march of a great church, encouraging and loving God’s servants. Note the revealing words, “And being brought on their way by the church.” As Paul and Barnabas began their journey to Jerusalem, a great company from the Antioch church escorted them as a mark of great affection and honor. Despite the ever present opposition to Paul that seemed to be in practically every church, there were some believers who loved and respected him deeply.

“Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship” (Acts 20:38).

“And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed” (Acts 21:5).

“Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well” (3 Jn.6. See note—Acts 28:15.)

5. The servants utilized every opportunity to preach. As Paul and Barnabas travelled toward Jerusalem, they *proclaimed Christ to the believers* where churches had been founded. They also proclaimed the great movement of God that had taken place among the Gentiles. Note the “great joy” of the Christian brothers.

⇒ The Phenician churches were founded by laymen over a decade before (cp. Acts 11:19).

⇒ The Samaritan churches had been founded by Philip and Peter and John (cp. Acts 8:5, 25).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mt.16:15).

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor.2:2-5).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(15:1) **Circumcision:** before Christ, circumcision had been the physical sign that a man was a follower of the true God. It was the sign that a man believed the promises that God had made to Abraham and Israel (cp. Gen.17:10-14; Ro.4:11). God never intended circumcision to have any value other than being a sign. It was not meant to bring righteousness to any man—not even to Abraham (Ro.4:9-10). It was given only as a sign, a sign of the faith that a man already had in God’s promises. Righteousness was imputed to the man because he believed God’s promises; then the man was circumcised as a sign of his faith in God (Ro.4:11-12).

However, many abused God’s purpose for circumcision.

1. Some made circumcision a substitute for true righteousness. A man was thought to be safe and secure in the arms of God if he was circumcised. Believing God and loving men had little to do with being a child of God. Many forgot the circumcision of a pure heart and became Jews of the circumcision in name only. Circumcision became merely a hand-made, external, physical sign.

2. Some used circumcision as a way to divide and categorize people. A great wall of division was thrown up around the uncircumcised (cp. 1 Sam.17:26, 36; 2 Sam.1:20). Any man who was uncircumcised was thought to be *cut off* and *far*

off, not only from those thought to be the people of God (the Jews and the circumcised), but from God Himself. An uncircumcised man was looked upon with bitter contempt. In the mind of the Jew, God was thought to love only Israel, despising and rejecting the Gentile nations.

3. God has done away with circumcision as a sign of righteousness since Christ has come (Gal.5:6; 6:15; Col.2:11). Righteousness is now of the heart and in the spirit, not in the letter of rules and regulations (cp. Ro.2:25-29; 4:8-12, 23-25). The truly righteous man is the man who is God's *inwardly*—the man whose spirit has been *recreated* into the very nature of God. God's very own righteous nature is implanted into the very nature of man when he is *born again*. A man *born again* by the Spirit of God is God's *new creation* (Jn.3:3f; 2 Cor.5:17; 1 Pt.1:20; 2 Pt.1:4).

**2** (15:4-5) **Salvation**: the enlarged question arising about salvation. Does a man have to accept the whole law before he can be saved? Note three points:

1. Paul and his company were received and welcomed by the Jerusalem church, including the apostles and elders. They *all* seemed to be present; the council was a critical session. The word "received" (*paredechthesan*) has the idea of a formal meeting of the church. Paul was reporting to "the church...the apostles and elders" in a called meeting. Apparently there were two days of meetings (v.4, 6).

Note that Paul declared "all things that God had done." The saving of men "by grace through faith" was not his doing. God was the One who was accepting people through faith alone.

2. The Jerusalem dissenters were "of the sect of Pharisees which believed" (see DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Pharisees*—Acts 15:5; 23:8 for discussion).

3. The enlarged discussion (see DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Salvation*—Acts 15:5; 10:1-33; 10:11-16 for discussion).

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(15:5) **Pharisees**: apparently there was a large number of Pharisees who accepted Jesus as the true Messiah after His death and resurrection. This would be a natural result to an honest and thinking Pharisee.

1. The Pharisee was looking for the Messiah to come. He knew the Scriptures. Therefore, when he heard the apostles prove from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah, he was bound to see the evidence. If he had an honest and open heart he would be touched and convicted by the Holy Spirit and converted.

2. The Pharisee would tend...

- to see Jesus as the fulfillment of Judaism, not the replacement of it.
- to see Jesus as an addition to the law, not replacing or embracing the law.
- to see Jesus adding belief to ritual, not replacing ritual.
- to see Jesus adding baptism to the ordinances, not replacing the ordinance.

Simply stated, the Pharisee, because of his extensive training and lifetime commitment to the keeping of the law, would be very slow to give up the law. He would be slow to rest completely in Jesus' righteousness. But note: Scripture says some did make a complete break. There were only "certain ones" who rose up against the message of salvation by faith alone (v.5).

### DEEPER STUDY #4

(15:5) **Salvation—Works**: note that the question in Jerusalem became much larger than mere circumcision. In Antioch the question had been, "Does a man have to be circumcised to be saved?" In Jerusalem the enlarged question was, "Does a man have to keep the whole law to be saved and accepted into the church? Does he have to accept the law as well as accept Christ?" (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.2:4.)

The root question is for all generations.

- ⇒ Can a man earn the favor of God? Or does he receive the favor of God?
- ⇒ Is he acceptable to God because he keeps the law? Or is he saved by confessing that he breaks the law and is utterly dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ?
- ⇒ Does he work to make himself righteous? Or does he cast himself upon Jesus' righteousness?
- ⇒ Does he say, "Lord, I come in my own righteousness"? Or, "Lord, I come in Jesus' righteousness"?
- ⇒ Does he say, "Lord, I come offering my own package of works"? Or, "Lord, I come needing your mercy for coming short"?
- ⇒ Does he come to God to be praised for what he has achieved by his own hands and efforts? Or does he come to praise God for what God has done for him in Jesus?
- ⇒ Is man to receive the glory because he has done good? Or is the glory to be lifted up to God for who He is and what He has done?

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| <p><b>1 The council met a second time</b> (cp. v.45)</p> <p><b>2 Peter's great statement: All are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ</b></p> <p>a. He recalled that God had saved Cornelius &amp; his house</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Believed while hearing the Word</li> <li>2) God gave the Holy Spirit while believing (before baptism)</li> <li>3) God cleansed their hearts—by faith (not by a ritual)</li> </ol> <p>b. He confessed the yoke of the law: Man's inability to keep it</p> <p>c. He reminded them of their basic belief: We are saved by grace</p> <p><b>3 Paul &amp; Barnabas' great declaration: God alone wrought miracles &amp; wonders to verify the message—salvation by grace</b></p> <p><b>4 James' great declaration: All men must be able to turn to God apart from the burden of ritual &amp; law</b></p> <p>a. He supported Peter's</p> | <p><b>B. The Jerusalem Council Meets: The Great Declaration on Salvation, 15:6-22</b></p> <p>6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.</p> <p>7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.</p> <p>8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;</p> <p>9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.</p> <p>10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?</p> <p>11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.</p> <p>12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.</p> <p>13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:</p> <p>14 Simeon hath declared</p> | <p>how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.</p> <p>15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,</p> <p>16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:</p> <p>17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.</p> <p>18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.</p> <p>19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:</p> <p>20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.</p> <p>21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.</p> <p>22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:</p> | <p>great declaration</p> <p>b. He quoted Scripture as support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Lord is to return</li> <li>2) There will be Jewish believers</li> <li>3) There will be Gentile believers</li> </ol> <p>c. He claimed God's foreknowledge &amp; providence in this matter</p> <p>d. He recommended a written exhortation, not burdening rules</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That no man be hindered from turning to God</li> <li>2) That all men live as they should</li> <li>3) That no man offend or be a stumbling block to another</li> </ol> <p><b>5 The council's decision: Agreement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To send representatives to the churches</li> <li>b. To write formal letters of the decision, v.23</li> </ol> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**THE GREAT JERUSALEM COUNCIL: PAUL'S MISSION CALLED INTO QUESTION, 15:1-35**

**B. The Jerusalem Council Meets: The Great Declaration on Salvation, 15:6-22**

(15:6-22) **Introduction:** this passage covers one of the most important church council meetings ever held. It is the great declaration on salvation.

1. The council met a second time (v.6).
2. Peter's great statement: all are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (v.7-11).
3. Paul and Barnabas' great declaration: God alone wrought miracles and wonders to verify the message—salvation by grace (v.12).
4. James' great declaration: all men must be able to turn to God apart from the burden of ritual and the law (v.13-21).
5. The council's decision: agreement (v.22).

**1** (15:6) **Church, Council Meeting:** the great Jerusalem council met a second time. The whole church was meeting—the apostles, the elders, and the people (v.12, 22). Once again, the scene is that of an extremely important council meeting, the importance of which cannot be overstressed. Note the sensitive consideration being shown by the leaders. The apostles were not *lording* it over the elders, nor the elders over the people. The issue being considered was of such great magnitude that the leaders were demonstrating humility and sensitivity to the needs of all. Note also there was “much disputing.” No one was ignored or silenced. All were allowed to say what they thought.

**2** (15:7-11) **Salvation:** Peter's great declaration—all people are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter drove home three points.

1. Peter recalled that it was God and God alone who saved the Gentiles, that is, Cornelius and his house. The event had taken place *some ten years before*, but it was given and established by God to be the example and the pattern which the church was to follow (v.10. Note this is important, a critical point for every church to heed in every generation.) The event had been planned, initiated, and executed from beginning to end by God and God alone (cp. Acts 10:1-48; see outline and notes—Acts 10:44-48 for more discussion).

- a. Cornelius and his house had believed the Word *while* Peter was in the process of preaching the Word. They believed *while* they were listening and hearing the Word.
- b. God had given the Holy Spirit *while* they were believing the Word. Note how Peter stressed that salvation is the act of God.
  - ⇒ God “knew their hearts,” that they were believing within their hearts. God and God alone knows the heart.
  - ⇒ God bore witness to the belief of their hearts.
  - ⇒ God bore witness by giving the Holy Spirit to them.
  - ⇒ God gave the Holy Spirit by His act alone (not by baptism nor by laying on of men's hands).
  - ⇒ God gave the Holy Spirit just as He did to the Jews.
- c. God cleansed their hearts by faith. The stress is upon the word *faith*, not upon ritual or ceremony. Again, the stress is upon God. God knows the heart, when a man believes, when a man's heart is moved toward the Lord Jesus, grasping and believing what Jesus has done for him. When God sees that, He cleanses the man's heart.

2. Peter confessed the yoke of the law; he confessed man's inability to keep the law. This was a question, but note it was also a serious charge: “Why tempt ye God?” Peter said that God had already demonstrated the truth about salvation. The matter was made known clearly and unmistakably in the experience of Cornelius. If a person declares that a man is saved by God's grace *plus* a ritual or the law, he tempts God; he prescribes and dictates to God. He questions...

- what God has already done.
- if God knew what he was doing.
- if what God had done was best.

Questioning God is, of course, walking upon sinking sand. It is very dangerous. Note what Peter said about the law.

- a. The law is a “yoke,” a burden. The picture is that of the oxen yoke (cp. Mt.11:29-30; 23:4; Gal.5:1). To insist that a man...
  - undergo a ritual,
  - accept the law
 ...in order to be saved is to put a yoke upon a man, a yoke that no man can bear.
- b. No man can keep the law; the Jews had proven the fact (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Law*—Gal.3:10 for discussion).

3. Peter reminded the church of their basic belief: all men are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter declared the doctrine of salvation. It was the very same as Paul's (cp. Eph.2:8-9). All men are saved in the same way: “through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

**“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:23-24).**

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

**“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:4-7).**

**3** (15:12) **Salvation, Source:** Paul and Barnabas' great declaration—God and God alone has wrought miracles and wonders to verify the message of salvation by grace. Note the stress is “miracles and wonders,” not points and arguments. Why? God's miracles show clearly that He approves the preaching of Paul and Barnabas. The message, “By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves,” is verified and proven by God's stamp of approval.

One may wonder if Paul asked the question he asked of the Galatians:

**“Received ye the Spirit by the work of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Gal.3:2).**

**4** (15:13-21) **Salvation, Source:** James' great declaration—all men must be able to turn to God apart from the burden of ritual and law. James was the Lord's brother. (See Introduction, *Author*—James, for more discussion.) Apparently, he was the leading elder or minister of the church at Jerusalem. Note four points.

1. James supported Peter's great declaration. The way James worded his support is significant.
  - ⇒ “God...did visit the Gentiles” (epeskepsato): looked upon, oversaw, cared for, looked after, provided for the Gentiles.
  - ⇒ “to take *out of them* a people”: to choose; to appoint; to remove them from the Gentile nations and select a chosen people. The word “people” (laon) is the same word used of the Jewish people (cp. Acts 10:2). The point is that God was calling *a new people out*—a new body, a new nation, a new race—to be His chosen people, just as He had done with Abraham and the Jews. (See DEEPER STUDY # 8, pt.6—Mt.21:43; notes—Eph.2:11-18; 2:14-15; 2:19-22; 4:17-19 for more discussion.)

⇒ “For His name”: two verses clearly show what God means by choosing a people “for His name.”

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Is.43:10).

“For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory” (Jer.13:11).

2. James declared that Scripture supported the truth. God *calls out* people from both the Jews and the Gentiles. He quoted Amos 9:11-12 and applied it to Jesus Christ and believers. God promised three things.
  - a. “I will return.” This is referring to the first coming of Jesus Christ. And He had come—no one present would deny that.
  - b. There will be Jewish believers: “The tabernacle of David” refers to believing Jews, the true tabernacle or true body of Jews. James was applying the prophecy to the present situation. The people of David, the true indestructible tabernacle of David, the true body of David (believing Jews) will be “built up again...I [God] will set it [them] up.”
  - c. There will be Gentile believers, believers who...
    - seek the Lord.
    - are called and known by God’s name.
3. James declared that God *foreknew* and *destined* from the beginning of the world...
  - salvation by faith.
  - salvation to all men who seek the Lord and become identified with Him.

This is and always has been the purpose of God (cp. Ro.16:25-27; Eph.3:8-9). And He is now bringing His purpose to pass.

4. James recommended a written exhortation instead of burdening rules. He did this for three reasons.
  - a. That no man be troubled or hindered from turning to God by rituals and law. All men cannot keep a ritual. All who can should, but some are just not able to keep a ritual due to such things as birth defects, injury, disease, or paralysis. And although everyone should obey God, no one is capable of keeping the law, not perfectly. Therefore, no one is saved by the law. The only hope of salvation is for man to turn to God and *trust* God to accept him simply because God loves that much.
  - b. That all men live as they should. Note the great significance of the sins which James listed...
    - idolatry: following and sacrificing to the gods of man’s imaginations and desires; partaking of things that pertain to idols (v.29).

“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with *idolaters*; for then must ye needs go out of the world” (1 Cor.5:9-10).

- fornication: all forms of immorality.

“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with *fornicators*: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world...for then must ye needs go out of the world” (1 Cor.5:9-10).

- “things strangled”: the sin of indulgence, of going against God’s law and fulfilling one’s own desire. Specifically, it refers to eating forbidden meats, to the dietary laws of the Jews (see note—Acts 10:11-16).

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Ro.7:18).

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Ro.8:8).

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die” (Ro.8:13).

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal.5:17).

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal.6:8).

“Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Ph.3:19).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

- “blood”: may refer to murder or to the blood of animals. It probably refers to murder.

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is *angry* with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Mt.5:21-22).

“Whosoever *hateth* his brother is a murderer” (1 Jn.3:15).

“He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness” (Mt.19:18).

“But let none of you suffer as a murderer” (1 Pt.4:15).

## ACTS 15:6-22

Note: these four sins are the sins so common to mankind as a whole.

- c. That no man offend or be a stumbling block to another. The sins listed by James were very offensive to the believing Jews. They were often preached against by Jewish rabbis. James stressed this fact, pointing out that keeping these four simple exhortations would please the body of Jewish believers, the strict religionists.

**5** (15:22) **Church:** the church council's decision was agreement. Note two points.

1. The whole church agreed with what had been proclaimed, at least officially.
2. The church went beyond the decision, reaching out to settle whatever disturbance and doubt existed. It reached out by sending two chief ministers back to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. The two men would..
  - reinforce the message of the decision: salvation is by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and nothing else (v.11).
  - exhort the new believers in the faith, and assure them that the message of the Judaizers was error.

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|   | <p><b>C. The Formal Decree of the Council: The Great Decree on Salvation, 15:23-35</b></p>  | <p>lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;</p>  |   |
| <p><b>1 There was the attitude that brought about the decree: Humility</b></p>  | <p>23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:</p>                          | <p>29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.</p> |   |
| <p><b>2 There was the declaration of the decree: Ritual &amp; law are not necessary to salvation; the dissenters were rebuked</b></p> | <p>24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:</p> | <p>30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:</p>   | <p><b>5 There were the glorious results</b></p>                                     |
| <p><b>3 There were the men chosen to proclaim the truth</b></p>   | <p>25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,</p>  | <p>31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.</p>  | <p>a. Brought about great rejoicing</p>   |
| <p>a. Men beloved, proven, &amp; experienced: Paul &amp; Barnabas</p>   | <p>26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.</p>   | <p>32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.</p>   | <p>b. Brought about great exhortation</p>   |
| <p>b. Men chosen as worthy exponents: Judas &amp; Silas</p>   | <p>27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.</p>   | <p>33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.</p>  | <p>c. Brought about the discovery of a great missionary—Silas<sup>DS1</sup></p>     |
| <p><b>4 There were the few rules that were necessary</b></p>  | <p>28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to</p>   | <p>34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.</p>  | <p>d. Brought about a great teaching &amp; preaching ministry within the church</p> |

**DIVISION VII**

**THE GREAT JERUSALEM COUNCIL: PAUL'S MISSION CALLED INTO QUESTION, 15:1-35**

**C. The Formal Decree of the Council: The Great Decree on Salvation, 15:23-35**

(15:23-35) **Introduction:** the great decree of salvation issued by the early church should have settled the issue forever. There is no question: salvation is “through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v.11). But some people still insist on adding to the plan of salvation. For this reason, the great decree of salvation needs to be proclaimed and taught time and again.

1. There was the attitude that brought about the decree: humility (v.23).
2. There was the declaration of the decree: ritual and law are not necessary to salvation; the dissenters were rebuked (v.24).
3. There were the men chosen to proclaim the truth (v.25-27).
4. There were the few rules that were necessary (v.28-29).
5. There were the glorious results (v.30-35).

**1** (15:23) **Humility:** there was the attitude that brought about the decree—humility. The leaders, the apostles and elders, placed themselves on an equal level with the brothers of the church. There was no sign of exaltation or superiority or of exalting one’s position; no claim that they had the authority to speak for the church. They humbly declared that the decision was a decision of all the brothers. The oldest and best manuscripts read “the apostles and elders, brothers send greetings to the brothers which are of the Gentiles...” In this reading the apostles and elders were writing as brothers to brothers, placing themselves on the same level as the brothers among the Gentiles.

In either case, the point is well made. The great decree of salvation is based upon humility. Everyone involved, and in particular the leaders, including the apostles themselves, realized that they were humble recipients of salvation just as all other men were. They were all “brothers in the Lord.” They all stood on an equal footing, no one above another, not in the great decree of salvation. No one had the authority to lord it over another person, not in the area of salvation. Before the Lord, all men are brothers. All are saved alike, “through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” (v.11).

“But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” (Mt.3:14).

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:4).

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Ph.2:4-5).

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim.1:15).

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Jas.4:10).

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pt.5:5).

“A man’s pride shall bring him low; but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Pr.29:23).

**Thought 1.** For an interesting study, take a concordance and look up the word “brothers.”

**2** (15:24) **Salvation—Ritual—Law—Grace:** there was the declaration of the decree—ritual and law are not necessary to salvation. No matter what anyone teaches, no matter who they are or how influential they are, salvation is...

- “by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” and by Him alone. Ritual and law are not necessary (v.11).
- “by the miracles and wonders of God” and by Him alone (v.12).
- by turning to God and turning to Him alone (v.19).

The persons who taught otherwise, the false teachers, were strongly rebuked.

1. They troubled believers with their words. The picture is that of words heaped upon words, false words that “trouble” (etaraxan), agitate, disturb, and shake violently. But note: the false teachers proclaimed mere words, empty words, and the believers must always remember this. Salvation is by grace alone and nothing is to be added to it. God and God alone saves. A man either accepts God’s salvation or rejects it. It is that simple. Man can do nothing to earn salvation.

2. They “subverted” (anaskeuazontes) the believers’ souls. The word means to devastate, to plunder, to dismantle, to ravage, to wreck, to cause havoc.

3. They were never commissioned by the church. The message of the early church was declared:

“And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things” (Acts 5:11).

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph.2:8-9).

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Tit.2:11).

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:4-7).

Anyone who adds, “Ye must be circumcised [undergo a ritual] and keep the law: to [them] we gave no such commandment.”

Note how strong the rebuke was. The Judaizers or legalists (then and now, through all generations) were strongly rebuked. Paul went even further and warned:

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal.1:6-9).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim.4:1-2).

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim.4:3-4).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).

**3** (15:25-27) **Ministers:** there were the men chosen to proclaim the truth. Note what the church council did.

1. The church sent forth Barnabas and Saul as men who had proclaimed the truth. The Judaizers (legalists) had accused them of *having* the gospel, but they had not. They had declared the truth: salvation is “by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,” and they had risked their lives to declare the truth. Therefore, the church called the men beloved.

**Thought 1.** The church should call all ministers beloved who proclaim the truth of salvation by grace. Men tend to *add* to salvation. The very nature of man desires to work, to have a part, to receive some credit. It is very difficult for man to confess he is depraved, totally unable to do a thing to save himself.

**Thought 2.** What the church needs is men and women who will *hazard* (risk) their lives for the *name* of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Mt.16:24-25).

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Mt.19:29).

“And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:27).

“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41).

“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb.11:24-25).

2. The church sent forth two chosen exponents and prophets, Judas and Silas. These men were prophets (v.32), worthy men, men gifted by the Holy Spirit; therefore, they were chosen by the church to go forth and declare the great decree of salvation. Note that the decree was so important that the written message was not enough. It must have exponents...

- who knew the “same things,” the truth of salvation.
- who could proclaim and tell the “same things,” the truth by word of *mouth*.

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32).

“And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard” (Acts 22:14-15).

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts 26:22).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).

**4** (15:28-29) **Holy Spirit—Purity:** there were the few rules that were necessary. Note two significant points.

1. The Holy Spirit and the church were both involved in the decision. The Holy Spirit led and guided the church to declare salvation “through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” (v.11).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Ro.8:14).

2. The necessary rules were not given for the purpose of saving men, but for the believers’ welfare. By doing these things the believers “do well” (en praxete), that is, fare well and experience good—love, joy, peace—both within their own hearts and lives and between themselves and other believers. (See note, pt.4—Acts 15:13-21 for discussion of the four necessary rules.)

“Keep thyself pure” (1 Tim.5:22).

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jas.1:27).

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 Jn.5:21).

**“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 21).**

**5** (15:30-35) **Salvation:** there were the glorious results of free salvation. When the four men arrived in Antioch, the whole church was called together and the great decree on salvation was read. When it was read, four great results occurred. Note how God took the dissension and its subsequent events and worked it all out for the good of the Antioch church and for the cause of Christ. The results were fourfold.

1. There was great *“rejoicing”* (echarisan): joy, gladness, rejoicing over the consolation (parakleseis), that is, over the encouragement and help given by the Jerusalem church.

2. There was great *“exhortation.”* Note that it was Silas and Judas who were exhorting and confirming the faith of the Antioch believers. Note also the phrase *“many words.”* They exhorted for a long time, building the believers up more and more, assuring them of their faith in the Lord Jesus. They were saved by the grace of God and His grace alone, and the two visiting preachers wanted the believers to know that the apostles and elders of the great Jerusalem church confirmed the glorious truth.

**Thought 1.** There is absolutely no question whatsoever about the stand that the early church took on the great declaration of salvation: salvation is *“by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ”* and by Him alone.

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

**“[God] who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:4-6).**

3. There was the discovery of the great missionary, Silas. The oldest Greek manuscripts do not include this verse (note the word *“they”* in v.33). Some scholars feel it was added at a later date because Silas appears with Paul in Acts 15:40. There was, of course, plenty of time for Silas to travel to Jerusalem and report back to the church, and then to return to Antioch before Paul left on his second missionary journey. Other scholars believe the verse was in the original manuscript. No matter who is accurate, Silas and his great gift from God were discovered by Paul at Antioch, and apparently Paul invited him to join the great mission thrust. (See note, *Silas—Acts 15:34* for more discussion.)

4. A great teaching ministry grew within the church. Note three striking points.

a. Paul and Barnabas were busy teaching and preaching. They were not idle.

b. There were many teachers and preachers in the church, and none of them were idle. They were all teaching and preaching.

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).**

**“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

c. The message they taught and preached was *“the Word of the Lord,”* not their own theories and ideas.

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

**“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)” (Acts 10:36).**

**“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:1-2).**

**“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor.4:5).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(15:34) **Silas:** Silas became one of the great missionaries of the early church (cp. Acts 15:40). He was an outstanding believer; a disciple and a close companion of Paul. He was apparently a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37). Silas...

- was a leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:27).
- was sent to Antioch to share the great decree of salvation (Acts 15:27, 32-33).
- was a prophet (Acts 15:32).
- was a disciple of Paul, joining Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:40).
- was imprisoned with Paul (Acts 16:19-40).
- remained in Berea with Timothy to minister to the believers (Acts 17:14).
- was with Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5; 2 Cor.1:19).
- ministered with Peter, apparently after Paul’s death (1 Pt.5:12).
- is mentioned in the following New Testament books: 1 Th.1:1; 2 Th.1:1; 2 Cor.1:19; 1 Pt.5:12.

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| <p><b>1 The cause of honest conflict</b><br/> a. Genuine concern: For the church's mission</p> <p>b. Genuine differences: How to do the mission</p> | <p><b>VIII. THE SECOND GREAT MISSION PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22</b></p> <p><b>A. The Journey Begins in Controversy: A Study on Honest Conflict, 15:36-41</b></p> <p>36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.</p> <p>37 And Barnabas determined to take with them</p> | <p>John, whose surname was Mark.</p> <p>38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.</p> <p>39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;</p> <p>40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.</p> <p>41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.</p> | <p>1) Barnabas: Felt Mark was recommitted—should be taken</p> <p>2) Paul: Felt Mark was a deserter, a poor example for churches</p> <p><b>2 The sad result of honest conflict: Division &amp; loss</b></p> <p><b>3 The good result of honest conflict: God overrules—two mission teams were sent forth</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**A. The Journey Begins in Controversy: A Study on Honest Conflict, 15:36-41**

(15:36-41) **Introduction:** the world is full of conflict, and most conflict is by far selfish and evil. However, there is an honest conflict, an honest holding of different opinions. This passage is an excellent study of the latter, that is, of honest conflict.

1. The cause of honest conflict (v.36-38).
2. The sad result of honest conflict: division and loss (v.39).
3. The good result of honest conflict: God overrules—two mission teams were sent forth (v.39-41).

**1** (15:36-38) **Conflict—Division:** the cause of honest conflict. Note two significant points.

1. Honest conflict arises from a *genuine* concern. The concern is not personal, not selfish, not self-serving. The conflict does not exist because a person is...

- exerting his authority
- trying to get his own way
- resisting change
- maintaining tradition
- seeking his own purposes
- jealous of the other person
- seeking to keep things as they are

This very fact is clearly seen between Paul and Barnabas. Paul was the person who made the suggestion to revisit the mission churches, and Barnabas agreed. He was just as determined to go as Paul was (v.37). They both had a genuine concern for the Lord's mission. In fact, the concern was as deep as it could be. They were both determined to visit "every city where [they had] preached the word of the Lord." Their concern was all-embracing, not willing that any should be left untouched or slighted in the ministry.

The point is that each man was as concerned as the other. Their concern for the Lord's work was genuine.

2. Honest conflict arises from a genuine difference, a difference that focuses upon how best to carry out the mission of the Lord. This is critical to see.

⇒ The difference was not over the mission. Every believer is to be concerned and committed to the mission of the Lord, to visit his brothers in "every city where [he has] preached the word of the Lord." Every church is to be exhorted and helped in every way possible in every generation. The difference cannot and must not be *in the mission*. If it is, then the conflict is not honest; it is false and selfish.

⇒ The difference was over method, how to best carry out the mission.

This difference is clearly seen in what happened to Paul and Barnabas.

a. Barnabas believed the best way to accomplish the task was to take Mark along. This fact is evident from three things.

⇒ First, Mark had failed and disproven himself once (see note 6—Acts 13:13). Barnabas never would have insisted on Mark going along unless he knew Mark had recommitted his life—not insisted as strongly as he did. The Greek says he stuck to his insistence. Note something else as well: Mark desperately wanted to go; wanted Barnabas to continue to take a stand for him. Apparently Mark felt strongly that God wanted him to be a missionary and he wanted a second chance. He wanted a chance to redeem and prove himself. Barnabas, the son of consolation, the great servant of God who was always reaching out to help those under attack even as he had Paul, reached out to help another young disciple (Acts 9:27; 11:25-26).

- ⇒ Second, Barnabas loved Paul dearly. He had been a spiritual father or brother to Paul, more so than anyone else, and he had witnessed God gifting Paul to take the lead in worldwide evangelism. Barnabas rejoiced in all he had witnessed as God had matured and used Paul. Barnabas never would have opposed Paul unless he was convinced he was right.
- ⇒ Third, Barnabas had already been wrong once in differing with Paul (cp. Gal.2:11-13). When Peter came down to Antioch to visit the church, he joined right in, fellowshiping and eating with the Gentiles. But some of the Judaizers who came down later criticized Peter; and Peter withdrew from eating with the Gentiles. The conflict had become so sharp that even Barnabas was affected and withdrew from eating with the Gentiles. Just when this happened is unknown, but the heavy weight of Scripture is that it had happened before the second missionary journey began.

The point is this: Barnabas would not be opposing Paul over taking Mark unless he genuinely differed, being thoroughly convinced of his position.

- b. Paul differed with Barnabas. Very simply, he believed that a deserter was a *poor example* for young churches who needed to be strengthened.

Again, the point to see is this: the conflict between Paul and Barnabas was honest. From the Scripture, both men were as determined as they could be to carry out the mission of the Lord. The only question was how best to do it; in their particular case, who was really needed to do the job most effectively?

**Thought 1.** As long as men are on the earth, there will be conflict. There always has been and always will be. Tragically, the conflict is usually selfish. The believer must always search his heart and make sure his differences with others are pure, completely unselfish.

Conflict is never good; it is always bad. But when we hold honest differences, being thoroughly convinced of God's leadership, conflict cannot be avoided. When this happens, each party has to move on, trusting the Lord to take charge of the other party and to work all things out for good.

**“He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done” (Mt.26:42).**

**“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn.7:17).**

**“And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done” (Acts 21:11-14).**

**“Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph.6:6).**

**“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (Jas.4:15).**

**“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (1 Th.2:4).**

**“Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness” (Ps.143:10).**

**2** (15:39) **Conflict—Division—Unity:** the sad result of honest conflict. Three results are seen in the experience of Paul and Barnabas, results that are tragically too common.

1. There was “sharp contention” (paroxusmos). The idea is that of differing to the point of suffering pain. Contrary to the picture usually painted of the conflict, the picture seems to be that both men were hurting. The difference was sharp and both hearts were cut deeply. Each man was thoroughly convinced that he was right before the Lord; therefore, each argued strongly for his position. This does not mean that they were cutting each other with sharp and ugly words. This is important to note, for sharp words should never be spoken among believers. But the opposing positions and convictions cut and hurt both hearts. They loved and respected each other, and their *sharp* conflict seemed irreconcilable. There seemed to be no solution.

2. There was the loss of each other. This fact is often forgotten, but should not be. The two men loved and respected each other, greatly so. Few men ever mean to each other what Barnabas and Paul meant to each other. When Paul needed help, Barnabas was the only believer who stepped forward to help him. Barnabas was the spiritual brother or father to Paul. Barnabas had taken Paul under his wings and...

- stood up for him against all other believers (Acts 9:27).
- nurtured him in the faith and ministry (Acts 11:25-26).
- seen God bless his efforts, moving Paul to the forefront in carrying the gospel to the world (Acts 13:9; 13:14-16).

Paul owed so much to Barnabas, he would never have allowed the conflict to divide them unless he was thoroughly convinced he was right. And Barnabas loved Paul so much the same was true of him. The conflict was an honest conflict, but the results were tragic. Two dear brothers, so strong in the Lord and so caring for each other, were splitting up their

ministry. Their only hope was that God would overrule and show the one who was wrong that he was mistaken, forgiving him and continuing to use him just as effectively as before.

The question naturally arises: Who was wrong? The answer is not known with absolute certainty. But Paul evidently misjudged. And the church's failure to commend Barnabas and Mark was apparently a tragic failure.

- ⇒ Mark did redeem himself. He is later seen serving with both Paul and Peter (Col.4:10; 2 Tim.4:11; Phile.24; 1 Pt.5:13).
- ⇒ Paul spoke affectionately of Barnabas, acknowledging his great ministry in writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor.9:6).

**Thought 1.** A believer is to make every effort possible to avoid conflict. He is to do all he can to live and serve in peace with his Christian brothers and sisters.

**“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord” (Ph.4:2).**

**“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Tim.2:14).**

**“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim.2:24).**

**“The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with” (Pr.17:14).**

**“Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame” (Pr.25:8).**

**Thought 2.** When a believer becomes aware that he was wrong, he needs to acknowledge it and correct it as much as possible. Just think: Mark was the author of the *Gospel of Mark*. What a friend Barnabas was! What a helper to those who were cast aside as both Paul and Mark were by other believers! How much of Mark's ministry and Paul's ministry and how much of the Gospel of Mark is due to Barnabas and his faithfulness in making a true disciple out of both men? What a servant of the Lord!

**“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).**

**3** (15:39-41) **Conflict:** the good result of honest conflict is that God overrules. God was able to overrule in the conflict between Paul and Barnabas, for both men had honest differences of opinion. They were not selfish, neither did they have ulterior, corrupt motives. They both loved God with all their hearts and were called according to God's purpose.

**“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Ro.8:28).**

Note the good results.

1. A deserter was reclaimed and set aflame: Mark.
2. A new disciple and a great minister was born: Silas (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 15:34).
3. Two mission teams were now sent forth. Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus, the native country of Barnabas. Paul and Silas went into Syria and Cilicia, the native country of Paul (Acts 15:41).

There are three factors seen here.

- a. Paul was hurting within his heart, hurting deeply. He and Barnabas, his dearest friend and companion in the ministry, had split up. And they had separated because of a sharp difference. They just could not agree on how to proceed, whether Mark should be taken or not. Nothing could be done about it. The difference was an honest difference, but it still hurt, for the men loved and respected each other deeply and had served together for so many years. The pain must have been almost unbearable for both men. But note something: Paul continued on, just as Barnabas did (Acts 15:39). As difficult as it was, they continued on. They were not sitting around devastated, wondering why the difference had happened to them. Discouragement and depression could have easily set in. But Paul fought such feelings off and marched forth, faithful and true to his Lord and His call. He faithfully threw himself into the ministry of his Lord.

From this point on, Luke, the author of Acts, concentrated on the ministry of Paul. Nothing else is said about Barnabas or the apostles.

- b. Paul travelled through Syria and Cilicia, his own home area. He was travelling by land instead of sea as he did on his first mission journey. God, of course, led Paul to take this route. There was probably a practical reason. Very simply, there is no place like home when a person's heart is hurting. In addition to this, it had been somewhere around ten years since Paul had been able to return home. Remember Paul's first extended ministry after his conversion was throughout his home region. He had spent eleven years there. Most of

the churches throughout the region were probably due to his ministry during those eleven years. (Cp. Acts 9:29-30. See DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Acts 9:23; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.1:17-24.) The point is twofold.

First, God knew that being in his home area among the very first churches of his ministry would help heal Paul's heart, a heart that had suffered so much and was yet to suffer so much. God had to provide some release for His dear servant to be able to continue on.

**Thought 1.** Note how God takes care of His hurting servants when they are faithful to their call and ministry. Paul is a dynamic example in continuing on despite being bombarded with setback after setback.

**“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal.6:9).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

**“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.1:13).**

**“The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger” (Job 17:9).**

Second, Paul's heart ached to visit the churches of his home district. It had been about ten years since he had seen and exhorted them. It was now time to check on their welfare and see how they were doing (Acts 15:36).

c. Paul's purpose was to confirm the churches. The word “confirm” (episterizon) means to strengthen; to establish; to support; to stabilize; to make strong; to lead someone to prop upon or lean upon. Paul's purpose was to support and to teach the churches...

- to lean upon and to prop their lives upon Jesus.
- to be stable and strong in the Lord's teachings.
- to be strengthened and established in their lives and witness.

**“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Ro.14:19).**

**“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Ro.15:2).**

**“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor.14:3).**

**“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:11-12).**

**“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph.4:29).**

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| <p><b>1 Faithful in making disciples<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> a. A wonderful discovery<br/><br/> b. A godly mother<br/><br/> c. An ungodly father<br/> d. A godly testimony</p> | <p><b>B. Galatia, the Return to a Far District: Faithfulness to the Church, 16:1-5</b></p> <p>Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:<br/> 2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.</p> | <p>3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.<br/> 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.<br/> 5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.</p> | <p>e. An attempt at well-meaning compromise</p> <p><b>2 Faithful in delivering the church's declaration on salvation &amp; behavior</b></p> <p><b>3 Faithful in bearing fruit: The churches were strengthened</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**B. Galatia, the Return to a Far District: Faithfulness to the Church. 16:1-5**

(16:1-5) **Introduction:** this passage is a striking picture of Paul's faithfulness to the Lord's church. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.)

1. Faithful in making disciples (v.1-3).
2. Faithful in delivering the church's declaration on salvation and behavior (v.4).
3. Faithful in bearing fruit: the churches were strengthened (v.5).

**1** (16:1-3) **Discipleship:** faithful in making disciples. This is a significant passage, for it shows how Paul took Timothy under his care to develop and grow him. Timothy was the young disciple who was destined to become one of the great servants of the early church, the one to whom the Lord had Paul write two of the great letters of the New Testament (1 and 2 Timothy). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Timothy*—Acts 16:1-3 for discussion.)

1. Timothy provided a wonderful surprise, an exciting discovery for Paul. The word "behold" (idou) has the idea of looking and gazing at a wonderful discovery, at an unexpected surprise. Timothy's love and maturity in the Lord struck Paul.

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching [making disciples of] them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt.28:19-20).**

**"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim.2:2).**

2. Timothy had a godly mother and a grandmother who were Jews, but they were also Christian believers. They were both so godly and strong in the faith that Paul mentioned it years later (2 Tim.1:15). They both had a great influence upon Timothy.

**Thought 1.** Note the influence of a godly mother upon her child.

**"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (2 Tim.1:5).**

**"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons" (Dt.4:9).**

**"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Dt.6:6-7).**

**"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Pr.22:6).**

3. Timothy had an unbelieving father, a Greek. He was not a follower of the Jewish God. If he had been, he would have had Timothy circumcised (v.3). The point is that he was a heathen, an unsaved father. Timothy was from a divided family spiritually. Yet he followed God despite his father's unbelief. Even if his father was dead at this time, Timothy still had made the choice to follow the Lord as taught by his mother.

4. Timothy had a godly testimony throughout the whole region. And note: he was only a young man, still in his teen years, probably around seventeen or eighteen years old. He was still a youth when Paul wrote his first letter to him (1 Tim.4:12). Note the emphasis upon the character of Timothy, a young man of purity and maturity, a young man with an unblemished character.

**“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim.2:22).**

5. Paul attempted a well-meaning compromise. There was a large population of Jews throughout the districts where Paul was planning to minister. As a Jew, Timothy needed to be circumcised if he was going to minister to the Jews. As long as he remained uncircumcised, he would be considered a heathen, denying the very sign (circumcision, ritual) that God had given to show that a person truly followed Him. Being uncircumcised, the Jews would never let him preach in their synagogues. Therefore, Paul removed this stumbling block to Timothy’s ministry and circumcised him.

Now note: Timothy’s circumcision was based upon the principle of expediency, that is, it was “because of the Jews” (Acts 13:3; cp. 1 Cor.6:12). However, Paul had refused to circumcise Titus on the principle of truth. That is, Titus was a non-Jew, a Gentile; and certain professing believers were insisting that all men had to be circumcised to be saved (Acts 15:1f; cp. Gal.2:3-50). Paul was not about to compromise the truth of salvation by the grace of God through faith. Therefore, he refused to allow Titus to be circumcised despite the peace it would have wrought within the church.

It should be noted how the carnal, the critical, the narrow-minded, and the legalist are never satisfied and ever seeking to disturb God’s people. The Judaizers subsequently claimed that Paul preached circumcision (Gal.5:11). The matter became such a *divisive issue* in Galatia that he was later forced to write the church and deny such—vehemently—using Titus as an example (Gal.1:10; 2:3-5; 5:11).

**“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(16:1-3) **Timothy—Discipleship:** Timothy was just a child when Paul visited Lystra on his first mission (about five or six years before). He was probably somewhere around ten to twelve years old. He was still a young man when Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy (1 Tim.4:12). All this means Timothy was somewhere around eighteen years old when Paul met him on his second mission to Lystra.

It is also possible that Paul led Timothy to the Lord on his first mission tour, but it is more probable that Timothy’s mother and grandmother led him to the Lord.

The present passage seems to read as though Paul did not know or remember Timothy from his first mission. In either case, his spiritual maturity at this point was strong enough for Paul to challenge him to join his mission corps. The facts of his life seem to be as follows.

Timothy’s father was a Greek and an unbeliever, but his mother was a Jew and a believer. Her name was Eunice and his grandmother’s name was Lois (2 Tim.1:5). Timothy was not circumcised; hence it would seem that he was educated in Greek ways and customs (Acts 16:3). When Paul met Timothy, Timothy was already a Christian believer with a strong testimony, so strong in fact that Paul arranged for him to become his missionary partner (Acts 16:1f). Timothy’s maturity and importance are seen by the word “he” of verse one being changed very rapidly to “they” of verse four. Timothy became a son to Paul (1 Cor.4:17). He was esteemed so highly and loved so deeply by Paul that Paul said he was the one man whose mind was at one with his own (Ph.2:19). He was probably chosen by Paul to become Paul’s successor (see note—Ph.1:1). From this point on, he was seen either ministering with Paul or else being sent out by Paul to minister to certain churches. He was with Paul in Paul’s first imprisonment (Col.1:1; Phile.1). Apparently, Paul was released from prison and Timothy began to travel with him again (see 1 Timothy, Introduction, Date). On this journey Paul left him in Ephesus to correct some errors that had arisen, while Paul himself travelled on into Macedonia to visit the churches there. Soon thereafter Paul was arrested and imprisoned in Rome a second time. As soon as possible Timothy joined him (2 Tim.4:11, 21), but this time Timothy was imprisoned also. However, Timothy was later released (Heb.13:23), while Paul was either beheaded or released and began a mission tour into Spain. (See notes, *Timothy—Ph.2:22-24* for more discussion.)

**2** (16:4) **Faithfulness—Word of God:** faithful in delivering the church’s Spirit-led declaration on salvation and behavior. Note three critical points.

1. The Holy Spirit had led the church in formulating and writing the message (Acts 15:28).
2. The message was the declaration of truth: emphasizing both salvation and behavior.
  - a. There was the declaration of salvation “through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:11). See outline and notes—Acts 15:7-11 for discussion and verses.)
  - b. There was the declaration of pure behavior (see note, pt.4—Acts 15:13-21 for discussion and verses).
3. Paul was faithful in going through all “the cities,” delivering the church’s glorious declaration on salvation “through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:11). And note he left each church a written copy of the decree.

**Thought 1.** What a lesson for us! We have the written decree, the written Word of God, regarding both salvation and behavior. Yet, how many believers and churches honestly read and teach and live by the *truth* of God's Word as it is written?

**“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (Jn.5:39).**

**“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures *daily*, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).**

**“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).**

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).**

**“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pt.2:2).**

**“And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein *all the days of his life*: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them” (Dt.17:19).**

**3** (16:5) **Church—Established:** faithful in bearing fruit. The churches were established and grew in number daily. They were...

- established in the truth of salvation and behavior.
- established in standing against making ritual necessary for salvation.
- strengthened in being stedfast in their labor for the Lord.
- continuing to reach more and more people for the Lord.

Note: the Greek words “established” and “increased” are continuous action. It was a continuous, day by day experience.

**“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ” (Ro.16:25).**

**“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Col.2:6-7).**

**“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work” (2 Th.2:16-17).**

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| <p><b>1 The leadership of the Holy Spirit step by step</b><br/> a. The plan to revisit churches was finished<br/> b. The Spirit forbade the westward mission<br/> c. The Spirit forbade the northern mission<sup>DS1</sup><br/> d. The Spirit's restraint: The great stress</p> <p><b>2 The clear call by the Holy Spirit</b></p> | <p><b>C. Asia, the Forbidden Area, and Europe, the Chosen Area: The Call to World Evangelism—Changing the Cradle of Society, 16:6-11</b></p> <p>6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,<br/> 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.<br/> 8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Tro-</p> | <p>as.<br/> 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.<br/> 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.<br/> 11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;</p> | <p>a. Paul kept going<br/> b. Paul was called to Europe by a vision<br/> 1) A man of Europe: A lost area<br/> 2) A man pleading: Come—help us</p> <p><b>3 The strong conviction of the Holy Spirit's call</b><br/> a. God's call<br/> b. Complete agreement: "We"<sup>DS2</sup><br/> c. Purpose: To preach</p> <p><b>4 The immediate obedience to the Lord's call</b></p> |
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DIVISION VIII

THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22

**C. Asia, the Forbidden Area, and Europe, the Chosen Area: The Call to World Evangelism—Changing the Cradle of Society, 16:6-11**

(16:6-11) **Introduction:** the Holy Spirit changed the cradle of society. This is one of the greatest decisions and events of history. Up to this time, Asia had been the cradle of civilization, but now it was to give place to Europe. Europe was soon to become the center of Christianity and of civilization. Therefore, the great call of God to European evangelization is one of the greatest calls in all of human history. As such, the call of God to Paul becomes a pattern of God's call for every believer. Every believer is being called by the man of Europe or of the world: "Come over and help us." (See Map—Introduction to Acts.)

1. The leadership of the Holy Spirit step by step (v.6-7).
2. The clear call by the Holy Spirit (v.8-9).
3. The strong conviction of the Spirit's call (v.10).
4. The immediate obedience to the Lord's call (v.11).

**1** (16:6-7) **Holy Spirit—Call:** the leadership of the Holy Spirit step by step. What happened to Paul was a most interesting experience. It stands as a challenge for Christian believers of every generation. Note four striking points.

1. Paul finished his mission of revisiting all the churches (Acts 15:36, 41; 16:1, 6). Apparently, he was staying in Antioch of Pisidia, deciding just where he should launch a *new* mission thrust.

2. The Holy Spirit forbade Paul to go westward into the Roman province of Asia (not modern Asia, but Turkey). The seven churches mentioned in the *Book of Revelation*, including the great city of Ephesus, lay in Roman Asia (Rev.2:1-3:22). The picture to note is this: sitting there in Antioch of Pisidia, Paul was dreaming and planning to penetrate Asia for Christ. But the Holy Spirit *restrained* him, *forbidding* him to go westward into the Asia of that day.

3. The Holy Spirit forbade Paul to undertake a northern mission. Therefore, Paul and his two companions (Silas and Timothy) left Antioch of Pisidia and headed northward toward Bithynia. When they reached the area of Mysia, the Spirit told them not to go any farther north. So Paul turned and went in the only direction he could—toward Troas, a city which lay close by the sea. (See Map—Introduction to Acts for a picture of what was happening.)

4. The great stress of what had just happened is the Holy Spirit's leadership: the Spirit led step by step through *restraint*. The Spirit did not come right out and tell Paul what he was to do. Rather the Holy Spirit shut doors, restrained and pulled at Paul's heart to move in a different direction than where he was heading. Very simply, the Holy Spirit stopped Paul from following through with the plans he was making. Note these facts.

- a. Paul's plans were important. The great cities of Asia needed to be reached for Christ.
- b. Paul's timing was wrong. The great cities of Asia would be reached for Christ by Paul, but it would be out in the future, not then.
- c. Paul was not given a reason for the rejection of his plans. The doors were merely closed by the Spirit. In fact, they were all closed until Paul could go in only one direction.
- d. Only God knew the reason why Paul was not yet to undertake the mission into Asia. There may have been laymen witnessing in the area and God was using their witness to mellow (prepare) the people, or perhaps the people were just not ready for the gospel, or perhaps some potential opposition had to be removed first. The reasons could go on and on. The point to see is that God knew best. He knew the whole situation. The believer must always trust God's leadership, the closing of doors as well as the opening of doors.

Note the drama of the Holy Spirit's leadership step by step as he restrained Paul.

- ⇒ The Spirit forbade the mission to Asia (Acts 16:6).
- ⇒ The Spirit forbade the mission to Bithynia (Acts 16:7).
- ⇒ Paul journeyed to Troas (Acts 16:8).

⇒ the Spirit gave a vision of the man in Macedonia (Acts 16:9). Paul took a “straight course” to the Spirit’s call (Acts 16:11).

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).

“But ye shall receive power, after that Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39).

“While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them” (Acts 10:19-20).

“For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death” (Ps.48:14).

“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps.73:24).

“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Is.30:21).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(16:7) **Trinity:** note the words “the Spirit.” The Greek says “the Spirit of Jesus” (To pneuma Iesou). There is a close identity between the Holy Spirit and Jesus in these two verses. Both are distinct persons, yet they are God; that is, they possess the very nature and power of God in dealing with Paul in these verses (Acts 16:6-7).

**2** (16:8-9) **Missions—Holy Spirit—World Evangelism:** the clear call by the Holy Spirit. Note two very significant points.

1. Paul kept going. He was not allowing closed doors to discourage or stop him. Despite the restraint, despite not having direct leadership from God, Paul was called to preach and teach and minister; and he kept at it. He went about fulfilling the great commission of the Lord, waiting and trusting the Lord to give *positive* instructions at the right time.

This fact is important, for if Paul had allowed the closed door and the restraint to discourage him, the great call he was about to receive would have never happened. Paul could have been lost forever from the scene.

**Thought 1.** A believer should never be discouraged by closed doors. God is the One who closes the door, and if He does, it is for one of two reasons.

- 1) To protect His dear follower.
- 2) To open a greater door for His servant. God alone sees the future and knows everything that is happening around the world. Therefore, God alone knows when His dear follower needs to be protected and when he is needed someplace else.

2. Paul was called to Europe. God gave him the vision of a man in Macedonia crying for help. Note the cry was “help *us*,” plural. It was the vision, the picture of a man representing all of Europe, crying and begging Paul to come and help the whole European continent. The desperation of the cry would both break and stir the heart of any true minister of the gospel. It was such a striking scene that Paul would never forget it, neither should any other believer. The cry of desperation is emphatic, declaring both to Paul and to all succeeding believers...

- that the door of the whole world is open, wide open. Souls are ready and crying for help. The harvest is truly ripe.
- that the heart must be stirred *now* to help. The need is now.
- that the need is great. It is not only one man who needs help, but *all of us* in Macedonia (Europe, the world).
- that the impression upon the mind must be lasting. The cry must be passed on down through every generation until the whole world is reached.
- that the great mission to the world is the call of the church. The church must go and go now or else the desperate cry for help will never be met.
- that the cry is desperate, the need is now. The response must be quick, immediate. A day must not be wasted, a slow and aimless route must not be taken (v.11).

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Mt.24:14).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Lk.24:47).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us” (Acts 16:9).

“But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:16-18).

**3** (16:10) **God, Will of:** the strong conviction of the Spirit’s call. What happened is instructive. Paul discussed the vision with three persons: his two companions Silas and Timothy, and Luke the physician who had now joined the mission party. Note the words “assuredly gathering” or *concluding* (*sunbibazontes*), which means proving, putting together, setting side by side. The picture is that of the three men discussing and reasoning, considering all that had happened to them...

- the vision of Paul,
- the closing of doors by the Spirit,
- the strong conviction of Paul.

They concluded that the vision was definitely of God. It was God’s will for them to go to Europe and to preach the gospel.

**Thought 1.** Note the “testing of the spirits,” of the vision to make sure it was definitely of God. What a lesson as we seek to make sure it is God leading us in the decisions and ministries we feel led to launch for Christ.

“Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Eph.5:10).

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Th.5:21).

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 Jn.4:1).

**DEEPER STUDY #2**

(16:10) **Luke:** note the word “we.” There is a change in persons here—from “they” and “he” (Paul) to “we.” This shows that Luke, the doctor and writer of Acts, joined Paul and his missionary companions at this point. Luke remained with Paul almost constantly and was with him even during the waning months of Paul’s life while he was a prisoner in Rome. The only time Luke appears to have been separated from Paul was when Paul left Philippi (Acts 17:1). Apparently, he re-joined Paul when Paul returned to Philippi (Acts 20:5).

**4** (16:11) **Obedience:** there was immediate obedience to the Lord’s call. This verse speaks for itself: no time was lost. A straight course was set; the men moved out to do as God had led. They embarked on the mission to help Europe in its desperate search and need for God and His glorious salvation.

**Thought 1.** Several thoughtful questions need to be asked. Would the world already be reached for Christ...

- if *every minister* who had been called by Christ to go to Europe (that is, the world) had said, “Yes, Lord, I will surrender and go”?
- if *every believer* who had been called to give his life to missions had said, “Yes, Lord, I give myself to full time ministry”?
- if *every layman* who had been urged to give more to support the gospel worldwide had gone ahead and given more?
- if *every church* had forgotten the extravagance and comfort of local buildings and programs and had concentrated on world evangelism as the Lord taught?
- more *Pauls* would have been reached by the multitude of laymen out witnessing? If the thousands who have been urged to witness had been out bearing testimony, would one *Paul* have been reached every ten years? The answer is evident, for God honors His Word.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).

“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Mt.12:50).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

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

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| <p><b>1 Paul &amp; his company arrived in Philippi</b></p> <p>a. They waited until the Sabbath</p> <p>b. They attended a prayer meeting by a river</p> <p>c. They saw that only women were present</p> <p>d. They preached</p> | <p><b>D. Philippi, a Chief City &amp; Luke's Home (Part I): Europe's First Convert<sup>DS1</sup> 16:12-15</b></p> <p>12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.</p> <p>13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.</p> | <p>14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.</p> <p>15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.</p> | <p><b>2 Lydia was a professional woman</b></p> <p><b>3 She sought &amp; worshipped God: Was a Jewish proselyte<sup>DS2</sup></b></p> <p><b>4 She listened &amp; heard the gospel</b></p> <p><b>5 She had her heart opened by the Lord</b></p> <p><b>6 She was immediately baptized</b></p> <p><b>7 She led her whole house to the Lord<sup>DS3</sup></b></p> <p><b>8 She opened her home—used her wealth for the Lord</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**D. Philippi, a Chief City and Luke's Home (Part I): Europe's First Convert, 16:12-15**

(16:12-15) **Introduction:** the first person ever converted in Europe was a businesswoman named Lydia. She stands as a dynamic example of conversion, an example that can stir many a person to trust Christ.

1. Paul and his company arrived in Philippi (v.12-13).
2. Lydia was a professional woman (v.14).
3. She sought and worshipped God: was a Jewish proselyte (v.14).
4. She listened and heard the gospel (v.14).
5. She had her heart opened by the Lord (v.14).
6. She was immediately baptized (v.15).
7. She led her whole house to the Lord (v.15).
8. She opened her home—used her wealth for the Lord (v.15).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(16:12-40) **Philippi:** Philippi was the gateway to Europe. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) It lay on the great Roman road known as the Egnatian Way. The city was named after Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great. The site was a natural fortress sitting on a range of hills that separated Europe from Asia, the East from the West. It was a strategic center commanding the great Egnatian Way.

Philippi was also a proud Roman colony. In fact, it was famous as a miniature Rome. A city became a Roman colony in one of two ways. At first Rome founded colonies throughout the outer reaches of the Empire to keep the peace and to guard against invasions from barbaric hordes. Veteran soldiers ready for retirement were usually granted citizenship if they would go out and settle these colonies. Later on, however, a city was granted the distinctive title of being a Roman Colony for loyalty and service to the Empire. The distinctive thing about these colonies was their fanatic loyalty to Rome. The citizens kept all their Roman ties, the Roman language, titles, customs, affairs, and dress. They refused to allow any infiltration of local influence whatsoever. They totally rejected the influence of the world around them. They were Roman colonists within an alien environment.

A picture of the loyalty of the Philippian Colony to its Roman citizenship is seen in Acts 16:20-21. Paul draws an illustration from the loyalty of these colonies and says to the Philippian church, "For our citizenship is in heaven" (Ph.3:20).

Philippi fit right into Paul's master plan. Its strategic location on the Egnatian Way assured the spread of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. Both businessmen and salesmen travelled to and from Philippi from all over the world. Although Paul himself was moving toward Rome and the regions beyond into Spain, the converts whose employment took them from Philippi throughout the Empire could move on out ahead of him. Some time could be gained and some ground could be laid to assure world evangelization sooner (cp. Acts 28:13f).

The church at Philippi was founded on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-40). It is one of the most exciting adventures in all of literature. Philippi witnessed the entrance of the gospel into Europe. Paul had made several attempts to go elsewhere, but the Holy Spirit had prohibited him (Acts 16:6-7). Therefore, he made his way to Troas, not really knowing why. While in Troas Paul experienced the incredible vision of a man in Macedonia crying out, "Come over and help us." Through that one vision, the Holy Spirit changed the cradle of society. He thrust Paul forth into Europe with the glorious gospel of Christ, and since that day the world has never been the same.

The church at Philippi...

- was founded on Paul's second missionary journey.
- was the first European city evangelized by the gospel (Acts 16:10f).
- was begun by three significant conversions: Lydia, a prominent businesswoman (Acts 16:14-15); a slave girl who was possessed by an evil spirit of fortune-telling (Acts 16:16f); and a jailer who was guarding Paul and Silas while in prison (Acts 16:19f).

- was persecuted (Ph.1:28; 2:15).
- met in Lydia's house (Acts 16:40).
- continued to grow (Acts 16:40).
- was made up mainly of Gentile converts. The names of Philippian believers would indicate this (Ph.2:25; 4:2-3; Ro.15:26-27).
- supported Paul's ministry financially, even while they themselves were suffering need and persecution (Ph.1:7, 27-30; 2:15; 3:10-11; 4:1).
- was a strong church worthy of being commended to other churches (2 Cor.8:1f).

**1** (16:12-13) **Paul:** Paul and his company arrived in Philippi. His companions included Silas, Timothy, and Luke the physician. Apparently, the small mission party arrived in Philippi early in the week. During the week they either heard about or noticed an open air prayer structure about one mile outside the city by the river, Gangites. When there were too few Jews in a city to build a synagogue, the few usually met out by a river for prayer.

- ⇒ The river provided the water necessary for the ceremonial washings involved in Jewish worship.
- ⇒ Note also the handful of Jews met only for prayer. Jewish law required a minimum of ten men to be present for the law (Torah) to be read. Jewish thought considered women to be so unimportant that they were not worthy of the law apart from the presence of men.

When the Sabbath arrived, the small mission party went out by the river and attended the prayer service. Note...

- only women were present.
- the words "we...spoke." All four of the men shared their testimonies about Christ, but Paul was the chief spokesman (v.14).

**2** (16:14) **Lydia—Women—Employers:** Lydia was a professional woman. She was a seller of purple fabrics (porphuropolis). Purple fabrics were in great demand in the Roman world. Purple was used on the toga or outer garments by the royalty of Rome. Therefore, as in every society, even the lower classes desired what the upper class had. *Royal purple* always has been and still is a common term.

Lydia was apparently very wealthy. Her home and financial means were large enough to accommodate not only the mission party and a household (v.15) but the church itself (v.40). Note also that her hometown was Thyatira. She apparently had business establishments and homes in both places. Perhaps Thyatira, a flourishing city known for its purple dyes and cloth, was her manufacturing and shipping headquarters, and Philippi was her distribution center. A constant flow of purple would be required to supply the market in a large city such as Philippi even if she did not market elsewhere. Note: Thyatira is one of the seven churches discussed in the Book of Revelation (Rev.2:18-29).

**3** (16:14) **Worship:** Lydia sought and worshipped God. She was a Jewish proselyte. The term "worshipped God" (sebomene ton theon) means a Jewish proselyte or one who worshipped God. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 16:14 for discussion.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(16:14) **Society, Corrupt—Women—Judaism:** the society of the day was by and large an unprincipled society. Crime and immorality and injustice were rampant. Religion and gods were conceived and formed to give vent to the basic urges and passions of men. Gods became gods of fertility, and priests and priestesses became prostitutes for man's sensual satisfaction. Corruption was so common that it became the accepted practice of society. This made life especially difficult for persons with moral standards, especially for women. For this reason many turned to the Jewish religion. Judaism offered the concept of one true God. The Jews believed that God was actually living and that He was actively involved in man's affairs. They believed that He demanded a pure and holy life and a respect for decency and order. (See note, *Society Corrupt*—Acts 17:11 for more discussion.)

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (Jn.4:24).

"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev.14:7).

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (1 Chron.16:29).

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Is.2:3).

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully" (Ps.24:4).

"Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee" (Ps.38:9).

"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" (Ps.63:1).

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Ps.73:25).

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker" (Ps.95:6).

"O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth" (Ps.96:9).

- 4** (16:14) **Spiritual Receptivity:** Lydia heard and listened to the gospel. The word “heard” (ekouen) means she really perked up and paid attention. She listened and kept on listening, giving utmost attention to the gospel.

**Thought 1.** No person is ever converted who does not listen to and hear the gospel. Too many just sit complacently with wandering minds, counting the gospel to be less important than the affairs of the world.

“But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Mt.13:16).

“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Mt.13:23).

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn.1:12).

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor.4:6).

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph.1:18).

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th.2:13).

“The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise” (Pr.15:31).

- 5** (16:14) **Conversion—Heart:** Lydia had her heart opened by the Lord. This is critical to note. No one is ever saved by the preacher. The preacher is needed to bear witness, but God does the saving. Only God can *open the heart* of a person. No man can get down into the heart of another person. Only God can enter the heart and spiritually save people.

Note this: it is the heart that has to be opened and converted. Scripture words it in different ways.

“Be ye transformed by the *renewing* of your mind” (Ro.12:2).

“Create in me a *clean heart*, O God; and renew a *right spirit* within me” (Ps.51:10).

“They that wait upon the Lord shall *renew their strength*” (Is.40:31).

“Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man *is renewed* day by day” (2 Cor.4:16).

“Be *renewed in the spirit of your mind*” (Eph.4:23).

“Put on the *new man, which is renewed* in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing or *regeneration*, and *renewing* of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:5).

- 6** (16:15) **Baptism:** Lydia was immediately baptized (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:38 for discussion. Cp. Acts 8:12; 8:36.)

- 7** (16:15) **Witnessing:** Lydia led her whole household to the Lord. This would include...

- family members such as a spouse, children, aged parents, brothers, sisters, and other relatives.
- servants or employees looking after household and business affairs.

The significance is the Christian influence and witness she bore before her household. She lived for Christ and witnessed to all under her influence. Note: after her own conversion her first objective became her immediate family and household. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Parents*—Acts 16:15 for more discussion and verses.)

**DEEPER STUDY #3**

(16:15) **Parents, Godly Influence—Home, Religion in:** the importance of the head of a household—of his bearing a strong witness for the Lord—cannot be overstressed. A strong spiritual head almost assures the salvation of the whole family (cp. Acts 16:31). Scripture stresses this fact time and again. There was...

- Abraham commanding his children to keep the way of the Lord.

“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Gen.18:19).

- Jacob demanding that his household put away false gods.

“Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments” (Gen.35:2).

- the charge to teach the Word of God to children.

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Dt.6:7).

**“And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Dt.11:19).**

- the charge to teach one’s children to fear the Lord.

**“And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it” (Dt.31:13).**

**“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts” (Is.28:9).**

- Joshua declaring that he and his house would serve God.

**“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh.24:15).**

- Manoah praying for God’s guidance in rearing his child who had not even been born yet.

**“Then Manoah entreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born” (Judg.13:8).**

- David instructing his son Solomon to walk after the Lord his God.

**“Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: that the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel” (1 Ki.2:1-4).**

- the charge to train up a child in the way he should go.

**“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Pr.22:6).**

- John the Baptist being born of a godly father, Zacharias.

**“And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied” (Lk.1:67).**

- Jesus, God’s own Son, being sent into the world through a godly woman.

**“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women” (Lk.1:26-28).**

- the healed demoniac being told to return to his own house and bear witness instead of following Jesus.

**“Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him” (Lk.8:38-39).**

- Andrew leading his brother Peter to the Lord.

**“He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ” (Jn.1:41).**

- the nobleman whose son was healed, leading his whole household to believe in Jesus.

**“So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house” (Jn.4:53).**

- Cornelius leading his whole household to fear God.

**“A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always” (Acts 10:2).**

- Lydia leading her whole household to the Lord.

**“And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us” (Acts 16:15).**

- the Philippian jailer leading his whole household to believe in God.

**“And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house” (Acts 16:33-34).**

- the charge to nurture children in the Lord.

**“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph.6:4).**

- the charge to have children in subjection to the Lord and to one’s own authority.

**“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (1 Tim.3:4).**

**“Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well” (1 Tim.3:12).**

- the charge to teach children to live godly.

**“But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God” (1 Tim.5:4).**

**8** (16:15) **Ministering:** Lydia opened her home and used her wealth for the Lord. Lydia desired to be faithful and to be counted faithful to the Lord. She was determined to have a strong testimony in following Jesus. Lydia obeyed her Lord...

- taking what she had and using it for the Lord.
- giving generously to the cause of the Lord. Most likely she was the one who took the lead in giving so liberally. The Philippian church supported Paul more faithfully than any other church (Ph.1:5; 4:10-19).

**“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).**

**“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim.6:17-19).**

**“But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate” (Tit.1:8).**

**“Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Pt.4:9).**

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| <p><b>1 The power of human sin</b><br/> a. The spirit of divination, of foretelling the future &amp; fate of people<br/> b. The spirit of greed &amp; materialism<br/> c. The spirit of deception<br/> 1) A true testimony<br/> 2) A false witness for God</p> <p><b>2 The power of Jesus' name</b><br/> a. The false witness lasted many days<br/> b. Paul's grieved spirit<br/> c. Jesus' strong name<br/> d. The immediate, complete deliverance</p> <p><b>3 The power of money &amp; greed</b></p> | <p><b>E. Philippi (Part II): The Power of Sin &amp; Money Vs. the Power of Jesus' Name, 16:16-24</b></p> <p>16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:<br/> 17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.<br/> 18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.<br/> 19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their</p> | <p>gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,<br/> 20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,<br/> 21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.<br/> 22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.<br/> 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:<br/> 24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.</p> | <p>a. Caused an outcry &amp; opposition</p> <p>b. Caused false charges: Are dangerous<br/> 1) Troubled people<br/> 2) Taught different customs</p> <p>c. Caused corruption of public officials<br/> d. Caused shameful, unjust, &amp; evil treatment</p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**E. Philippi (Part II): The Power of Sin and Money Vs. the Power of Jesus' Name, 16:16-24**

(16:16-24) **Introduction:** this is a descriptive picture of the world's power vs. the power of Jesus' name.

1. The power of human sin (v.16-17).
2. The power of Jesus' name (v.18).
3. The power of money and greed (v.19-24).

**1** (16:16-17) **Occult—Fortune-Telling—Sorcery—Wealth:** the power of human sin is seen in three persons or spirits.

1. There was the damsel (paidisken) or slave girl possessed by "a spirit of divination" (pneuma puthona), of foretelling the future and fate of people. Note the Greek word "puthona" which is our English word python, referring to the large python serpent. In ancient myth, the Greek god Apollo was said to have slain the great serpent or dragon python. As a result Apollo took both his great gift of predictions and his name. Apollo became known as "puthios Apollo" or "Python Apollo." The young slave girl is said to have the spirit of "python" (putona); that is, the people thought she was the voice, the oracle of the great Greek god Apollo. There were also ventriloquists who were thought to be empowered with the spirit of Apollo.

Note: Scripture says that the young slave girl was possessed by an evil spirit (v.18) which gave her the power of fortune-telling. As a result people went to her for hope that...

- their desires would be fulfilled
- their futures would be good
- their confidence would be restored
- their fortunes would be at hand
- their lost items would be found
- their past would be unravelled
- their mysteries would be solved

The point to see is the power of sin to enslave and bind a person in the dark world of divination, fortune-telling, witchcraft, black magic, sorcery, and astrology. All false approaches to the truth are similar. They come from the dark world of evil spirits, spirits that cause people to put their trust in such things as...

- fortune tellers
- soothsayers
- palm readers
- seances
- the stars
- sorceries
- the zodiac
- a deck of cards

Just imagine! People are trusting such things instead of God. How deceived and blinded men are! How dark the world is—the dark world of evil spirits...

- that cause people to trust such things instead of God.
- that keep people away from the Word of God and the true promises of God.
- that blind people to the reality of prayer.
- that keep people away from the grace of God, the grace of the only living and true God, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, the only Sovereign Spirit who can truly save them.

The power of sin is strong, very strong in the dark world of evil spirits.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:22-23).

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Mt.24:24).

“To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:10-12).

“And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus” (Acts 13:6).

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, *witchcraft*, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19-21).

“...thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived” (Rev.18:23).

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and *sorcerers*, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).

“And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians” (Ex.9:11).

“Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God” (Lev.19:31).

“And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people” (Lev.20:6).

“There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee” (Dt.18:10-12).

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (1 Sam.15:23).

“Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee” (1 Sam.28:7-8).

“And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger” (2 Ki.17:17).

“And he [Manasseh] made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger” (2 Ki.21:6).

“Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD” (2 Ki.23:24).

“So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it” (1 Chron.10:13).

“Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers” (Is.2:6).

“And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Is.8:19-20).

**“And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards” (Is.19:3).**

**“But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments” (Is.47:9).**

**“Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon. For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish” (Jer.27:9-10).**

**“Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets” (Dan.2:27-28).**

**“The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom” (Dan.5:7).**

**“And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers” (Mic.5:12).**

**“For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd” (Zech.10:2).**

2. There were the men possessed by the spirit of greed and materialism. The young girl was a slave exploited by men to make money. They used her fortune-telling ability to play upon the needs of people for hope and confidence, self-esteem and direction. Note the words “much gain.” She was apparently the leader among all the soothsayers, the one from whom the upper class sought advice and counsel. This would explain why the people were riled up so quickly and why the magistrates or rulers acted so quickly in condemning Paul and Silas (v.19-24).

The point to note is this: the strong and the wealthy always have and always will exploit and use the weak for their own ends, whether in prostitution, fortune-telling, labor, false worship, sexual gratification, or whatever. The world has always witnessed *white slavery*, *black slavery*, *child slavery*, *national slavery* and a horde of other forms of slavery. Whatever the form, the purpose of the strong and wealthy is always onefold: to satisfy either their desires and urges or to fill their pockets. In the present passage the emphasis is upon filling their pockets, upon greed and materialism. Note: the dark world of greed and materialism is the dark world of evil spirits—the evil spirits of selfishness that misuse and exploit people for personal gain.

**“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).**

**“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim.6:10).**

**“Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days” (Jas.5:3).**

**“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Ex.20:17).**

**“Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!” (Hab.2:9).**

3. There is the young slave girl and the evil spirit of deception within her. Note three things.
- The testimony of the evil spirit was a true testimony. Paul and the others *were* “the servants of the most high God.”
  - The testimony of the evil spirit was also a false testimony. This is seen in the Greek which reads, “*a way of salvation*,” not “*the way*.” The word “*the*” (the definite article) is not in the Greek. The evil spirit is proclaiming that Paul preaches only one of many ways to reach God. (How like today!)
  - The testimony, although partly true, is unacceptable. Such acknowledgement is a false witness, a profession only. The evil spirit was not confessing from the heart or will that he would follow Jesus. He had not been born again. The *only confession* Jesus accepts is the confession of a man who makes a deliberate decision to follow Him *as Lord*. (See note—Mk.1:25-26.)

The point is the power of human sin. Sin is so powerful that it can enslave a person and swamp him in the dark world...

- of divination and the occult
- of greed and materialism
- of deception and false witness

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn.6:68).**

**“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).**

**“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).**

**“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2).**

**“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).**

**“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:5-6).**

**2** (16:18) **Jesus Christ:** the power of Jesus’ name. Note four facts.

1. The false witness was a barrage that lasted many days. The slave girl followed Paul and his companions day by day when they went to prayer. As she followed she shouted out the great but false oracle:

**“These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us [a] way of salvation” (v.17).**

Note: her proclamation was a barrage that would be embarrassing, and it went on for many days. Why Paul did not act sooner is not known. It could be that he feared a reaction from the worldly-minded, sensing from God that it was not yet time to stop the false witness.

2. The day arrived when Paul became “grieved” (*diaponetheis*). The word means pained, deeply troubled, worked up, annoyed, and angry (a righteous anger). He was troubled and hurting...

- over the girl being enslaved by sin.
- over the girl being so used by greedy and lustful men.
- over the false witness to the Lord’s name.
- over the mockery and ridicule of his ministry as the servant of Christ.

3. The moment came when Paul called upon the strong name of Jesus Christ. He whipped around and healed the girl. Note exactly what Paul did.

- a. He addressed the evil spirit within the girl. She was gripped by an *evil spirit of divination or of the occult*. The power she had was not her own, but of an evil spirit. It was the evil spirit that was the problem, not the girl. Therefore, Paul addressed the evil spirit.
- b. Paul called upon “the name of Jesus Christ.” The power to cast out the evil spirit was of Christ, not of Paul (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Name*—Acts 3:6 for discussion.)

4. The enslaved girl was immediately and completely delivered. It was the very same hour that the evil spirit came out.

**“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).**

**“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).**

**“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb.7:25).**

**3** (16:19-24) **Greed—Wealth:** the power of money and greed is pictured in what follows.

1. Money and greed caused an outcry and opposition against the gospel. And note why: because the owners of the enslaved girl had lost their top money-maker. She had been delivered by the power of Christ. They were frustrated and angry, full of wrath and vengeance. They caught Paul and Silas and dragged (*heilkusan*, the idea is violently) them before the magistrates of the city. The magistrates in a Greek city were the governors or rulers. They were equal to the consuls in Roman government.

2. Money and greed caused false charges. The preachers were said...

- to be dangerous.
- to be troubling people and disturbing the public peace.
- to be teaching different customs and carrying on illegal religious activities. Strict Roman law allowed conquered nations to continue their own religious practices, but did not allow the foreign religions to evangelize among Roman citizens.

The same charges are often brought against Christian believers by the world. Even in free democracies where the rights of free speech are so loudly proclaimed, these same charges are made by the world against true Christianity.

Note the emphasis upon “these men, *being Jews*.” This is a slur of racial prejudice. The emperor Claudius had just expelled all Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2). The Romans’ hatred of the Jews was at a peak when Paul and his company were ministering in Philippi.

3. Money and greed caused corruption of public officials. Note the officials gave in to the influential owners and to the public. True justice was bypassed. Paul and Silas were not allowed to answer for themselves; in fact, they were not even allowed to speak. If the court had been interested in true justice, the magistrates would have discovered that the two men were Roman citizens much sooner than they did (cp. v.37-40), and they would have found out that the two men had only helped a poor enslaved girl. An *open and thinking* mind would have seen the enormous contribution the preachers could have made...

- in helping to deliver people from sin, hopelessness, and darkness.
- in strengthening society through righteousness and justice.
- in guiding people to harness their energies in creativity and development instead of focusing them upon immorality and pleasure.

However, the officials and rulers were neither open-minded nor honest. They allowed themselves to be influenced and guided by their own selfish purpose. They gave in to the money and greed of influential people and the cry of the duped populace who were following the influential.

4. Money and greed caused shameful, unjust, and evil treatment (cp. 1 Th.2:2). Paul and Silas, the great servants of God who had done such a glorious deed...

- had their clothes torn off.
- were beaten with rods “many” times (cp. 2 Cor.11:23).
- were cast into prison—a dark, dirty, rat and roach infested dungeon.
- were thrust into the inner cells—a solitary confinement type of situation.
- had their feet locked in chains.

The point is this: the two godly servants were treated this way because of some men who were consumed with the dark spirit of money and greed. Such a dark, evil spirit has great power, but God has greater power.

**“Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 Jn.4:4).  
“If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Ro.8:31).**

**Thought 1.** The great tragedy of so many in the world is that they put selfishness, greed, and money before people. It is because of selfishness that so many influential people attack genuine believers. But Christ changes lives. He changes...

- the immoral to the moral
- the unjust to the just
- the dishonest to the honest
- the prideful to the humble
- the powerful to the servant
- the wealthy to the benevolent
- the authoritarian to the helpful

So many of the influential, wealthy, and powerful are unwilling to become servants of mankind—servants who sacrifice all they are and have for the needy. They are unwilling to truly sacrifice themselves and their money to help the desperate of the world. Therefore, they oppose anything that requires them to *sacrifice* their selfishness. They will give and help enough to salve their consciences, but not sacrificially.

**“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).**

**“Let your conversation [behavior] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).**

**“He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live” (Pr.15:27).**

**“Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!” (Hab.2:9).**

**Thought 2.** Much of what man does and enjoys is built upon the immoral, unjust, dishonest, and selfish treatment of others, such things as:

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| ⇒ gratification | ⇒ employment  |
| ⇒ money         | ⇒ pleasure    |
| ⇒ position      | ⇒ social life |

Therefore, when the believer proclaims righteousness, he can expect to be opposed.

**“But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues” (Mt.10:17).**

**“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn.15:20).**

**“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).**

**“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto” (1 Th.3:3).**

**“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).**

**“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange things happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13).**

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| <p><b>1 The preparation for salvation</b></p> <p>a. The strong witness of believers through difficult circumstances</p> <p>b. The movement of God: Through an earthquake</p> <p>c. The desperate plight of man: Fear, helplessness, &amp; insecurity</p> <p>d. The call of hope by believers</p> <p><b>2 The cry for salvation</b></p> <p>a. The immediate &amp; reverent search for salvation</p> <p>b. The urgent cry for salvation</p> <p><b>3 The proclamation of salvation</b></p> <p>a. The necessity of belief</p> <p>b. The necessity for understanding the Word of the Lord</p> <p>c. The necessity of repen-</p> | <p><b>F. Philippi (Part III): A Jailer &amp; Salvation, 16:25-40</b></p> <p>25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.</p> <p>26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.</p> <p>27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.</p> <p>28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.</p> <p>29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,</p> <p>30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?</p> <p>31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.</p> <p>32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.</p> | <p>33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.</p> <p>34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.</p> <p>35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.</p> <p>36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.</p> <p>37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.</p> <p>38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.</p> <p>39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.</p> <p>40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.</p> | <p>tance &amp; baptism</p> <p><b>4 The fruits of salvation</b></p> <p>a. The privilege of ministering</p> <p>b. The joy of rejoicing</p> <p>c. The salvation of one's family</p> <p><b>5 The effect of salvation upon the world</b></p> <p>a. The sense &amp; guilt of injustices</p> <p>b. The officials feared &amp; were humbled</p> <p>c. The disciples were delivered &amp; released</p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**F. Philippi (Part III): A Jailer and Salvation, 16:25-40**

(16:25-40) **Introduction:** this is a great study on the subject of salvation.

1. The preparation for salvation (v.25-28).
2. The cry for salvation (v.29-30).
3. The proclamation of salvation (v.31-33).
4. The fruits of salvation (v.34).
5. The effect of salvation upon the world (v.35-40).

**1** (16:25-28) **Salvation:** the preparation for salvation is fourfold.

1. There was the strong witness of the disciples through terrible difficulties. Paul and Silas had just been stripped, beaten with rods, imprisoned, and put in chains. Their backs were a lacerated, bloody, swollen mass of human flesh. We can just imagine the excruciating pain. But note: sitting there in the dark, smelly, rat and roach infested dungeon, they bore a strong testimony to the wonderful grace of God.

- a. They prayed. They probably asked God what every dedicated servant would ask: for God...
  - to strengthen and help them.
  - to forgive their persecutors.
  - to use their suffering to reach others for Christ.
- b. They praised and thanked God for...
  - His salvation.
  - the privilege of suffering for the name of Christ Jesus.
  - His presence and strength through all the suffering.

Note: all this took place at midnight (cp. Ps.119:62), and they sang so loudly that the other prisoners could hear them. They were unashamed of their Lord (cp. 2 Tim.1:8). The idea is that the praying and singing went on for a long time.

The point to see is the strong testimony they bore through the terrible trial. Their faith in the Lord Jesus was a strong witness that prepared the heart of the unsaved for the gospel. Note this: when Paul later wrote to the Philippians, he told them to “rejoice in the Lord always” (Ph.4:4; 3:1).

**“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph.5:19).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:17).**

**“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul” (Ps.66:16).**

**“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence” (Is.62:6).**

2. There was the movement of God. In this instance God moved through an earthquake. In other instances He will move in other ways. God can move upon a person’s soul through...

- some happening in nature
- a tragedy
- sensing a lack or need
- the reading of Scripture
- some miracle
- some event in the person’s life
- thinking about life or death
- the preaching of the gospel
- an innumerable list of ways

The point to see is this: God moves events to prepare man’s soul for salvation. One of the major reasons for causing the earthquake was to stir the jailer to cry out for salvation.

3. There was the desperate plight of man—his fear, helplessness, and insecurity. In the case of the jailer, he felt that he faced a hopeless situation because...

- the earthquake had sprung open the jail doors, allowing the prisoners to escape.
- he had fallen asleep while on duty.
- the penalty for allowing prisoners to escape was death (cp. Acts 12:19; 1 Ki.20:39, 42).

The jailer, feeling helpless and hopeless, drew his sword to kill himself. He knew the terrible shame and punishment awaiting him and the shame coming upon his family due to his letting the prisoners escape. Therefore, he preferred to go ahead and die the less painful death of suicide. It would look like he was murdered by one of the prisoners when they escaped and this would spare his family the shame of his having been derelict in his duty.

Circumstances differ; but every person experiences serious problems that cause fear, helplessness, hopelessness, and insecurity in life. In every instance of serious need, a person either turns to God or farther away from God. A person either becomes softer toward God or harder in reacting against God. A person either seeks God for help or approaches some humanistic answer.

The point is this: helplessness and hopelessness are used by God to prepare the human soul for salvation. *But we have to turn to God* when impossible situations confront us. The choice is up to us.

**“And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?” (Mk.4:38).**

**“And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse” (Mk.5:25-26).**

**“And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not” (Mk.9:17-18).**

**“And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity” (Lk.13:11-12).**

**“There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?” (Jn.6:9).**

**“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn.6:44).**

**“And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away” (Acts 27:20).**

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

**“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Ro.7:18).**

4. There was a call of hope by the believer. The jailer was standing out in the hallway or corridor in the light. Paul, in the dark dungeon cell, saw him and shouted out for the jailer not to kill himself. No greater voice or call was ever heard by the jailer. It saved his life. This is a picture of the human soul sensing helplessness and being prepared for salvation. The be

liever must cry out, proclaiming hope to the helpless and hopeless of the world. The cry of hope is part of the preparation for salvation, a part so desperately needed. Without it the world hurts and ruins itself and dies in its helpless state.

**“For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard” (Acts 22:15).**

**“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).**

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).**

**2** (16:29-30) **Salvation:** the cry for salvation. Note two significant points.

1. There was the immediate and reverent search for salvation. The jailer...
  - called for a light.
  - sprang in.
  - came trembling.
  - fell down before Paul and Silas.

The stress is immediate reverence for the God of these men. Their God had caused the earthquake and had saved him from being executed by keeping the prisoners in their cells. (Most likely the other prisoners had gathered in Paul’s cell.) He had heard that Paul and Silas had been preaching about *salvation* throughout the city, that is, that people could be forgiven their sins and delivered from sin and death. And since being in jail, he had heard the two preachers praying for strength and deliverance and for the forgiveness and salvation of their persecutors (which included himself). He feared the God who answered a man’s prayer so quickly and who had such enormous power. He must waste no time in seeking this God and having Him forgive his sins lest he face the judgment of such a God. A significant fact is this: the man was repenting out of fear. Fear is a legitimate reason for seeking salvation despite the minimizing of it by so many.

**“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt.10:28).**

**“And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation” (Lk.1:50).**

**“But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).**

**“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Ps.34:18).**

**“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Ps.51:17).**

**“Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Is.8:13).**

**“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).**

**“For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Is.66:2).**

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**

**“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor.7:10).**

2. There was the urgent cry for salvation. Note: the man knew to whom to go. He had heard Paul and Silas praying and singing about *salvation*. He knew....

- that salvation was what he needed.
- that he desperately needed to know this God of theirs.
- that he and everyone else needed to be cared for by a God who looks after His followers as He did Paul and Silas.

The jailer cried out “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” The disciples were God’s instruments for proclaiming salvation. They were tired and sore and it was the wee hours of the morning, yet they did not put the matter off until morning. They took time right then and there to meet the man’s need.

**“Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength” (Ps.54:1).**

**“Show us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation” (Ps.85:7).**

**“Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation” (Ps.106:4).**

**“Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word” (Ps.119:41).**

**3** (16:31-33) **Salvation—Believe:** the proclamation of salvation—believe. Note three critical points.

1. The necessity of believing (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Believe*—Jn.2:24 for discussion). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” is the answer to the jailer’s question. What is not said is of extreme importance. Note what Paul *did not* say:

- Saved? My good man, such is superstition, a delusion. There is nothing to be saved from.

- Saved? Well, if you have done wrong, right it. And do the best you can from now on.
- Saved? Go to work for God. Put your hands to the wheel. Labor and toil for God and mankind.
- Saved? Man, don't trouble yourself about such whims. Life is too short. Live! Eat, drink, and be merry. Make the most of what life you have.

**“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn.1:12).**

**“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:15-16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).**

Note the promise that the jailer's whole house would be saved. The influence of the head of a household in spiritual matters *cannot* be over-emphasized. A strong spiritual leader almost assures the salvation of his family (see note also DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 16:15 for discussion).

2. The necessity for understanding the Word of the Lord. The man and his household were utterly ignorant of Christ. Apparently they had never heard anything about Him, so Paul and Silas had to instruct the jailer and his household in the basics of salvation. Note the jailer's living quarters were within the prison walls.

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:1-4).**

3. The necessity of repentance and baptism. The man and his family believed, trusted Christ as their Savior (v.34), and they repented of their sins. This is not mentioned, but it is clear, for the very first act of belief and repentance is baptism. Note: they were immediately baptized (v.33). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Baptism*—Acts 2:38.) Also note the man demonstrated repentance by caring for the wounds of the men whom he had treated so badly.

**“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).**

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**

**“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:32).**

**“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).**

**4** (16:34) **Salvation:** the fruits of salvation. Three fruits are clearly seen.

1. There was the privilege of ministering to fellow believers. The jailer brought Paul and Silas into his house which apparently was within the prison walls, and then he fed them. What he was doing, of course, was showing his appreciation for what God had done for him. A believer cannot sit still and ignore people around him, not if they have desperate needs, not if he is a genuine believer. When God had helped him so much, he could not shut his eyes to those who needed his help.

**“For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in” (Mt.25:35).**

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Ro.15:1-2).**

**“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

2. There was the joy of rejoicing. God had saved him and his whole family, saved them all from the grip of sin, death, and condemnation. He could not help experiencing the joy of rejoicing.

**“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (Jn.15:11).**

**“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pt.1:8).**

**“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Is.61:10).**

**“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts” (Jer.15:16).**

3. There was the salvation of his family. He was faithful. He knew the importance of salvation, so he insisted his whole family come together to hear the gospel. And note it was in the wee hours of the morning. God honored his spiritual hunger and leadership and saved the whole family. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Home, Religion*—Acts 16:15 for more discussion and verses.)

**5** (16:35-40) **Salvation:** the effect of salvation upon the world. Three effects are seen in this experience.

1. The world had a sense of guilt over the injustice done. What caused this? Apparently the movement of God in the earthquake. As usually happens in any natural disaster, most men’s minds turned toward God. These men had just committed a serious evil; they were the judges and rulers and they had allowed themselves to be swayed by the influential and wealthy of the city. They had punished and imprisoned two men without a trial. Their consciences bothered them and they decided to do what they could to right their wrong. They released the men.

**Thought 1.** The Spirit of God will convict every man who ever mistreats a believer. No man will ever escape His convicting power. But note: repentance is up to the man. God cannot repent for the man. Repentance is the man’s responsibility. And if the man does not respond to God’s conviction by repenting, he will be judged and condemned eternally.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn.3:16-19).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (Jn.5:25).**

**“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Ro.1:18-20).**

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**

**“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).**

**“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).**

2. The world feared and was humbled. Paul revealed that he was a Roman citizen. It was against the law for a Roman citizen to be denied trial and to be flogged. If the rulers were reported to Rome, they would be removed from office and could be tried for treason.

The point is this: God was using natural events to strike fear and humility into the city of Philippi. God wanted the church at Philippi left alone so it could grow and become one of the great ministering churches in the first century.

**“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt.10:28).**

**“He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree” (Lk.1:52).**

**“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).**

**“Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king” (1 Pt.2:17).**

**“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD” (Josh.24:14).**

**“Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Is.8:13).**

3. The disciples were released and delivered by the hand of God.
  - ⇒ They went to the house of Lydia.
  - ⇒ The word “they” is used instead of “we.” Luke stayed behind in Philippi.
  - ⇒ The first fruit in Europe was born. There was now a Christian fellowship or church in Philippi: Lydia, the slave girl, the jailer, and perhaps Clement. Euodia and Syntyche were also saved on this first mission to Philippi (cp. Ph.4:2-3).

**Thought 1.** God is able to deliver the believer through all trials, and He will deliver and work all things out for good until He is ready to take the believer on home to heaven.

**“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Ro.8:28).**

**“There hath no temptation [trial] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).**

**“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us” (2 Cor.1:10).**

**“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).**

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).**

**“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:15-16).**

**“The Lord knoweth how to deliever the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).**

| CHAPTER 17  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
|   | <b>G. Thessalonica, A Most Important City: The Message that Turned the World Upside Down,<sup>DS1</sup> 17:1-9</b>   | <p>tude, and of the chief women not a few.</p> <p>5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.</p> <p>6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;</p> <p>7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.</p> <p>8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.</p> <p>9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.</p> | <p>c. Many influential women</p> <p><b>4 The world's reaction to the message</b></p> <p>a. The reaction of the religionists<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>b. The reaction of the loafers, the idle, the disorderly</p> <p>c. The reaction of the average citizen</p> <p><b>5 The charge against the message</b></p> <p>a. Is revolutionary; is insurrection</p> <p>b. Is a claim that Jesus is King</p> <p><b>6 The world's fear of the message: Feared the loss of material possessions &amp; positions</b></p> |
| <b>1 The messenger</b>  | <p>Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:</p> <p>2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,</p> <p>3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.</p> <p>4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multi-</p> |  |   |
| <b>2 The message</b>  |  |  |   |
| <b>3 The results of the message: Many believed</b>  |  |  |   |
| <b>4 The world's reaction to the message</b>  |  |  |   |
| <b>5 The charge against the message</b>   |  |  |   |
| <b>6 The world's fear of the message: Feared the loss of material possessions &amp; positions</b> |  |  |   |

**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**G. Thessalonica, a Most Important City: The Message that Turned the World Upside Down, 17:1-9**

(17:1-9) **Introduction:** this is the message needed for today, the message that turned the ancient world upside down.

1. The messenger (v.1-2).
2. The message (v.2-3).
3. The results of the message: many believed (v.4).
4. The world's reaction to the message (v.5).
5. The charge against the message (v.6-7).
6. The world's fear of the message: feared the loss of material possessions and positions (v.8-9).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(17:1-9) **Thessalonica:** the great city was the capital and the largest city of Macedonia. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) It had been founded by Cassander, the top military officer of Alexander the Great, after Alexander died. Under the Romans the city had been made free because of its loyalty to Rome. As a free city it was allowed its own government and local laws. The city had a natural harbor, but the primary factor contributing to the city's greatness was that it lay right on the Roman road, the Egnatian Way. In fact, the great road ran right through Thessalonica. It was the main street of the city, stretching all the way from the Adriatic Sea to the Middle East. Trade and commerce bristled with all the accompanying vice that follows such a metropolitan center. It was a great day when Paul walked into the city bringing the news of the glorious gospel. The gospel was bound to spread out beyond to the world rather rapidly. The church at Thessalonica...

- was founded on Paul's second missionary journey.
- was revisited by Paul (1 Cor.16:5).
- included some Jews and a large number of Greeks and influential women (Acts 17:4; 2 Th.3:4, 7-8).
- did not support Paul. He worked at a secular job while there (1 Th.2:9); however, he did receive financial help from the church at Philippi (Ph.4:16).
- suffered persecution (1 Th.2:14).
- was well organized (1 Th.5:12).
- had several prominent believers known by name: Jason (Acts 17:6), Gaius (Acts 19:29), Aristarchus (Acts 19:29; 20:4), and Secundus (Acts 20:4).

**I** (17:1-2) **Minister—Paul:** the messenger. As Paul travelled about proclaiming the gospel, he set a dynamic example for every believer. Note three challenging points.

1. The messenger continued on for the Lord despite great opposition and terrible persecution from those who did not understand the gospel (v.23-24, 39). Paul was the Lord's, and he had been called by the Lord to preach the gospel. Even

## ACTS 17:1-9

more to the point, he knew the Lord personally—His glorious salvation—and he knew there were many persons who had never heard the gospel. Therefore they were dying and doomed to an eternal hell. Even as Christ loved the world, Paul loved the world; therefore, he was driven to carry the message to Thessalonica. He wanted them to at least have the opportunity to hear and be saved.

**Thought 1.** We must not allow opposition to stop our witness.

- ⇒ We must witness out of love for people who have never heard a clear cut presentation of the gospel.
- ⇒ We must witness, being compelled by the love of Christ for us.
- ⇒ We must witness, for men without Jesus Christ are lost and doomed unless they are saved.

**“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).**

2. The messenger sowed the gospel wherever he was. This is clearly seen in this verse. Paul “passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia.” The city of Apollonia was in the district of Illyricum, and Paul said he preached the gospel all the way “from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum” (Ro.15:19). Paul witnessed wherever he was. He missed no opportunity to reach out to those who so desperately needed the gospel.

3. The messenger followed his plan. His plan was wise: he would first reach out to those who were already familiar with the Scripture, to the Jews and to the God-fearing Gentiles (see note—Acts 13:14-16 for discussion).

**Thought 1.** One major reason for the weak witness of believers is the lack of a plan. Believers need to plan their witnessing, how...

- to discover the lost.
- to make opportunities.
- to approach the subject of the gospel.
- to share Christ.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching [make disciples] them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).**

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).**

**2** (17:2-3) **Gospel—Preaching:** the message was critical. It always is, for what a person believes determines everything he becomes and does.

1. The source and authority of Paul’s message was the Scripture. This is critical. Paul did not preach the ideas of other men nor his own ideas. His message did not come from man’s mind, not from man-made...

- philosophy
- psychology
- sociology
- history
- religion
- law

Paul preached the Scriptures. The Scriptures were both the source and authority of his message.

2. The points of Paul’s message were threefold.

- a. Christ died (see DEEPER STUDY # 2,3—Acts 2:23 for discussion).
- b. Christ arose from the dead (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:3; DEEPER STUDY # 4—2:24; note—2:25-26 for discussion).
- c. Jesus is the Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.1:18 for discussion).

3. Paul preached the message in the synagogues for three Sabbath days. This does not mean that Paul preached in Thessalonica for only three weeks. Paul simply moved out of the synagogue and began to preach in homes wherever he was welcomed. Several passages indicate that he was in Thessalonica for a considerable length of time, and while there he...

- worked night and day at a secular job (1 Th.2:9).
- received financial support *several times* from the Philippian church (Ph.4:16).
- apparently led the church in a strong evangelistic thrust throughout the whole region (1 Th.1:8).

**Thought 1.** The great need of the hour is for believers to be just as dedicated as Paul was. Just imagine being so committed to preaching the gospel that...

- when people reject, one just moves out of the worship center into the homes and even outdoors if needed.
- when people do not support the ministry, one works at secular employment, works night and day if necessary, just to have enough to continue preaching the gospel.

**“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome**

also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Ro.1:14-16).

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor.9:16).

**3** (17:4) **Preaching:** the result of the message was that many believed. A real cross-section of society came to Christ. Note who they were.

1. Some Jews believed and joined with Paul and Silas in following Christ. Note a significant point that should encourage every witness of the Lord. The Jews were the most prejudicial people imaginable, yet some were saved and became true disciples. Sin can be overcome in lives, no matter how deeply rooted it may be. Paul did not let gross sin keep him from preaching. He knew the power of the gospel and proclaimed it even to the most bitter and prejudicial.

**"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Ro.1:16).**

2. Many devout (God-fearing) Greeks and influential women believed. These were the people...
- who were sick of the idolatry and immorality of their society.
  - who sensed the presence and sovereignty of the one true and living God.
  - who saw in the Jewish religion and the Scriptures hope for discovering the truth of God and life. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Society*—Acts 16:14 for more discussion.)

**"For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Lk.11:10).**

**"And [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:26-27).**

**"But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Dt.4:29).**

**"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer.29:13).**

**"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hos.10:12).**

**4** (17:5) **Gospel, Reaction—Church, Problems in:** the world's reaction to the message. Three different segments of society react to the gospel.

1. There are the religionists. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Religionists*—Acts 17:5.)

2. There are the loafers, the idle, the disorderly who are always ready to stir up trouble and do mischief and evil. Such people are easily aroused and led to react against anyone and anything. Leaders of government and religion have always found the slothful and disorderly easy prey to use in their schemes to attack opponents. Note how the loafers and the disorderly have no interest in Christ at all. They go about their own interests and the pursuit of doing nothing until they are aroused by some leader to oppose something. In the present situation the religionists used the disorderly to inflame the city against Paul and Silas and the new believers.

**Thought 1.** The loafers are a dangerous threat to believers if aroused. Throughout history they have been used time after time to oppose the movement of God. This is true even in the church. Carnal leaders seldom have been able to arouse the spiritual against God's will, but they have found easy prey in the uninvolved and in the loafers. By far most trouble within churches comes from carnal leaders arousing the uninvolved.

3. There are the average citizens. The response of the average citizen to Christ is clearly seen in the picture described here. They ignored Christ and had little to do with Him. But they could be easily influenced and become very disturbed with Christ and His followers. Note what caused them to become aroused. It was...

- men with selfish motives.
- rumors being spread.
- talk against leaders.
- the ill-informed being aroused.
- religious leaders speaking against Christ and His followers.

**"And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people" (Mt.26:47).**

**"And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them" (Acts 16:22).**

**"And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?" (Num.11:4).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(17:5) **Religionists:** the religionists (Jews) are said to be "moved with envy" against Paul and the gospel. The word "envy" (zelosantes) means jealous. Multitudes of people were turning to Christ; therefore, they were attending the preaching and teaching sessions of Paul. The religionists became as envious as men can become. Note two significant points.

1. The religionists were envious because another preacher was getting the attention and recognition, following and loyalty of the people. Simply speaking, they were jealous of his success.

2. The religionists were so envious that they “moved” to do something about it. Just what they did is seen in Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians (1 Th.2:3-10). The religionists talked against Paul, spreading rumors about him.
- a. They spread the rumor that his preaching...
    - was deceitful (v.3).
    - was from unclean or impure motives (v.3).
    - was a fraud, a false gospel (v.3).
  - b. They spread the rumor that Paul...
    - was a man-pleaser (v.4).
    - resorted to flattery to achieve his ends (v.5).
    - used a cloak of covetousness—deceived to make money—preached out of greed (v.5).
    - was seeking glory (v.6).
    - was unjust or crooked (v.10).
    - was to be blamed, reproached, exposed (v.10).

**Thought 1.** Rumors are the very things often used against the servants of God. However, this is not the most shocking fact. In this case it was preachers attacking a preacher; Jewish ministers attacking a Christian minister. Note this: a person is usually attacked by his own professional peers more than by anyone else. And the reason is too often envy and jealousy.

**5** (17:6-7) **Gospel—Preaching:** the charge against the messengers and the message. The mob could not find Paul and Silas. They were out someplace. Paul had been staying at the house of a man named Jason. The mob dragged him and some other believers before the rulers of the city and made two charges.

1. The charge was that the message was revolutionary, a message of insurrection; it turned the world upside down.
  - a. The charge was true in one sense. The gospel does change lives. It turns men from sin and shame to God and from immorality to purity.
  - b. The charge was false in the sense the accusers meant. They said that the message disturbed the community and threatened the public peace, put people in an uproar and infringed upon their rights.

**Thought 1.** The same charges are often made against the church and believers, especially when the needs of a large number of people are beginning to be met.

2. The message was the claim that Jesus is King. Note that one of the major teachings of Scripture is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth. Paul had been teaching the glorious truth to the believers (1 Th.4:13f). The public at large had misunderstood the teaching, “Jesus Christ is King.” But He is the King of man’s spirit and of heaven, of the spiritual world and dimension of being, not of *this world* (Jn.18:36-37). He came to rule and reign in the hearts and lives of men, in the realm of the spiritual and eternal, not of the physical and temporal. (See note—Eph.1:3.) No earthly power need be concerned about Christ usurping the authorities and kingdoms of this earth. The Lord’s concern is the spiritual revolution of men, the changing of their hearts and lives to live righteously and godly *in this present world*.

Note: a righteous and godly man becomes a much more loyal and responsible citizen than an immoral and unjust man. The latter is much more likely to cause the collapse of his government through the sowing of dishonesty and corruption, immorality and unfaithfulness, unattachment and selfishness, dishonor and betrayal.

“By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked” (Pr.11:11).

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pr.14:34).

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Pr.16:32).

“Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness” (Pr.25:5).

“For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged” (Pr.28:2).

**6** (17:8-9) **World, Reaction—Gospel, Reaction:** the world’s fear of the message. Very simply, the city leaders feared the loss of their positions and authority, esteem and recognition, power and rule, wealth and livelihood. If the news of another King reached Caesar, Rome would react and remove the city leaders and they would lose all. Apparently, the officials only took notice of Paul’s preaching so they could keep an eye on things and prevent the rise of a *Christian King* in their midst. They put Jason under a bond that apparently was to prevent him from housing the ministers again and to see to it that they left the city immediately (cp. 1 Th.2:17-18).

**Thought 1.** Men reject Christ because of what it will cost them. Christ demands the denial of this world and death to all selfish desires and ambitions (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.9:23 for discussion).

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Lk.9:23-24).

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:33).

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).

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| <p><b>1 A night escape by Paul &amp; Silas</b><br/> a. Led by a brave people<br/> b. Purpose: To save them so they could keep on proclaiming Christ</p> <p><b>2 A concerned, God-fearing people</b></p> <p><b>3 A receptive people</b></p> <p><b>4 A people who honestly sought the truth</b></p> <p><b>5 A thinking &amp; searching people: They verified the message preached</b></p> <p><b>6 An honest &amp; decisive</b></p> | <p><b>H. Berea, the Receptive City: A Noble People,<sup>ps1</sup> 17:10-15</b></p> <p>10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.</p> <p>11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.</p> <p>12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable</p> | <p>women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.</p> <p>13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.</p> <p>14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.</p> <p>15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.</p> | <p><b>7 people: They believed what proved to be true</b></p> <p><b>A courageous, protective, helpful, &amp; ministering people</b></p> <p>a. Enemies of the gospel pursued Paul—stirred up the people</p> <p>b. Believers were courageous &amp; protective: Escorted Paul to Athens</p> <p>c. Believers were helpful &amp; ministering</p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**H. Berea, the Receptive City: A Noble People, 17:10-15**

(17:10-15) **Introduction:** this is an excellent study on what it is that makes a people noble.

1. A night escape by Paul and Silas (v.10).
2. A concerned and God-fearing people (v.11).
3. A receptive people (v.11).
4. A people who honestly sought the truth (v.11).
5. A thinking and searching people: they verified the message preached (v.11).
6. An honest and decisive people: they believed what proved to be true (v.12).
7. A courageous, protective, helpful, and ministering people (v.13-15).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(17:10-15) **Berea:** the city was about fifty miles southwest of Thessalonica. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) It was located in a quiet, out of the way place lying on the eastern slope of the Olympian mountains, and next to a well watered plain. It was well off the Egnatian Way, that is, the major Roman road running through the country. Paul probably chose Berea because it was out of the way, thinking the opposition in the other towns against him might settle down. More than anything he wanted to preach the gospel so that lost men could be saved. Naturally, he could preach more freely and reach more people if there was peace.

The church...

- was founded on Paul’s second missionary journey.
- was a noble people, of the very highest quality and character.
- had one prominent member mentioned in Scripture: Sopater (Acts 20:4).
- was described in Scripture only here.
- loved the Scripture and readily responded to Christ.
- had a strong testimony and legacy for loving the Scripture. Many *Berean Bible classes* are named after the Bereans.

**1** (17:10) **Courage:** Paul and Silas made a night escape. Remember they were not in Jason’s house when the mob stormed it (v.5-6). When they returned, Jason and the Christian brothers naturally related what had happened. The decision was made that it would be best for Paul and Silas to escape by night.

1. Note the bravery of the believers. Jason had been put under a security bond, which certainly meant he was not to house or welcome the preachers any more. Also it probably meant he was to turn them over to the authorities for questioning and perhaps trial. The fact that they had to escape by night indicates this. But Jason, right along with the other brothers, showed enormous courage in helping Paul and Silas escape.

**Thought 1.** All believers need such courage. How many would have the courage to risk their lives or imprisonment to help other believers? Many do not even have enough courage to witness for Christ, fearing ridicule and embarrassment, which in most cases is only a mild rebuke.

2. The purpose for the escape was to save the lives of the preachers. But note what their minds were upon: not so much upon saving their lives as upon continuing to grasp opportunities to preach the gospel. People are lost and without Christ,

doomed to sin and shame, death and judgment. And Paul wanted to live in order to reach them with the glorious news of salvation. They could be saved from sin and death; therefore, as soon as he entered Berea, he went into the synagogue to share Christ.

**2** (17:11) **Society, Corrupt—Man, God-Fearing; Noble:** a noble people are a concerned and God-fearing people. The Berean people were a people of the synagogue and of the Scriptures, a people who worshipped God. They were sickened by the immorality and injustices of society, by the sin and shame, selfishness and greed, indulgence and license, unfairness and disadvantage, abuse and violence, dishonesty and stealing, deception and lying, fornication and adultery of men and women against each other and against fellow human beings. They were sickened by a world that had forgotten what it is that builds character and nations:

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| ⇒ righteousness | ⇒ truthfulness |
| ⇒ honesty       | ⇒ justice      |
| ⇒ morality      | ⇒ love         |
| ⇒ goodness      | ⇒ brotherhood  |

A noble people have a concern about God and the things of God. They fear—stand in awe and reverence before God—knowing that God alone is the answer to the longing of their soul and to the ills of their society and world. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Society Corrupt—Acts 16:14* for more discussion.)

**“And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation” (Lk.1:50).**

**“But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).**

**“What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose” (Ps.25:12).**

**“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!” (Ps.31:19).**

**3** (17:11) **Spiritual Receptivity:** a noble people are receptive and open both to people and the truth.

1. They are a people with an even and well-balanced temperament. Their temperament is not...
  - negative
  - sour
  - ugly
  - despairing
  - critical
  - ill
  - downcast
2. They are a people with a healthy attitude toward others. Their attitude is not that of...
  - pride or superiority
  - being too busy
  - indifference
  - holier than thou
  - ignoring or neglecting
3. They are a people concerned about the welfare of others. Their actions and behavior are not that of...
  - being selfish and self-centered
  - showing jealousy and envy
  - pre-judging and rejecting
  - reacting and abusing
4. They are a people who are open and receptive both to other people and to the truth. They are a people...
  - who are welcoming and hospitable
  - who are soft and warm
  - who listen and hear
  - who are fair and impartial
  - who are considerate and charitable

**4** (17:11) **Word of God—Truth:** a noble people seek the truth and seek it honestly. They are open to seeking the truth in the Scripture as well as to seeking it in the world. Not everyone is honest in seeking the truth. Some claim to seek the truth but have closed minds to other approaches to the truth. They are closed to approaches that differ from the approach they wish to pursue. This is particularly true with the truth of Scripture and of Christ. Natural man has a bias and prejudice against the truth of Scripture and Christ. Therefore, in his pursuit of truth, he ignores and sometimes mocks Biblical truth.

But note: this is to be expected. Why? Because if the Bible is true, then man must surrender his life to Christ—all he is and has. And man fears and rebels against this demand. He is just unwilling to look at the truth of the world, that it is reeling under the unbelievable weight of pain and suffering because of sin and death. The only conceivable answer to meeting the mammoth needs of the world is to turn men’s hearts to God. Only God can change the human heart from selfishness and inject enough love and care to meet the needs of man.

The point is this: most men are unwilling to face the reality of truth. Natural man has a bias against the truth of God and His world. But not *the noble* of the world. The noble are those who search for the truth and are open to all areas of the truth, including God and Scripture.

**“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (Jn.5:39).**

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).**

**“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th.2:13).**

**5** (17:11) **Seek-Seeking—Truth:** a noble people are an honest and thinking and searching people. They investigate, study, and seek to verify the message of truth. Note: the Bereans sought “with all readiness of mind” (meta pases prothumias): a willing desire, an eagerness, a hunger, a thirst to know the truth. A noble people do not shut their minds or hearts; they do not refuse to listen or consider.

Note another fact: a noble people do not just accept and swallow whatever is said. Paul himself was the authority proclaiming the truth; but the Bereans studied, investigated, and searched the Scriptures for the truth themselves. And they searched daily. The truth of God and His world has no end; it is unfathomable. Discovering the truth is a daily responsibility. God has made it so (Lk.9:23).

**“Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart” (Ps.119:2).**

**“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Is.1:18-20).**

**“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer.29:13).**

**6** (17:12) **Truth—Commitment:** a noble people are an honest and decisive people. They believe the truth and commit their lives to it when they discover it. God rewards a diligent search for the truth. He reveals the truth to the human heart by His Spirit.

**“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (Jn.5:39).**

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).**

**“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn.8:31-32).**

**“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).**

Note: many Bereans believed, and among the believers were many honorable women and men. The word “honorable” (euschemonon) means both good character and respectable and influential citizens. They were leaders in the community. Also note that both men and women were seeking God, attending the services and studying the Scriptures together, not just women.

**“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).**

**7** (17:13-14) **Ministering—Courage:** a noble people are a courageous and protective, helpful and ministering people. A noble people will always do all they can to stand up and protect those who proclaim the truth and do good. Nobility refuses to let the innocent be unjustly treated and abused. Note how this is demonstrated in the noble persons of Berea. The enemies of the gospel in Thessalonica heard that Paul was in Berea preaching the gospel. So they pursued him and began to stir up (saleontes) the people against Paul. The idea is a volcanic stirring or shaking of the people. The stirring was of earthquake proportions. (Cp. the Galatian Jews who also pursued Paul to keep him from preaching, Acts 14:19.) But note the traits of nobility demonstrated by the Bereans.

1. They were courageous and protective. They immediately took matters into their own hands and bravely took action contrary to the wishes of the aroused citizens. They protected Paul by sending him away. However, Silas and Timothy remained back in Berea continuing to ground the church and to preach the gospel to the city.

2. They were helpful and ministering. The Berean Christians took a most unusual step to show their love and care: they provided an escort for Paul, helping and ministering to him all the way to Athens.

**Thought 1.** Believers must stand together, help and protect and minister to each other whenever needed. In the face of opposition, ridicule, and embarrassment it may be tough. But we must be courageous and brave and support each other as brothers in the Lord—no matter the cost...

- at work
- at church
- at play
- at school

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).**

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 The messenger, Paul, was in Athens, the great intellectual &amp; cultural center</b><br/> a. His spirit was stirred<br/> b. He preached daily<br/> <b>2 There were the religionists</b><br/> <b>3 There were the God-fearing people</b><br/> <b>4 There were the average persons or citizens</b><br/> <b>5 There were the Epicureans or pleasure-</b></p> | <p><b>I. Athens, the Great Intellectual &amp; Philosophical City (Part I): The Preacher's Urgency &amp; His Audience—Who It Is that Needs the Gospel,<sup>DS1</sup> 17:16-21</b></p> <p>16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.</p> <p>17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.</p> <p>18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the</p> | <p>Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.</p> <p>19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?</p> <p>20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.</p> <p>21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)</p> | <p><b>6 seekers</b><br/> <b>There were the Stoics or the self-disciplined</b><br/> <b>7 There were the philosophical questioners of Christ</b><br/> a. Confronted Paul<br/> b. Were disturbed by the resurrection<br/> c. Requested to hear more<br/> <br/> d. A great need: Aimless, meaningless, empty</p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**I. Athens, the Great Intellectual and Philosophical City (Part I): The Preacher's Urgency and Various Audiences—Who It Is That Needs the Gospel, 17:16-21**

(17:16-21) **Introduction:** this is an excellent study on different types of people and audiences who sit before the gospel.

1. The messenger Paul was in Athens, the great intellectual and cultural center (v.16).
2. There were the religionists (v.17).
3. There were the God-fearing people (v.17).
4. There were the average persons or citizens (v.17).
5. There were the Epicureans or pleasure-seekers (v.18).
6. There were the Stoics or the self-disciplined (v.18).
7. There were the philosophical questioners of Christ (v.18-21).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(17:16-21) **Athens:** the once great city was now in its sunset of glory. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) Throughout ancient history Athens had been one of the most glorious cities of the world. Literature, art, architecture, and thought flourished. Prosperity was rampant. But as history has always proven, when a people gain prosperity, most of them become arrogant and self-sufficient, extravagant and indulgent, greedy and unjust, worldly and immoral, slothful and complacent, selfish and hoarding. The spiritual fiber and physical hardness of the Athenians deteriorated. At the time of Paul's visit, the city was the greatest university center of the world. But its citizenry lacked spiritual unity, common purpose and behavior. There were as many gods as there were men. Men did little else than exercise their mental faculties, debating the merit of philosophies, reality, and gods (v.21).

- 1** (17:16) **Minister:** there was the messenger Paul in Athens, the great intellectual and cultural center of the world. Paul was alone, and no doubt he did as anyone would do—he toured the city. But note: he was not swept off his feet by the majestic buildings and splendor of the architecture. Contrariwise, what gripped him was the idolatry. The city was “wholly given to idolatry.” The Greek says “full of idols.” Ancient writers estimate that the city had thousands and thousands of idols, one or more for every person in the city. The idols sat everywhere, lining the streets and buildings, within and without every home. Seeing such a sight “stirred” (paroxuneto) the spirit of Paul. The word means aroused, agitated, irritated. Paul was aroused...
- over the abuse of God's glory.
  - over the spiritual blindness of man's mind and reason.
  - against the devil's enslavement of lives.
  - with compassion for the souls of men.

Note what happened: Paul could wait no longer. He had been waiting for Silas and Timothy, but he could not swallow the scene of idolatry anymore. He began to *reason* and *discuss* the gospel with men everywhere. The word “dispute” (dielegeto) means to reason and discuss. And he proclaimed the gospel *daily*. The idea is twofold.

1. He was zealous, full of fervor and passion, eagerly grasping every moment and opportunity.

2. He knew the stakes were high. The destiny of everyone he passed and saw lay in the balance. They were all lost and doomed unless he could reach them with the gospel. Therefore no matter the cost, he had to do all he could to reach and help them in their search for the truth.

**2** (17:17) **Religionists—Gospel:** the first audience for the gospel was the religionists. The religionists were pictured in the Jews. They...

- were the regular attenders of worship services.
- were familiar with God.
- were familiar with the Scripture and its teachings.
- were the ones usually trying to live moral and just lives.
- were the ones usually seeking truth.

Therefore, they were the logical ones to try and reach first. They were the first ones for whom the preacher's heart would ache, for they...

- had been seeking God and had been blinded by institutional religion, by its ceremony and ritual and form.
- were resting in a false security and assurance.
- had been holding the banner of morality and justice high in an evil world.
- had been holding back the flood waters of evil.

Very simply, the religionists were the persons who were more like the preacher than anyone else. The religionists, although lost and blinded to Christ, were concerned with morality and justice. The preacher's heart was bound to ache for the *blind religionists* to know the truth.

**"I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Ro.9:2-3).**

**"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Ro.10:1).**

**"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God" (1 Th.2:9).**

**3** (17:17) **Seeking God—Reverence:** the second audience for the gospel was God-fearing men and women. The word "devout" (*sebomenois*) means those who worship or the God-fearing men and women who are not Jews. There were many of these in the ancient world, many who were just sick of the immorality and injustices of their pagan society and polytheistic religions. Therefore, they turned to the Jewish religion, being attracted by the emphasis upon one God and the laws demanding morality and justice for all (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Society Corrupt—Acts 16:14*; note—17:11 for discussion).

**"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27).**

**"But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Dt.4:29).**

**"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Is.55:6).**

**"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer.29:13).**

**4** (17:17) **Gospel—Materialism:** the third audience for the gospel was the average person or citizen of the community. These were the people of the community who...

- gave little thought or notice to truth, to what lay behind the world and man, behind behavior and death.
- just fit in and went along with the crowd and society and the world around them, whether just or unjust, moral or immoral.
- were concerned with day to day affairs and practical living.

They were the audience who moved about in the market places and shopping centers of the community, buying and selling, demonstrating concern over...

- appearance and looks
- clothes and the latest styles
- possessions and things
- body and development
- social acceptance and popularity
- position and recognition
- money and property

Note: these are the materialists of the world. Materialism always leaves the human heart empty and longing for something that will fill and satisfy one's life. The heart of the honest materialist is a prime audience for the gospel.

**"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt.6:24).**

**"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mt.16:26).**

**"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col.3:2).**

**"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev.3:20).**

**“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).**

**“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Is.1:18).**

**“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is.55:1).**

**5** (17:18) **Epicureans—Worldliness:** the fourth audience for the gospel was the Epicureans or pleasure-seekers. The Epicurean philosophy has been in the world since Adam. However, the basic principles were spelled out by the Greek philosopher Epicurus (B.C. 342-270). The basic beliefs are:

- ⇒ The world happened by chance, by accident.
- ⇒ If there are *gods*, they are remote and disinterested in the affairs of men.
- ⇒ Man is left on his own to discover the truth and pleasure of life.
- ⇒ There is nothing after death, no heaven or hell, no reward or punishment. Man simply returns to become part of the dust of the earth.

Note how this philosophy centers upon man and his pleasure. It is both humanistic and materialistic, leaving God completely out of the picture. Note also the practical outcome of the Epicurean philosophy. Man is left on his own to discover the truth and his own pleasure. Whatever pleases him, gives him and his society pleasure and happiness, he is free to do. Such a low view of man leads man...

- to do his own thing.
- to indulge self.
- to eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow he dies and is no more.
- to take license against others.
- to please self over others.
- to behave for self-interest, selfishly.
- to ignore and deny the rights of others in order to have and build, and to secure one’s own happiness and pleasure.

Pleasure-seekers are often left empty and dissatisfied, craving for something to fill and satisfy their lives. They are, therefore, prime prospects for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection” (Lk.8:14).**

**“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lk.21:34).**

**“But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Tim.5:6).**

**“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another” (Tit.3:3).**

**“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas.4:4).**

**6** (17:18) **Stoics:** the fifth audience for the gospel was the Stoics or the rationalists, the self-controlled and disciplined. The stoic philosophy was formulated by Zeno (B.C. 336-264). The basic beliefs are...

- Pantheism: god exists in everything and in everyone. The *fiery spirit*, the energy of everything and everyone, is god.
- Fatalism: whatever happened occurred because it was supposed to happen. There is no good or evil in the world. Things are the way they are and happen the way they do because they are destined. There is nothing anyone can do about anything.

Note the practical outcome of this philosophy. People—those who believe in a *god* and believe that whatever happens is *of god* and that events cannot be affected by man—slip into one of two responses.

First, some people try to control their destiny. They discipline and control themselves, using all the reasoning powers and energy at their disposal. They try to control their destiny and fate, attempting to make only good things happen. They even deny themselves the simple pleasures and joys of life. They repress all feelings, for emotions and feelings are only signs of weakness. A person tries to be self-sufficient, indifferent to pain and pleasure, guided by reason alone.

Second, some people reason they can do nothing about their fate; therefore, they just live doing little if anything. They take whatever comes as their destiny and the life they are supposed to live. They make few, if any, significant contributions to life. Of course, this often leads to complacency and lethargy, laziness and worthlessness.

The disciplined, the self-controlled, and the legalist often ache for release, for a spirit of joy and rejoicing. And they, along with the lethargic, complacent, and fatalist, often ache for the care and interest of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are often a prime audience for the gospel.

**“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (Gal.4:10-11).**

**“For bodily exercise [discipline] profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim.4:8).**

**7** (17:18-21) **Philosophers:** the sixth audience of the gospel was the philosophical questioners of Christ. Note several points.

1. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers confronted Paul. Some mocked him to his face, calling him a “babbler.” Others took him more seriously, saying that he was presenting a new and *strange god* to the people.

**Thought 1.** Paul endured the mockery, stood his ground and refused to be dismissed. He wanted the chance to preach the gospel so that some might be saved. What a dynamic example for us—willing to bear mockery in order to try and reach some of the mockers for Christ!

2. It was Jesus and the resurrection that confounded the philosophers. Note: Paul was proclaiming Jesus as *the personal God*...

- the God who is vitally interested in our lives, interested enough to come to earth and live and die for us.
- the God who is so interested in us that He has ordained a day when He will resurrect all of us to face Him and give an account of our lives.

3. The philosophers brought Paul to the Areopagus, which is the Greek for Mars Hill. It is not known whether Paul was asked to share his *god* with a congregation of all the interested philosophers of the city or before the official court of the city. Whatever the case, he would be surrounded by a throng of people who had followed him to Mars Hill. Paul was anxious to preach Christ.

4. The great need of the philosophers is clearly stated by Scripture. They were...

- |               |                              |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| • aimless     | • empty                      |
| • meaningless | • without profitable purpose |

They had searched every philosophy and thought, belief and position in the known world at that time, and they had come short in finding the truth—the one true and living God. They had searched and ended up empty for so long that they found meaning in life only by listening to new and novel ideas. They were hopeless in discovering the one all-embracing Being of truth.

**“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Ro.1:22).**

**“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor.1:19-21).**

**“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought” (1 Cor.2:6).**

**“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain” (1 Cor.3:19-20).**

**“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).**

**“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col.2:8).**

**“This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (Jas.3:15).**

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| <p><b>1 Paul preached on Mars Hill</b></p> <p><b>2 God was sought by man</b></p> <p><b>3 God was not hidden, not unknown</b></p> <p><b>4 God is the Creator</b></p> <p>a. The Lord of heaven &amp; earth</p> <p>b. The God who is present everywhere</p> <p>c. The Creator, not the created</p> <p>d. The self-sufficient</p> <p>e. The giver of life &amp; breath &amp; all things</p> <p><b>5 God guides the history of all men &amp; nations</b></p> <p>a. All men come from one source</p> <p>b. All men are appointed a <i>time</i> to live &amp; are given "bounds"</p> <p><b>6 God has a great purpose for creating man: To seek &amp; know Him</b></p> <p>a. God can be found: Is</p> | <p><b>J. Athens (Part II): Preaching to a Heathen People, 17:22-34</b></p> <p>22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.</p> <p>23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.</p> <p>24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;</p> <p>25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;</p> <p>26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;</p> <p>27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him though he be not far from,</p> | <p>every one of us:</p> <p>28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.</p> <p>29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.</p> <p>30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:</p> <p>31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.</p> <p>32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again on this matter.</p> <p>33 So Paul departed from among them.</p> <p>34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.</p> | <p>not far off</p> <p>b. Man is the offspring of God: Is responsible to seek God</p> <p><b>7 God now demands repentance<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p>a. Because of man's sin—his idolatry</p> <p>b. Because the days of ignorance are over</p> <p><b>8 God has appointed a day to judge the world</b></p> <p>a. The judgment: Righteousness</p> <p>b. The judge: Jesus Christ</p> <p>c. The surety of judgment: Jesus' resurrection</p> <p><b>9 The results of the message</b></p> <p>a. Some mocked</p> <p>b. Some put off</p> <p>c. The preacher turned from them</p> <p>d. Some believed</p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**J. Athens (Part II): Preaching to a Heathen People, 17:22-34**

(17:22-34) **Introduction:** the message to the heathen people is a message that should be heard by every unbeliever.

1. Paul preached on Mars Hill (v.22).
2. God was sought by man (v.22).
3. God was not hidden, not unknown (v.23).
4. God is the Creator (v.24-25).
5. God guides the history of all men and nations (v.26).
6. God has a great purpose for creating man: to seek and know Him (v.27-28).
7. God now demands repentance (v.29-30).
8. God has appointed a day to judge the world (v.31).
9. The results of the message (v.32-34).

**1** (17:22) **Gospel—Preaching:** Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill ready to preach. He stood where so many of the world's great philosophers had stood, philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. They had expounded the great thoughts of their philosophies; now Paul was about to proclaim the great truths of God. The official court sat before him and a large crowd of interested philosophers and poets and citizens surrounded him. There they sat and stood, all heathens, completely void of any knowledge of the living and true God. The most momentous moment of their lives was about to take place. They were about to hear the most glorious news ever proclaimed to man: God had revealed Himself and made Himself known to man. He had sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to earth to save man from sin, death, and judgment to come. God was deeply concerned with the welfare of man. Paul's message included eight points.

**2** (17:22) **Man, Seeking God:** God was sought by man. Note the words, *You are very superstitious, very religious* (hos desidaimonesterous). The word can be equally translated either way. The fact that man is religious and superstitious reveals he is searching for God. Men worship because they seek God. Their hearts...

- are restless, searching for peace and life with God.
- are hungry, seeking to have God's care and provision.

- are fearful, seeking to have God’s protection.

“But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?...And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job 28:12, 28).

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved” (Jer.8:20).

“Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name” (Amos 5:8).

**3** (17:23) **God—Idolatry:** God is not hidden, not unknown. As Paul had walked throughout the great city of Athens, he had read many of the inscriptions written on the monuments and idols. One in particular had caught his attention: the altar “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD” (AGNOSTO THEO). Note several facts.

1. The word “devotions” (ta sebasmata) means the objects of worship such as idols, altars, images.
2. The people acknowledged there was an unknown god, and they worshipped him. But they did not know him.

None of the gods satisfied the people. Their lives and their religions were still empty and missing something. The restlessness, hunger, and fear were still in their hearts and minds, especially in lonely moments. None of the religions or gods created by man’s imagination satisfied and met their needs. All they could do was worship *an unknown god*; they knew nothing about him, yet they worshipped him.

Note what Paul did: he declared that he knew the unknown God. He personally knew Him, and it was He whom Paul declared.

“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Judg.2:10).

“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge” (Jer.4:22).

“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Ro.1:14-16).

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:1-4).

**4** (17:24-25) **God, Creator:** God is the Creator. Paul declared six significant points about God as Creator.

1. God made the world and all things therein (cosmos, the whole universe). The point is striking. There is only One God, One who...

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| • is supreme          | • has created the world (cosmos, universe)              |
| • is absolute         | • has created everything in the world                   |
| • is all powerful     | • has created man himself (who is part of the universe) |
| • is all encompassing |   |

“Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee” (Neh.9:6; cp. Acts 14:15).

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb.11:3).

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen.1:1).

Note the point: if there is only One Supreme God, then there are no other gods. All other gods are false. They are only the creation of man’s mind and the object of man’s desires.

**Thought 1.** Men of every generation need to heed this point, for men worship many false gods and idols. They put their trust and confidence in the things of this world such as...

- |            |             |              |
|------------|-------------|--------------|
| • money    | • houses    | • property   |
| • position | • fame      | • cars       |
| • clothes  | • education | • government |
| • religion | • self      | • mankind    |

Any of these and a host of other things can become the *gods* of present day man, the primary objects of his trust and attention, energy and efforts, hope and confidence. But note the declaration of Paul: there is only One God; only One who can look after and take care of man; only One who created the universe. There is no other God worthy of the trust, worship, time, and energy of man.

2. God is the Lord of heaven and earth. He is the Master, the Ruler over all. The point is clear. As Lord, the Unknown God of man is the One to whom all men owe their allegiance and worship. Men are not to bow before nor serve any other god. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Lord*—Acts 2:36 for more discussion.)

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever” (1 Tim.1:17).

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Rev.19:6).

“The LORD shall reign for ever and ever” (Ex.15:18).

“And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?” (2 Chron.20:6).

“For the kingdom is the LORD’s: and he is the governor among the nations” (Ps.22:28).

“Who is the King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory” (Ps.24:10).

3. God is the Creator, not the created. He does not dwell in temples made with man’s hands.
  - ⇒ Man’s ideas and imaginations about God *are not God*. Man cannot create God out of his mind.
  - ⇒ Man’s temples built to hold the presence of God *cannot contain God*. God is above the heavens. He is the Creator, the Lord of heaven and earth.

**Thought 1.** Men often worship what they have *made with their hands* and minds. It may be a man-made religion or some man-made thing in the world. Whatever it is, it is false. It is only a creation of man himself and cannot do him any good beyond this world. There is only One God, and He is the *Creator* of man, not the *created*.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen.1:1).

“Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee” (Neh.9:6).

“He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7).

“Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands” (Ps.102:25).

“And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein” (Acts 14:15).

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb.11:3).

4. God is the Self-Sufficient One. He needs nothing. Men may think God needs them, their lives, worship, offerings, and service; but God does not need men. He needs nothing that man has. Man cannot help or benefit God at all.

The point is shocking to the mind of man. It means that all man is and has, himself and his world, are *free* gifts of God. God has made man because God is loving and gracious and giving, not because He needs man. Man has nothing to offer God; man does not exist because God needs him. Man exists because God loves and wanted to demonstrate His love to man.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever” (Mt.6:13).

“Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou?” (Job 9:12).

“That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth” (Ps.83:18).

“The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me” (Lev.25:23).

“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee” (1 Chron.29:14).

“The earth is the LORD’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Ps.24:1).

5. God is the Giver of life and breath and all things. He is the sole source of man’s existence, the One who gives and sustains life. Note: God is actively involved in *giving* three things to all beings...

- life
- breath
- all things

Everything that man has and that concerns man comes from God’s hands. God is not remote, off in outer space someplace, unreachable. He is actively involved in the life of man, even in the very breath of man and in the giving of *all things*.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas.1:17).

“Thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified” (Dan.5:23).

**5** (17:26) **God, Sovereignty:** God guides the history of all men and nations. This is a phenomenal revelation.

1. All men come from one source, from God Himself. All men have the same blood and nature. No man or nation is above another. All are equal; all stand before God. No one is a favorite of God. God shows no partiality to one person over another: to Jew or Gentile, to religionist or heathen.

2. All men and nations are “appointed a time” to live and are given “bounds” within which to live. God oversees the birth and life of every person and nation. He is actively involved in the world and in the lives of people. Man just needs to acknowledge and reach out to Him and to Him alone; then man will come to know the glorious care and guidance of God’s hand.

**Thought 1.** Note how God is in control of human history, both of nations and of individuals. He rules over all, guiding and directing and keeping everyone within certain bounds. What is so desperately needed is for men to put their trust in God so that they may come to know His personal care in their lives.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever” (Mt.6:13).

“The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever” (Ps.29:10).

“That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth” (Ps.83:18).

“The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved” (Ps.93:1).

“Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places” (Ps.135:6).

“Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his” (Dan.2:20).

“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Dan.4:35).

**6** (17:27-28) **Creation—Idolatry:** God has a great purpose for creating men—that men might find and know God. Man should never have turned away from God and fallen into idolatry (cp. Ro.1:18-32). But since man has, he desperately needs to seek God, to do all he can to find God. There are two reasons given as to why man should seek to find God.

1. God is not far off. He is near everyone of us. He can be found. How close is God? It is in God that we live, move, and have our being. He and His works are all about us. If we only look, we can see how He gives and sustains our lives and movement. We will find Him, and once we have found Him, we can call upon Him and He will make Himself known to us. Note: men should see God in natural revelation, in the world all about them.

2. Man is the offspring of God (v.28-29). Therefore, man is responsible for seeking God. Paul quotes the Grecian poet Aratus (about B.C. 270). The point is forceful:

⇒ If man is the offspring of God, then idols are *less* than man, for idols are made by the mind of man. Man is superior to idols; therefore, to worship idols is to degrade the exalted position God has given man.

⇒ If man is the offspring of God, then something created by man is less than God. God is above everything man makes. Therefore, to exalt the works of man’s hand above God is to degrade the exalted position of both God and man.

“But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Dt.4:29).

“Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore” (Ps.105:4).

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near” (Is.55:6).

“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you” (Hos.10:12).

**7** (17:29-30) **Repentance:** God now demands that all men repent. There are two reasons why man is to repent.

1. Man is to repent because of his sin and idolatry. Man is not to worship idols of any sort, whether invisible or visible, of the mind or of materials, of the imagination or of the world. Note how the exhortation is worded: “We ought not to *think*,” to imagine that God is like gold, silver, or stone graven by art and man’s device. The word “device” (enthumeseos) means internal thoughts, ideas, imaginations. Every man has a *concept*, a thought about God. But we should not. We should seek and find the *only living and true God*. Every person is personally responsible for forsaking the idols of this world and for finding God. Man is now to repent.

2. Man is to repent because the days of ignorance are over. Before now, God winked at (huperidon) man’s ignorance—not in the sense of closing His eyes or of condoning man’s idolatry, but He overlooked man’s ignorance until He could prepare man for the coming of His Son. *Now* God’s Son has come, and God demands that all men repent (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 17:29-30).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(17:29-30) **Repentance:** to change; to turn; to change one’s mind; to turn one’s life. It is a turning away from sin and turning toward God. It is a change of mind, a forsaking of sin. It is putting sin out of one’s thoughts and behavior. It is resolving never to think or do a thing again. (Cp. Mt.3:2; Lk.13:2-3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 26:20.) The change is turning away from lying, stealing, cheating, immorality, cursing, drunkenness, and the other so-called glaring *sins of the flesh*. But the change is also turning away from the *silent sins of the spirit* such as self-centeredness, selfishness, envy, bitterness, pride, covetousness, anger, evil thoughts, hopelessness, laziness, jealousy, lust.

1. Repentance involves two turns. There is a negative turn away from sin and a positive turn toward God. It is a turning to God away from sin, whether sins of thought or action. (See note, *Repentance*—Lk.3:3. Cp. 1 Th.1:9; Acts 14:15.)

2. Repentance is more than sorrow. Sorrow may or may not be involved in repentance. A person may repent simply because he wills and acts to change; or a person may repent because he senses an agonizing sorrow within. But the sense or feeling of sorrow is not repentance. Repentance is both the change of mind and the actual turning of one's life away from sin and toward God. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Cor.7:10.)

**8** (17:31) **Judgment:** God has appointed a day to judge the world. The word “appointed” is significant. The day of judgment is set, already determined. Note three points.

1. The judgment concerns righteousness, how men have lived and behaved. Life does not cease at the grave (Epicureans, the pleasure-seekers), nor does life just pass into one large ball of energy with everyone entering into God. Life is purposeful, which means...

- it is planned and guided by love and care.
- it is just and righteous.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt.25:31-32).

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Ro.2:16).

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Ro.14:12).

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb.9:27).

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Pt.3:7).

“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14-15).

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev.20:12).

2. The Judge is Jesus Christ, the Man ordained by God (see note, *Judgment*—Acts 10:42 for discussion).
3. The surety of judgment is the resurrection of Jesus Christ (see notes—Acts 10:40-42 for discussion and verses. Cp. Jn.5:27-29.)

**9** (17:32-34) **Gospel—Preaching:** the results of the message. Note that Paul was interrupted and stopped from completing his message. The results were both tragic and wonderful.

1. Some mocked. In particular they mocked the resurrection. Most either felt life just ceased at death or else a person passed into some fluffy cloud, some half-slumber and half-conscious state of being.

⇒ The idea that life would be so purposeful that a man would exist forever—that he would literally arise from the dead and live in a perfect state of being—was just beyond their understanding.

2. Some put off making a decision. They were thoughtful, trying to grasp the message and think through the implications, what living a life of righteousness would mean, the great price they would have to pay. They just were not ready to make such a commitment, not yet.

“When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are” (Lk.13:25).

“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25).

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved” (Jer.8:20).

3. Paul turned away from them. He had done his duty, proclaimed the glorious message of salvation. Now it was up to the audience to repent or not.

4. Some believed. Dionysius was one of the judges of the great court of Athens. Damaris was the name of a woman. Respectable women of Athens would not have been in the market crowd listening to Paul. Therefore, she was probably a woman of immoral character. There were also others who were saved, but they were unnamed.

**Thought 1.** The gospel has the power to reach all: the high, the low, and the unsaved.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn.1:12).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ro.10:13).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).

| CHAPTER 18  |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | <b>K. Corinth, the Bridge of Greece: An Indisputable Christian,<sup>DS1</sup> 18:1-17</b>  | of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. |
| <b>1 Paul left Athens &amp; travelled to Corinth</b>  | After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;   | <b>8 He faced terrible discouragement</b><br>a. His fear  |
| <b>2 He found &amp; grew people<sup>DS2</sup></b>   | 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.   | b. God's encouragement & presence   |
| <b>3 He worked when required</b>  | 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.   | c. His faithfulness to God's call   |
| <b>4 He worshipped &amp; taught every Sabbath</b>   | 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.   | <b>9 He saw God's hand at work</b><br>a. The Jews arrested Paul & brought him to court                                      |
| <b>5 He experienced terrible strain &amp; rejection—but he marched on</b><br>a. He was pressed in spirit<br>b. He was rejected: The Jews opposed & blasphemed | 5 And when Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.<br>6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. | b. The charge<br>c. The verdict   |
| <b>6 He identified with people to whom he ministered</b>  | 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.   | d. The reciprocal punishment  |
| <b>7 He witnessed to high &amp; low</b>   | 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler   |   |

**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**K. Corinth, the Bridge of Greece: An Indisputable Christian, 18:1-17**

(18:1-17) **Introduction:** Paul's ministry in Corinth holds many lessons for the Christian believer. Paul demonstrated forcibly what it takes to be an indisputable disciple of the Lord.

1. Paul left Athens and travelled to Corinth (v.1).
2. He found and grew people (v.2).
3. He worked when required (v.3).
4. He worshipped and taught every Sabbath (v.4).
5. He experienced terrible strain and rejection—but he marched on (v.5-6).
6. He identified with people to whom he ministered (v.7).
7. He witnessed to high and low (v.8).
8. He faced terrible discouragement (v.9-11).
9. He saw God's hand at work (v.12-17).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(18:1-17) **Corinth:** the city was a major city of Greece, a peninsula at the southern tip of Greece with land stretching only about five miles across. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) It was bordered by two harbors, one lying on the west coast and

the other on the east coast. All traffic north and south passed right through the city. It was known as the *lookout*, the *guard*, the *eye* of Greece; and as such it naturally became a city of vast wealth. It was cosmopolitan, made up of Greeks, Romans, Jews, and adventurers who plied and transacted their business by day and frequented the night clubs by night. It was a pleasure-mad city, wallowing in sensuality, drunkenness, and extortion. Its temples were consecrated to the goddess of fertility, Aphrodite. It was a sports-minded city, the home of the Isthmian Games, second only to the Olympic Games. It was just the kind of metropolitan city Paul looked for to spread the gospel worldwide. (See 1 Corinthians, Introductory Notes, Special Features, point 1.) The church at Corinth furnishes us with the longest writings of Paul's epistles, 1 and 2 Corinthians. When Paul entered Corinth, he entered "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor.2:3)—apparently discouraged. He had faced severe opposition in his three ministries immediately prior to Corinth. The Judaizers had run him out of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Even in Athens he had experienced little success. Now, facing Corinth, he was confronting a hodge-podge of every sort, a city of diverse population and culture, a population that was proud, intellectual, busy, and immoral. He was apparently alone, with Silas and Timothy having remained in Macedonia to minister. He was, so to speak, at the mercy of God alone.

God met Paul's need. Almost immediately God brought across Paul's path two believers, Aquila and Priscilla, who were tentmakers by profession. These two godly Jews had been expelled from Rome along with all other Jews by the decrees of Emperor Claudius (Acts 18:2-3). Silas and Timothy also returned to him soon afterwards, bringing news of the firm stand of the Thessalonian believers against persecution (Acts 18:5). Encouraged and pressed in the spirit, Paul immediately entered the synagogue and began his ministry, testifying that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:5).

Paul met with such success that he was forced out of the synagogue by the hostile Jews. He moved next door into a house owned by Justus. The home of Justus became his base of operations. Apparently to prevent further discouragement, God gave Paul a vision assuring him that many people in the city were to be reached for Christ (Acts 18:10). His ministry lasted eighteen months, the longest of any ministry other than the three years he spent with the Ephesian Church.

The converts at Corinth paint a good picture of the kind of success Paul experienced in city after city. So far as is known, the only Jewish converts under his personal ministry were Crispus and his household. Crispus was the chief ruler of the synagogue (Acts 18:8). As was the case in other cities, the largest number of converts were Gentiles, who had earlier become attracted to the Jewish religion because of its stress upon high morals and belief in one God. Judaism was especially attractive to women, especially well-to-do women. They were citizens of an immoral world that gave no rights to women; thus, they found great security in a religion of high morality. However, most Gentiles, despite their attraction to Judaism, were repulsed by Jewish nationalism and rites such as circumcision. It was these who turned a ready ear to the gospel of Christ and who were by far the greatest number of converts.

There were some wealthy converts. Gaius was the host of Paul and the whole church (Ro.16:23). Erastus was the chamberlain (treasurer) of the city. Chloe was probably a lady of extreme wealth with business interests in both Corinth and Ephesus (1 Cor.1:11). Some believers were engaged in legal disputes and others were attending wealthy banquets. These two engagements indicate wealth. However, the greatest number of converts came from average folk and from folk who had come from the most sinful backgrounds imaginable. Remember: Corinth was one of the cesspools of immorality and night club life in the ancient world. As Paul so clearly says, "...not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor.1:26-29).

**1** (18:1) **Evangelism:** Paul left Athens and travelled to Corinth. The decision was by choice. There had been some results in Athens, but the philosophical and intellectual pride made most people close-minded and self-sufficient when considering God and eternity. Apparently Paul felt his time could be spent more profitably in Corinth. No doubt he stayed in Athens long enough to ground the Athenian believers in the faith, then he struck out for Corinth.

**Thought 1.** Note three lessons.

- 1) Intellectual pride closes a person's mind to the truth of God and eternity.
- 2) A person's time needs to be spent where the most fruit can be borne unless specifically shown otherwise by God.
- 3) The servant of God must root the young believer in the faith, even if it is under difficult circumstances.

**2** (18:2) **Discipleship:** the Christian disciple finds and develops people. Note the word *found*. Wherever Paul went he looked for people who either needed Christ or needed to grow in Christ. Whether Aquila and Priscilla were believers or not at this time is not known. But Paul found this couple, stayed with them, and either led them to the Lord or into a deeper commitment to the Lord (see **DEEPER STUDY # 2, Priscilla**—Acts 18:2 for more discussion).

The point to see is how Paul was always reaching out to find people who needed Christ. A dynamic example for us all!

**"Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Mt.28:19-20).**

**"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim.2:2).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(18:2) **Priscilla and Aquila—Hospitality:** Priscilla and Aquila were companions of Paul. They were originally residents of Rome. But the Roman emperor, Claudius, had the Jews banished from Rome in A.D. 52. Priscilla and Aquila moved to Corinth. They were the couple who opened their home to Paul the apostle when he first entered Corinth. They were also

the couple who went into business with Paul as tent-makers. They later travelled with Paul to Ephesus where they settled (Acts 18:18). The chief characteristic of this couple was an open heart and an open house. Wherever we find them, we find that their home is the center for Christian worship and fellowship.

1. They received the young preacher, Apollos, into their home to instruct him in the faith (Acts 18:24-26).
2. They had a church meeting in their home in Ephesus (1 Cor.16:19).
3. They had another church meeting in their home in Rome (Ro. 16:13).
4. Paul called them "*my helpers* [fellow-workers] in Christ Jesus (Ro.16:3), and he explained what he meant. They risked their lives in order to save him. This probably refers to the attacks made upon Paul and the church in Corinth (Acts 18:6, 12-17), or to some other severe persecution that took place in Ephesus (1 Cor.15:32; cp. 2 Cor.1:8). In either case, this godly couple, Priscilla and Aquila, risked their lives in order to save the life of one of God's dear servants, Paul himself.

- 3** (18:3) **Paul, Ministry; Secular Labor:** the Christian disciple worked at secular employment when required. Paul was usually supported in his ministry and did not have to work at secular work. In fact, he was soon to receive financial support from the Philippian church when Silas and Timothy arrived, and the support would free him to preach the gospel and minister full time (Acts 18:5; cp. 1 Th.3:6; 2 Cor.11:9; Ph.4:15). But note this verse. Paul did not hesitate to work with his hands in order to get the gospel out to people. He would do whatever was necessary to reach people and meet their desperate need for Christ and the glorious life of joy and eternity that Christ gives. (Cp. Acts 20:34; 1 Th.2:9; 2 Th.3:8; 1 Cor.4:11-12; 9:12-15; 2 Cor.11:7-9; 12:14.)

**"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (Jn.9:4).**

**"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).**

**"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor.9:16).**

- 4** (18:4) **Preaching—Teaching—Witnessing:** the Christian disciple worshipped and taught every Sabbath. Note where Paul was on the day of worship. He was where he should be—worshipping the Lord and serving Him by preaching and teaching others just as the Lord had gifted him to do.

1. Paul "reasoned" (dielegeto): presented sound, thoughtful, logical points; answered and settled questions in a reasonable way. The tense is continuous action. Paul reasoned and reasoned doing all he could to convince the listeners that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Note there was no sense of bombarding a person in a demanding, forceful, fiery, argumentative spirit.

**"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Is.1:18).**

**"Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob" (Is.41:21).**

**"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pt.3:15).**

2. Paul "persuaded" (epeithen): prevailed, urged, induced, pleaded, begged, sought to move and bring about a change of heart and mind. Paul reasoned and reasoned, doing all he could to reach and help people to trust Christ Jesus the Lord. Again, the tense is continuous action. Paul continued to persuade.

**"And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ" (Acts 18:4-5).**

**"Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31).**

**"Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily" (Col.1:29).**

**"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Is.62:1).**

- 5** (18:5-6) **Gospel, Rejection—Minister, Rejection:** the Christian disciple experienced terrible strain and rejection, but he marched on. Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Silas coming from Philippi and Berea and Timothy from Thessalonica.

⇒ They brought financial support which freed Paul to preach Christ full time.

⇒ They brought wonderful news about the churches of Macedonia growing in the Lord.

Such blessings stirred Paul to minister and proclaim Christ with new vigor. Note three points.

1. Paul was pressed in the spirit, constrained by the Word to give himself completely to preaching and teaching the Word. Note what he was proclaiming: that Jesus is the Messiah (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.1:18 for discussion).
2. Paul was rejected. The Jews opposed and blasphemed the name of Jesus. The idea is that they organized and opposed the preaching and teaching of Jesus as the Messiah, and they reviled and spoke reproachfully of Christ.
3. Paul turned from the Jews to the Gentiles. This was a turning point in the ministry at Corinth. Some Jews were saved, but the vast majority of those reached would be Gentiles. The scene was dramatic and forceful. Paul was not pro-

nouncing a curse upon the Jews, but declaring he had fulfilled his responsibility to them. He was free of their blood, of the responsibility for their salvation. Their blood, the responsibility for their salvation, was now upon their own heads.

**Thought 1.** The Christian disciple is to turn from those who continue to reject the gospel; but when rejected, he is to continue on, not quitting or slacking up. Note: Paul did exactly what Christ said for us to do. He shook off the dust of those who had rejected him.

**“And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet” (Mt.10:12-14).**

**“But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium” (Acts 13:51).**

**“Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labor, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise” (Neh.5:13).**

**6** (18:7) **Humility:** the Christian disciple identified with those to whom he ministered. Rejected by the Jews, Paul could no longer preach in the synagogue. Note what he did: he began to preach *in the home* of a convert named Justus. This says two significant things.

1. Paul strategically planned and located his ministry. He had been preaching to the people attending the synagogue, so he wanted to be located nearby in order to continue reaching those already familiar with the message. Under the leadership of the Lord, he was able to secure quarters in the *most favorable location*, right next door to the synagogue itself.

**Thought 1.** This is a significant lesson. We should always be alert to favorable locations in establishing churches and buildings, and holding meetings.

2. Paul identified with those to whom he ministered. This is a much needed point. He was not removed from his congregation, not high-minded or above others in any sense of the word. He was one with the flock of God.

**“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:4).**

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee” (Is.57:12).**

**7** (18:8) **Witnessing:** the Christian disciple witnessed to high and low. This is clearly seen in that the chief ruler of the synagogue and his family were reached for Christ, but so were many of the other citizens of Corinth. And remember, many of these would be coming from the most sinful backgrounds imaginable, for Corinth was one of the cesspools of immorality and night club life in the ancient world.

**Thought 1.** What an example for the church—reaching both high and low for Christ!

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28; cp. Jn.20:21 with Lk.19:10).**

**8** (18:9-11) **Encouragement:** the Christian disciple faced terrible discouragement. This is a striking picture of just how human Paul was and how dependent he was upon the Lord’s presence and encouragement. What happened to this Christian servant is a glorious lesson for every Christian servant when facing terrible discouragement.

1. Paul sensed fear, terrible fear. Apparently when Crispus, the chief synagogue leader, and so many others were saved, the Jews began to be stirred; and the potential storm of persecution once again lay on the horizon for Paul. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Paul, Persecution*—2 Cor.1:8-10; note—11:23-31 for list of persecutions.) Keep in mind how severely he had been persecuted, suffering so much for his precious Lord...

- his life had been threatened in Damascus (Acts 9:23).
- his life had been threatened again in Jerusalem (Acts 9:29).
- he had been persecuted and run out of Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:50).
- he had faced possible stoning in Iconium (Acts 14:5).
- he had been stoned and left for dead in Lystra (Acts 14:19).
- he had been opposed and made the center of controversy by the church itself (Acts 15:1f).
- he had experienced the loss of his closest friend and companion Barnabas (Acts 15:39).
- he had been beaten with rods and imprisoned in Philippi (Acts 16:23f).
- he had been cast out of Philippi (Acts 16:39).

- his life had been threatened in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-7, 10).
- he had been forced out of Berea (Acts 17:13-14).
- he had been mocked in Athens (Acts 17:18).

The dear servant of God was shrinking from having to face the uproar of persecution again. He was apparently thinking about moving on or else keeping silent for awhile, hoping the storm would pass. This is seen in the very first words which the Lord spoke to Paul...

- Be not afraid
- Speak
- Hold not thy peace

2. God met the need of His dear servant with a vision of the Lord Jesus Himself. Note: it was the presence of the Lord that encouraged Paul. The Lord gave Paul a most glorious promise, "I am with thee." It is the very same promise He gives to us (Mt.28:20). Paul needed nothing else, just the perfect assurance and sense of the Lord's presence, the presence of the One who had done so much for him and whom he loved so much.

3. The Lord assured Paul that he would be kept safe and bear much fruit while in Corinth.

**"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Is.41:10).**

**"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel" (Is.43:1-3).**

**"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (2 Tim.1:7-8).**

4. Paul was faithful to the Lord's call, remaining in Corinth for eighteen months teaching the Word of God. Note a crucial point that we all need to learn. Paul continued on *by faith*, enduring in the ministry. He did not live on spiritual highs but by faith. God gave him spiritual highs, deep experiences with Himself when Paul needed such encouragement and guidance. But the deep spiritual experiences were not common occurrences. Paul had to walk by faith and not feeling. What a lesson for us!

**"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim.1:12).**

**9** (18:12-17) **God, Faithfulness:** the Christian disciple saw God's hand at work. God fulfilled His promise. This is clearly seen in these verses. Some months later a new deputy, Gallio, began his rule in the district of Achaia of which Corinth was a part. The Jews, thinking they might be able to manipulate this new ruler, rose up against Paul and dragged him before Gallio. But note what happened.

⇒ Gallio would have nothing to do with these religious hair-splitters. He had them removed from the court.

⇒ The Jews, embarrassed and shamed, turned against the leader Sosthenes, who had aroused them against Paul; they beat him right there in the judgment hall before Gallio.

Note: Sosthenes later became a convert to Christ. He also became a minister of the gospel with Paul (1 Cor.1:1). How marvelously the Lord fulfilled His promise to Paul, not only in protecting him from harm, but the Lord converted the very leader of those who would harm His dear servant.

**"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever" (2 Tim.4:18).**

**"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb.13:6).**

**"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pt.2:9).**

**"The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him" (Ps.28:7).**

**"But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God" (Ps.40:17).**

|   |  |  |   |
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| <p><b>1 He struck out despite being comfortably settled</b><br/> <b>2 He put himself under a vow when needed<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> <b>3 He made disciples of those who would go with him</b><br/> <b>4 He witnessed faithfully wherever he was<sup>DS2</sup></b></p> | <p><b>L. Jerusalem &amp; Antioch, the Journey Back: The Heroic Christian, 18:18-22</b></p> <p>18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.<br/> 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but</p> | <p>he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.<br/> 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;<br/> 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.<br/> 22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.</p> | <p><b>5 He showed honor to other leaders</b></p> <p><b>6 He was attached to his home church</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE SECOND GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO EUROPE, 15:36-18:22**

**L. Jerusalem and Antioch, the Journey Back: The Heroic Christian, 18:18-22**

(18:18-22) **Introduction:** this is a clear picture of the heroic disciple. In these few verses, the journey Paul struck out on and covered is over 1500 miles long.

1. He struck out despite being comfortably settled (v.18).
2. He put himself under a vow when needed (v.18).
3. He made disciples of those who would go with him (v.18).
4. He witnessed faithfully wherever he was (v.19).
5. He showed honor to other leaders (v.20-21).
6. He was attached to his home church (v.22).

**1** (18:18) **Self-Denial—Zeal:** the heroic disciple struck out despite being comfortably settled. He did not have to leave Corinth. After the court trial and a favorable ruling by the new procounsel Gallio, Paul was able to settle down in a permanent ministry, coming and going and bearing witness and ministering freely. Scripture says he remained in Corinth for a good while, for many days. Ministering freely without the pressure and strain of open abuse and opposition was a real treat for Paul (see note—Acts 18:9-11 for the constant strain of persecution Paul had suffered up to this time). No man could blame Paul for settling down and carrying on a dynamic ministry in Corinth.

- ⇒ He was protected by Gallio’s ruling.
- ⇒ He was having phenomenal results.
- ⇒ He was loved by many of the believers.
- ⇒ He was in a strategic city of commerce and trade which would assure the spread of the gospel far and wide.

But note a critical fact. God had not called Paul to be the minister of a local church. Paul was called to carry the gospel forth as an evangelist and a missionary. To remain in Corinth as a local church minister would be against God’s will. Paul would miss God’s great call for his life.

The point is this: being the heroic believer that he was, Paul...

- struck out because it was the only way to fulfill God’s purpose for his life.
- struck out despite being comfortably settled.
- struck out to carry the message of the glorious gospel forth.
- struck out to reach men and women, boys and girls for Jesus Christ.

The striking and heroic courage of Paul is seen in that this journey covered over 1500 miles.

**Thought 1.** How many turn away from God’s call because of...

- family and friends
- success and acceptance
- position and prestige
- possessions and materialism
- security and safety

The heroic believer refuses to miss God’s will and call for his life. He denies himself and takes up his cross daily and follows Christ, no matter where it takes him.

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Lk.9:23-24).**

**“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).**

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Tim.1:6).

**2** (18:18) **Vows:** the heroic disciple put himself under vows when needed. When Paul left Corinth he took some vow before the Lord, refusing to cut his hair until the vow was fulfilled. It was completed when he reached Cenchrea and he cut his hair. What was the vow? Was it a vow...

- of thanksgiving and praise for such a fruitful ministry in Corinth?
- of commitment to break away from such a comfortable and peaceful ministry in Corinth?
- of prayer for safety as he travelled back home to Antioch?

The answer is unknown. However, there is a great lesson for believers in the fact that Paul took a vow before the Lord. Vows are too often ignored and dismissed by believers just as fasting is. Yet Scripture teaches both.

“If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth” (Num.30:2).

“When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform” (Dt.23:21-23).

“Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows” (Job 22:27).

“My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him” (Ps.22:25).

“Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: and call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Ps.50:14-15).

“Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee” (Ps.56:12).

“Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed” (Ps.65:1).

“Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared” (Ps.76:11).

“I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints....I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people” (Ps.116:14-15, 17-18).

“When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay” (Eccl.5:4-5).

“But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD” (Jonah 2:9).

“Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off” (Nah.1:15).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(18:18) **Cenchrea:** the eastern part of Corinth, but a separate town. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) The city evidently had a strong church. Paul highly praised Phoebe, a deaconess of the church (Ro. 16:1-2).

**3** (18:18) **Discipleship:** the heroic disciple trained others. Paul took Priscilla and Aquila with him. Note two significant points.

1. Paul was committed to making disciples, to building dynamic witnesses and ministers. He trained those who were willing to go with him (see notes, *Discipleship*—Acts 13:5-6 for discussion).

2. Priscilla was named before her husband Aquila. This is significant, probably pointing to the fact that she was the stronger and more mature Christian of the two.

“Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).

**4** (18:19) **Witnessing:** the heroic disciple witnessed faithfully wherever he was. Paul’s stay in Ephesus at this time was very brief. But he did not sit still. No matter where Paul was or the brevity of his stay, he bore testimony to the glorious salvation in Christ Jesus. Note that he reasoned with the Jews (see note—Acts 18:4 for discussion).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(18:19) **Ephesus:** see note—Acts 19:1-41.

**5** (18:20-21) **Humility:** the heroic disciple showed honor to other leaders. Note: even the Jews in Ephesus were open to Paul on this brief visit. They asked him to stay with them for a while, hungering for the Word of God. But he could not stay, not now. He had to go on to Jerusalem to keep the feast (probably Pentecost). He was leaving Priscilla and Aquila behind to teach the people. They would be in good hands.

The point to note is Paul’s courtesy to the leaders who asked him to stay. The whole tone of Paul’s answer was a gracious reply. He went to extra pains explaining that he *must*...

- bid them farewell,
- keep the feast,

...but he would return again if *God willed*.

**Thought 1.** We must show honor to other believers always, no matter...

- how important God’s call.
- how significant our gifts are.
- how important people may view us.
- how busy we may be.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).

“Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved” (1 Cor.10:33).

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Jas.4:10).

**6** (18:22) **Church:** the heroic disciple was attached to the mother church at Antioch. Note the words “the church.” This is most likely the church at Jerusalem. Jews always spoke of *going up* to Jerusalem. Nothing is shared about the visit beyond the simple fact that he visited the church in Jerusalem. But note another fact: right after visiting the Jerusalem church he went down to the Antioch church, and nothing is shared about his visit there either. This is probably significant. Paul had just had a most glorious experience—carrying the gospel for the very first time into Europe itself. Bursting at the seams with the joy and the fulness of the Lord, he was bound to desire to share the glorious news with his mother church, Antioch. But he also longed to share with the mother church of Christianity, Jerusalem itself. He had experienced the fruits of Pentecost on his second missionary journey, and he wanted to share the glorious celebration of Pentecost with the apostles and those who had experienced Pentecost itself.

Note how attached the heroic servant of the Lord was to the mother church, how much he wished to share the glorious reports of God’s grace with them. This helps explain his sense of urgency in rushing to Jerusalem.

**Thought 1.** Every believer needs such an attachment, such a sense of responsibility to his home church.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb.10:25).

“Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (2 Cor.11:28).

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| <p><b>1 Two great ministers of the Lord</b><br/> a. Paul began his third missionary journey</p> <p>b. Apollos began to minister in Ephesus<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p><b>2 He was an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures</b></p> <p><b>3 He was instructed in the</b></p> | <p><b>IX. THE THIRD GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO ASIA MINOR &amp; EUROPE, 18:23-21:16</b></p> <p><b>A. Ephesus, the Market &amp; Religious Center of Asia Minor (Part I): Apollos—Preparing the Way,<sup>DS1</sup> 18:23-28</b></p> <p>23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.</p> <p>24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.</p> <p>25 This man was instructed</p> | <p>in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.</p> <p>26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.</p> <p>27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:</p> <p>28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.</p> | <p><b>way of the Lord<sup>DS3</sup></b></p> <p><b>4 He was fervent in spirit</b></p> <p><b>5 He taught accurately, taught what he knew</b></p> <p><b>6 He spoke boldly</b></p> <p><b>7 He was teachable, willing to be taught even by those of less learning</b></p> <p><b>8 He was faithful to his call</b><br/> a. He helped &amp; greatly served other believers</p> <p>b. He reached out to the lost with power</p> |
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**DIVISION IX**

**THE THIRD GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO ASIA MINOR AND EUROPE, 18:23-21:16**

**A. Ephesus, the Market and Religious Center of Asia Minor (Part I): Apollos—Preparing the Way, 18:23-28**

(18:23-21:16) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Missions—Paul, Mission Journeys:** this begins the third great mission of Paul (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) The mission includes...

- a revisit to all the churches Paul had earlier founded in Galatia and Phrygia. This one verse is the only information given about his third visit to these churches (Acts 18:23).
- the ministry in Ephesus which lasted about three years (Acts 19:1-41).
- a return to Europe and Asia Minor (Acts 20:1-5).
- a return to Troas (Acts 20:6-12).
- a stopover in Miletus where he was visited by the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:13-38).
- the final miles to visit Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-16).

(18:23-28) **Introduction:** Apollos was one of the great servants of the early church. Note how he just burst upon the scene in this passage. He is a dynamic example of the strong disciple.

1. Two great ministers of the Lord (v.23-24).
2. He was an eloquent man mighty in the Scriptures (v.24).
3. He was instructed in the way of the Lord (v.25).
4. He was fervent in spirit (v.25).
5. He taught accurately, taught what he knew (v.25).
6. He spoke boldly (v.26).
7. He was teachable, willing to be taught even by those of less learning (v.26).
8. He was faithful to his call (v.27-28).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(18:23-28) **Ephesus:** the city of the great trade centers of Asia. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) Ephesus sat at the mouth of the great river valley, Cayster, and was a fertile land. A description of the kind of trade that took place in the great cities of that day is described in Rev.18:12-13.

The city had been founded to command one of the highways of Asia Minor. It was called the “Queen of Asia Minor,” “The Treasure House of Asia,” and “The Vanity Fair of Asia Minor.” It was the home of the Pan-Ionian Games. But its most reputable honor was its great temple, the Temple of Diana or Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the world. Pilgrims from all over the world became tourist-worshippers (cp. Acts 19:27). And the prosperous guild of silversmiths with their souvenir relics abounded and plied their trade of religious superstition all over the city. It was the silversmiths’ fear of losing their livelihood under the power of the gospel that was to cause Paul great trouble in the coming months. (See Ephesians, Introductory Notes, Special Features, point 1 for more discussion.)

The church at Ephesus had a small beginning. When Paul visited, he found only twelve believers. They had been won to the Lord by the immature but impressive preacher Apollos. But even they were misinformed on the presence of the Holy

Spirit. They seemed to lack a consciousness of the Spirit in the life of the believer and the awareness that He had already been sent into the world (Acts 19:1-7). After Paul's instruction to these twelve, he began to teach in the synagogue. He taught there for three months, but the Jews were hardened and did not believe and they murmured against the message. Therefore, Paul was forced to move the church into the school of a philosopher named Tyrannus. There he preached Christ for two whole years. During this time it is said that the church was instrumental in sounding forth the Word throughout all Asia:

**“So all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10).**

**1** (18:23-24) **Paul, Ministry:** two great ministers of God, Paul and Apollos.

1. The first great minister was Paul, who is seen beginning his third great mission. The first leg of the journey was a revisit to all the churches in Galatia and Phrygia. Note two points.
  - a. Paul was alone. So far as we know, no one was travelling with him. This is symbolic of his faithfulness and commitment to the Lord's call. Nothing could keep him from carrying out the Lord's great mission...
    - not even the comforts of a home and the love of dear friends (Antioch).
    - not the dangerous trips into frontier areas (see note, *Lystra*—Acts 14:8-20; DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Derbe*—Acts 14:21).
    - not having to travel and minister all alone.
  - b. Paul's purpose in revisiting the churches was not to socialize or to enjoy good Christian fellowship. Although he and the disciples would have a wonderful time together, Paul's purpose was more specific: to strengthen the disciples in the Lord. Note: he had not seen them for many months. He loved them and longed to see them, but seeing and being with them was not enough for Paul. There was more to life than just socializing and fellowshiping together. He wanted them to grow in the Lord, to be strengthened in Him.
2. The second great minister was Apollos. Apollos was a new minister appearing on the scene of Christian missions (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Apollos*—Acts 18:24-28 for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(18:24-28) **Apollos:** was a Jew born in Alexandria, one of the great cultural and educational cities of the ancient world. There were about one million Jews in Alexandria, which means Apollos was steeped in Jewish religion, tradition, and Scripture. Somehow he either came into contact with John the Baptist or with his message on the baptism of repentance. This simply means that he knew of John's declaration that Jesus was the Lamb of God, but he knew...

- nothing of Jesus' death and resurrection.
- nothing of Jesus as the Savior.
- nothing of the Holy Spirit coming to live within believers, empowering them to live righteously and to minister in power.

This, of course, means that his message was *repentance only*, coming short of salvation in Christ Jesus. But note his sincerity and commitment and fervor to what he knew. He was *totally committed* to what he knew, and God always honors those who diligently seek Him (Heb.11:6). Therefore, God sees to it that believers who are able to instruct him cross his path. It is at this point that the present passage picks up Apollos' ministry. His ministry in the New Testament includes...

- his visit to Ephesus (Acts 18:23-26).
- his visit to Achaia or Corinth and the surrounding area (Acts 18:27-28).
- his return visit to Ephesus (1 Cor.16:12).
- his visit to Crete (Tit.3:13).

Apollos was such a powerful preacher that a clique began to form in his name, causing problems within the Corinthian church (1 Cor.1:12f; 3:4-6, 22f; 4:6). Paul loved him and longed for his companionship and ministry among the churches (1 Cor.16:12; Tit.3:13).

**2** (18:24) **Apollos—Scripture—Minister:** the strong disciple was an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures. The term “eloquent man” (aner logios) can mean either learned or eloquent. In this case it probably means both. But note the point: it was *the Scriptures* that Apollos...

- learned so well.
- spoke forth so eloquently or forcefully.

Apollos had learned the Old Testament Scriptures by memory and spent hours meditating on them. He understood and believed them, grasping the promises of the Messiah. Therefore, when he saw or heard the proclamation of John the Baptist, he was ready to receive the promises of the Savior and to proclaim them.

**“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).**

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).**

**“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).**

**“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).**

**3** (18:25) **Instruction—Teaching—Parents:** the strong disciple had been instructed in “the way of the Lord.” He knew that John had declared Jesus to be the “Lamb of God,” the promised Messiah; but he had not yet learned of Jesus’ death and resurrection as the Savior of the world, nor of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence and power. (See note, *Apollos—Acts 18:24-28* for more discussion.)

The point to see is twofold.

1. Someone had instructed Apollos, either his parents or some godly teacher who was genuine and faithful in his teaching responsibility.
2. Apollos was an obedient and faithful son and student.

**Thought 1.** This proclaims a loud message to all Christian parents and teachers and Christian children and students. A believer must be instructed in the “way of the Lord” in order to become a strong disciple of the Lord.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn.8:31-32).

“These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim.4:11-16).

“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (2 Tim.1:5).

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim.2:24).

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.3:15).

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Dt.6:6-7).

“That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments” (Ps.78:6-7).

“And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean” (Ezk.44:23).

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(18:25) **The Way of the Lord:** this was one of the first and most primitive names for Christianity (Acts 9:2; 18:25, 26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; cp. 1 Pt.2:2, 15, 21).

**4** (18:25) **Zeal:** the strong disciple was fervent in spirit. The word “fervent” (zeon) means to be boiling, glowing, burning, passionate. His spirit was set aflame, filled with all fervency and zeal for God. He was burning with a holy fire to proclaim the glorious promise that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Lamb of God.

**Thought 1.** The strong disciple is *fervent in Spirit*. It is the command of the Lord.

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jn.4:34).

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).

“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Ro.12:11).

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Tim.1:6).

“ whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Eccl.9:10).

**5** (18:25) **Teaching:** the strong disciple taught accurately, taught what he knew. As pointed out, Apollos knew only the baptism of repentance declared by John the Baptist (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 18:24-28; and note 3—18:25). The stress of this point is that he taught diligently (akribos), that is, carefully and accurately.

⇒ He was true to the Scriptures, weighing carefully what they said.

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor.2:4-5).

⇒ He proclaimed what the Scriptures taught and all that they taught, not neglecting subjects his listeners might not like to hear.

**“For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law” (Pr.4:2).**

⇒ He did not twist the Scriptures, adding to or taking away from them.

**“For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness” (1 Th.2:3-5).**

**“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Tit.1:9).**

**“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Tit.2:1).**

**6** (18:26) **Boldness:** the strong disciple spoke boldly. Apollos followed a long train of faithful witnesses who proclaimed the truth *boldly*. Boldness is an absolute essential for effective witnessing, both boldness in seeking the presence of the Lord and in facing the men of the world.

**“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).**

**“But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus....And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him....Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied” (Acts 9:27, 29, 31).**

**“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46).**

**“Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands” (Acts 14:3).**

**“And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26).**

**“And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8).**

**“For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner” (Acts 26:26).**

**“Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation” (2 Cor.7:4).**

**“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Eph.3:12).**

**“For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Eph.6:20).**

**“But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention” (1 Th.2:2).**

**“For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.3:13).**

**“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb.10:19).**

**“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world” (1 Jn.4:17).**

**7** (18:26) **Humility:** the strong disciple was teachable, willing to be taught even by those of less learning. Apparently, Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos preach in the synagogue service. They could tell he had not heard the full story of the gospel, so they took him aside to share the full message of the gospel with him. Note how humble and receptive Apollos was. There was no air of haughtiness, of being above others. The young servant of God—so well educated, so well versed in the Scriptures, so capable as a preacher, so highly esteemed—was willing to learn from any who would teach him, even from two lowly tentmakers.

**Thought 1.** A strong disciple, one who is truly strong, is ever looking to be strengthened by *all* of God’s people, no matter their position.

**“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Mt.23:12).**

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**8** (18:27-28) **Minister—Call:** the strong disciple is faithful to his call. Apollos was called to preach and evangelize; therefore, as soon as he had the full gospel he was set afire and wanted to go to Corinth (Achaia) and share the gospel there. Apparently he felt the Ephesian church was in excellent hands under the leadership of Priscilla and Aquila and he could be more useful elsewhere. The Ephesian church encouraged him, even writing a letter of recommendation for him to the church at Corinth (cp. 2 Cor.3:1). A letter from Priscilla and Aquila would open the door to Corinth for him and assure his being received (Acts 18:1f).

The point to note is the fire to reach the world for Christ that burned in Apollos. And just think, prior to this he did not even have the full message of Christ. (What a dynamic example for us all!)

1. He burned to help and serve other believers. He helped them *much*, edifying, exhorting, watering what Paul had planted (1 Cor.3:6).

**“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Ro.14:19).**

**“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Ro.15:2).**

**“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:11-13).**

**“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph.4:29).**

2. He burned to reach out to the lost. The words used in this verse show how deeply he burned with the message of the Lord.

a. The word “mightily” (eutonos) means that he used the Scriptures with power, straining earnestly to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messiah.

b. The word “convinced” (diakatelegcheto) means confronted, argued down, refuted to the very last point, defeated in argument. And he did it publicly.

But note: he was not using human reason to argue; he was using the Scripture. And his purpose was to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.1:18 for discussion.)

**“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (Jn.4:35).**

**“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Ro.1:14-16).**

**“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2).**

**“Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily” (Col.1:29).**

| CHAPTER 19   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| B. Ephesus (Part II): Paul in Ephesus—Lessons on Salvation & Revival, 19:1-20              |   |  |
| <p><b>1 Paul arrived in Ephesus, but missed Apollos</b></p>                                | <p>And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,</p>   | <p>10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.</p>   |
| <p><b>2 The lessons on salvation</b></p>   | <p>2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be an Holy Ghost.</p>   | <p>11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:</p>   |
| <p>a. Salvation necessitates full belief &amp; receiving the Holy Spirit</p>               | <p>3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.</p>  | <p>12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.</p>  |
| <p>1) The incomplete belief of twelve disciples</p>  | <p>4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.</p>                  | <p>13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.</p>  |
| <p>2) The complete instruction given them</p>  | <p>5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.</p>  | <p>14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.</p>   |
| <p>3) Their obedience in baptism</p>   | <p>6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.</p>  | <p>15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?</p>  |
| <p>4) Their reception of the Holy Spirit</p>   | <p>7 And all the men were about twelve.</p>   | <p>16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.</p>  |
| <p>5) Their number</p>   | <p>8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.</p>   | <p>17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.</p>   |
| <p>b. Salvation necessitates a decision: Many rejected Christ &amp; refused to believe</p> | <p>9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.</p> | <p>18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds.</p>  |
| <p>c. Salvation necessitates the protection &amp; growth of new converts</p>               |   | <p>19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.</p>  |
|  |   | <p>20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.</p>  |
|  |   | <p><b>3 The lessons on revival</b></p> <p>a. The Word was preached for two years</p> <p>b. The special miracles of God were seen</p> <p>c. The false prophets were exposed</p> <p>d. The fear of God struck men's hearts</p> <p>e. The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified</p> <p>f. The conversion of many took place</p> <p>g. The burning of superstitious books &amp; charms took place</p> <p>h. The Word of God spread mightily</p> |

**DIVISION IX**

**THE THIRD GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO ASIA MINOR AND EUROPE, 18:23-21:16**

**B. Ephesus (Part II): Paul in Ephesus—Lessons on Salvation and Revival, 19:1-20**

(19:1-20) **Introduction:** Paul's ministry in Ephesus was dramatic. It was a ministry that zeroed in on salvation and experienced revival.

1. Paul arrived in Ephesus, but missed Apollos (v.1).
2. There were the lessons on salvation (v.2-9).
3. There were the lessons on revival (v.10-20).

**1** (19:1) **Ministry:** Paul arrived in Ephesus, but Apollos had already left for Corinth. Therefore, the two men missed each other. When Priscilla and Aquila told Paul about Apollos, Paul's heart must have leaped for joy, for another

young man was on fire for Christ. Through the upcoming years Paul would learn to love the young man and to long for his companionship and ministry (1 Cor.16:12; Tit.3:13).

As Paul ministered in Ephesus, the thing to note is his commitment to reach men with the gospel of salvation. He was a messenger of salvation, so he focused his whole life upon sharing that message with those who were lost, hopeless, and doomed.

**2** (19:2-9) **Salvation—Preaching:** this passage presents several important lessons on salvation. The lessons must be kept in mind as believers go about the task of proclaiming the glorious gospel of salvation.

1. Salvation necessitates *full belief and the receiving of the Holy Spirit*. While ministering in Ephesus, Paul ran across twelve disciples who had no association with the church at Ephesus. They were either drifting, or else were meeting for worship in another area of the city. They were just totally unknown to the church and to Priscilla and Aquila. In either case, Paul *found* them, and what results is one of the great lessons on salvation. (Note: they could not have been associated with Apollos, for he would have proclaimed Christ to them after his true conversion. See outline and notes—Acts 18:23-28.)

Note Paul’s question. The correct translation of the Greek is: “Did you receive the Holy Spirit, having believed,” or “...when you believed?” Some have held that these men believed and then the Holy Spirit came upon them some time after their belief. But this could not be the case, for it is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. They were disciples of John, Jewish proselytes, who were still looking for the coming Messiah (Acts 19:2-4, esp. 3-4). They evidently were not Christian believers. They had not been baptized *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Their belief was incomplete. They believed what John had preached, that the Messiah was coming, but they did not know He had already come in the person of Jesus Christ. They had repented of sin as preached by John, but they had not yet received the saving presence of the Lord Jesus in their hearts and lives. The living presence and power of Christ in the Person of the Holy Spirit had not yet saved them.

Note: Paul did not degrade their incomplete faith. He did not rebuke them for not grasping the full message of John. He approached them in a positive manner. He pointed out that they had done well by repenting of sin, for John did proclaim the baptism of repentance. *But John did something else:* he proclaimed to the people that...

**“They should believe on Him, which should come after him [John], that is on Christ Jesus.”**

When the twelve disciples heard this, they responded just as they should have: they believed (v.4), were baptized (v.5), and received the Holy Spirit (v.6). (See DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Tongues*—Acts 2:4, note—10:46 for discussion on tongues.)

**Thought 1.** Note three significant lessons.

1) A person can repent and be baptized and still not have received Christ into his life and heart. He can *confess Christ* and still not have the Holy Spirit. When Paul looked at these men who *professed* to be disciples, he saw they were lacking something. The lack was visible, and he suspected what it was. They were not bearing the presence and fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

**“After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Eph.1:13).**

**“Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest [guarantee] of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor.1:22).**

**“Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit” (2 Cor.5:5).**

2) Belief can be incomplete. Note closely: these men believed in the coming Messiah preached by John, and they had even repented and turned from their sin to God. But they still lacked the presence of Christ, that is, of the Holy Spirit in their lives. How many have changed their lives and are now living moral lives, but still have never accepted the *truth* of God’s Son,  
 ⇒ the truth of His coming to earth?  
 ⇒ the truth of His securing our righteousness by living a sinless life?  
 ⇒ the truth of His dying for our sins?  
 ⇒ the truth of His arising from the dead?

Salvation necessitates *full belief*, believing the truth that Jesus is the Son of God in the fullest sense of salvation.

3) Note that these twelve were baptized twice. A believer is to be baptized after his conversion—*in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:38; note—Eph.5:18-21. Cp. Ro.8:19; 1 Cor.6:19; Eph.1:13-14, “When you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”)

2. Salvation necessitates a decision: a person either decides to accept Christ or else he automatically rejects Him. In the case of the audience who heard Paul, many rejected Christ. They just hardened their hearts and refused to believe. For three months Paul preached boldly in the synagogue of the Jews. Note four facts.

- a. Paul disputed (*dialogomenos*) the gospel. The word means to reason, discuss, convince, and answer questions. He discussed the gospel, asking and answering questions, convincing all who were willing to be convinced.
- b. He persuaded (*peithon*) men of the gospel. (See note—Acts 18:4 for discussion.)
- c. Paul’s message concerned the Kingdom of God (see DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Kingdom of God*—Mt.19:23-24 for discussion).

- d. Many were hardened and did not believe, being disobedient to the call of God to salvation.
- ⇒ The word “hardened” (esklerunonto) means to harden like a stone; to be unfeeling and difficult, standing in opposition.
  - ⇒ The words “believed not” (epeithoun) mean to be disobedient. Take note of this, for rejecting the gospel is not just unbelief. It is much worse: it is disobeying God. God demands that men believe in His Son Jesus Christ. Refusing to believe is outright disobedience, an affront to God, an act of rebellion and hostility against His commandment.

**“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27).**

**“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:19).**

**“Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief” (Pr.28:14).**

**“He, that being often reprovèd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Pr.29:1).**

3. Salvation necessitates the protection and growth of new converts. New converts have to be protected and developed. Therefore, when the Jews began to slander Christ and the way of salvation, Paul separated the believers from the synagogue. He secured a lecture hall in a school conducted by a man named Tyrannus. Note two points.

- a. Paul took the believers out of the synagogue with him. He began a separate church. Why? Because the synagogue was opposing the truth, threatening the faith and growth of the believers. He had to move out to protect the believers and to assure their growth in Christ. (What courage! What a commitment to the needs of men and to the cause of Christ!)

**“He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:17).**

**“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).**

**“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Tim.2:14).**

**“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim.2:25).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Tim.4:2-3).**

**“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1 Pt.5:2).**

**“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence” (Is.62:6).**

**“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me” (Ezk.3:17).**

- b. Paul was a man totally committed to helping believers and to reaching the lost. This is seen in the schedule he kept. People took a siesta between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. because of the heat in that part of the world. (William Barclay. *The Acts of The Apostles*. “The Daily Study Bible.” Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1956, p.155.) Therefore, Paul...

- worked in secular employment in the morning hours up until 11 a.m. (Acts 20:34; 1 Cor.14:11-12).
- taught during the hours when Tyrannus was not using the school (11 a.m. - 4 p.m.).
- taught in the homes of believers in the evenings (Acts 20:20-21, 31).

He literally labored for the Lord day and night. All his energy, mind, body and soul were committed to the cause of Christ and His kingdom.

**Thought 1.** A pointed question that we need to ask ourselves and perhaps of one another is: Have we really given our lives to the Lord? Are we honestly committed to the Lord, laboring day and night?

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).**

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**3** (19:10-20) **Revival:** this passage also presents several important lessons on revival. Note eight points.

1. The Word of the Lord was preached. The Word preached would be the message mentioned earlier, the things concerning the Kingdom of God (v.8. See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Kingdom of Heaven*—Mt.19:23-24 for more discussion.) Paul preached the Word for two years in the school, and note the gospel spread all over Asia (modern day Asia Minor or more particularly, Turkey). Most likely the other six churches mentioned in Revelation Chapter 2-3 were founded at this time, as well as Colossae and Hieropolis (Col.4:13). These facts are known.

⇒ Timothy and Erastus were with Paul at Ephesus, at least for a while (Acts 19:22; Col.1:1).

⇒ Three well-known leaders of the Colossae church were co-workers with Paul: Epaphras (Col.1:7; 4:12), Philemon, and Archippus (Col.4:17; Phile.1:1-2).

Apparently, these laymen and others carried the Word throughout all of Asia during these two years. A true revival was taking place because...

- the servants of Christ preached the Word of the Lord, not their own ideas or philosophies.
- the servants of Christ were committed, completely sold out to Him and to the evangelizing of the world.
- the servants of Christ did not just talk about reaching people for Christ; they actually reached out to *all the area*, went everywhere they could.

**“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Mt.24:14).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)” (Acts 10:36).**

**“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).**

**“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor.4:5).**

2. The special miracles of God were seen. Note these were “special miracles” (dunamis ou tas tuchousas); the phrase actually means two things:

⇒ They were miracles, powers that were not regular happenings; powers that were not the day to day experiences of men.

⇒ They were miracles that were extraordinary; miracles that were usually not seen; that were uncommon; that were usually not performed. Even the disciples had not witnessed such miracles, not on a regular basis.

Apparently what happened was this: Ephesus was a hotbed of the occult including all forms of spiritism, magic, superstition, and the black arts. The people were an emotional lot, sensual and easily moved to feelings and to belief in the magical. From all the evidence, the spectacular was necessary in order to get through to the people. As always, God does everything He can to reach a people. Very simply stated, these “special miracles” show the great love and movement of God toward men. (See note—Acts 2:22-24; Jn.2:23 for more discussion.)

The scene sees Paul working in the tentmaking shop, sweating and having to change his apron and headband (handkerchief) often. People apparently took the clothing to their sick loved ones. In touching the handkerchiefs, the faith of the sick in the God preached by Paul would be lifted to new highs, and God out of mercy would heal them.

As we know (at least down deep within) no piece of cloth or any other material thing has any virtue of its own. Only God has virtue within Himself. Therefore, the healing was done by God, not by Paul nor by a piece of cloth. We who genuinely believe in God must always be honest in dealing with God. Since God is God...

- God has the right and power to do whatever He wills.
- God is love and reaches out to save men in every way possible.
- God knows when a person’s faith is true, when a person’s faith is really reaching up to be saved wholly, both spiritually and physically.

**“But Jesus beheld them and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Mt.19:26).**

**“For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Lk.1:37).**

**“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).**

3. The false prophets were exposed (v.13-16). This event graphically demonstrates how God exposes false prophets. Note this:

⇒ Exorcists were common throughout the ancient world. Many were vagabonds, living as strolling gypsies. They lived a circus-type life, making a living off the superstitions of people. They felt that power lay in using the name of God in a formula. Jewish exorcists, of course, used the name of God Himself.

⇒ These exorcists or priests were seven sons of either a Jewish high priest or a man closely connected with the high priestly family.

Note how degenerate and how far the family had forsaken the high calling of God. Priests were called by God to serve His people as priests. (What a warning to every minister of the gospel! He can fall into a terrible degenerate state.)

⇒ These priests used the name of Jesus over a demon-possessed man. The scene was dramatic as the demon used the voice of the man, rebuking the false prophets for using Jesus' name against him. The evil spirit said he knew Jesus and Paul, but *who were they?* And he used the man to assault the false prophets for using the name of Jesus against him.

Now note the point: a true revival, a true movement of God's Spirit, will expose false prophets. False prophets confess Jesus and use His name in their work. But the power is not present, not the kind of power seen in true revival. A true movement of revival witnesses the power of God at work.

4. The fear of God struck men's hearts. They were gripped with a sense of awe and reverence, of God's power and demand for righteousness and of their need to walk righteously before God.

**"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt.10:28).**

**"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Pt.1:17).**

**"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD" (Josh.24:14).**

**"Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him" (Ps.33:8).**

**"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl.12:13).**

**"Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" (Is.8:13).**

5. The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Name*—Acts 3:6 for discussion).

6. The conversion of many took place. They believed and confessed (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Believe*—Jn.2:24 for discussion).

**"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Ps.29:2).**

**"O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together" (Ps.34:3).**

7. The burning of superstitious books and charms took place. (What an example! What would happen if all the occult and pornographic and harmful books and magazines, pamphlets and papers, pictures and films were destroyed?) Note: they did not sell the items; they burned them. They did not want them in the hands of others because of their lies and degrading influence. Note also the great cost of all the items. A piece of silver was one day's wage, so fifty thousand pieces of silver equalled fifty thousand working days or 137 years.

**"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves" (Mt.21:12).**

**"And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changer's money, and overthrew the tables" (Jn.2:15).**

**"And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made" (1 Ki.15:12).**

**"Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves [heathen worship centers] out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God" (2 Chron.19:3).**

**"And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city" (2 Chron.33:15).**

8. The Word of God was spread mightily, in strength and power, prevailing and triumphing over all.

**"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).**

**"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Ro.1:16).**

**"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Th.2:13).**

**"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb.4:12).**

**"Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them" (Jer.5:14).**

**"Is not my word like as a fire: saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer.23:29).**

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|--|--|---|---|
|  | <p><b>C. Ephesus (Part III): The Way of the Lord Disturbed People, 19:21-41</b></p>  | <p>31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>1 Paul's great strategy</b><br/> a. To evangelize: Asia, then Europe, then Rome<br/><br/> b. To minister to churches &amp; to send forth disciples<br/><br/> c. A great commotion arose over The Way</p>                                     | <p>21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.<br/> 22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.<br/> 23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.</p>   | <p>32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.<br/> 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.</p>   | <p><b>5 The Way was the object of mob action</b><br/> a. There was mass confusion<br/><br/> b. There was striking out against any and all</p>   |
| <p><b>2 The Way disturbed the greedy, the materialists</b><br/><br/> a. The message of the Lord attacked the greed of evil professions<br/><br/> b. The Lord struck at idolaters: Changed men's lives, demanding that they deny all false gods</p> | <p>24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;<br/> 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.<br/> 26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:</p>  | <p>34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.<br/> 35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?</p>  | <p>c. There was frenzied behavior</p>   |
| <p><b>3 The Way was falsely accused &amp; attacked</b><br/> a. The false charge: The message of Christ was revolutionary &amp; blasphemous<br/><br/> b. The reaction: Wrath, rage<br/><br/> c. The attack: A riot</p>                              | <p>27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.<br/> 28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.<br/> 29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.</p> | <p>36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.<br/> 37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.<br/> 38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.<br/> 39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.<br/> 40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this course.</p> | <p><b>6 The Way was miraculously protected by God</b><br/> a. God used a city official<br/> 1) He stated that the world knew about Diana &amp; her greatness: There was no chance she was going to be destroyed<br/><br/> 2) He reminded the people that the city laws were the guardians of idolatry<br/> 3) He said that The Way was attacked illegally<br/><br/> 4) He counselled pursuing the legal course<br/><br/> 5) He suggested the government would not tolerate civil disorder</p> |
| <p><b>4 The Way required great courage, but also wisdom</b></p>  | <p>30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.</p>   | <p>41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.</p>   | <p>b. God overruled the mob</p>   |

**DIVISION IX**

**THE THIRD GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO ASIA MINOR AND EUROPE, 18:23-21:16**

**C. Ephesus (Part III): The Way of the Lord Disturbed People, 19:21-41**

(19:21-41) **Introduction:** this is an excellent passage showing the reaction of the world to *The Way of Christ*. It is a strong reminder that the godly shall suffer persecution even as their Lord suffered.

1. Paul's great strategy (v.21-23).
2. The Way disturbed the greedy, the materialists (v.24-26).
3. The Way was falsely accused and attacked (v.27-29).
4. The Way required great courage, but also wisdom (v.30-31).
5. The Way was the object of mob action (v.32-34).
6. The Way was miraculously protected by God (v.35-41).

**1** (19:21-23) **Evangelism—Strategy:** Paul's great strategy for world-evangelization can be seen here. Paul had launched his mission in the great cities of South Galatia (Acts 13:1-14:28). Then he had the desire to quickly reach Ephesus, the link between the East and West. But God, knowing the generations that lay ahead, led Paul over into Europe (Acts 15:36-18:22, esp. 16:6f). After Europe, Paul struck out for Ephesus, "the gate between the continents" (Acts 18:23-19:41). With the evangelization of Ephesus he said, "I must also see Rome" (Acts 19:21). This was a critical statement, for Paul was saying that the great cities lying along the great road to Rome were now evangelized. Rome, the capital of the world, could now be reached. His prayer for years had been the conquest of Rome, and now his heart seemed to tell him that his prayer could be fulfilled (Ro.1:13-15). Observe that Paul ached to evangelize Spain as well (Ro.15:24).

Now note a significant point: Paul's purpose was to evangelize, but he did not forget to minister to churches and to send forth disciples. The scene was this: Paul was in Ephesus (Asia or Turkey). He ached to reach Rome for Christ, but the churches at Jerusalem and throughout Judea were suffering famine. He sensed a deep need to help them, so before striking out for Rome, he planned to visit Jerusalem with an offering from all the churches in Macedonia and Achaia (the European or Greek churches). Paul was not able to leave immediately, so he sent Timothy and Erastus on ahead to the European churches. They were to exhort the churches and raise the funds necessary for the relief offerings. He planned to follow as soon as possible.

**Thought 1.** The call of the minister is to evangelize and to edify churches and to send forth disciples. All these ministries are necessary and all must be done. We should never forget the dynamic example of Paul.

**2** (19:24-26) **Greed—Materialism:** The Way of the Lord disturbed the greedy and the materialists and those who were working in evil professions. There are two primary reasons:

1. The message of the Lord attacked the greed of evil professions. Demetrius and the silversmiths were engaged in an evil profession, that of making and selling items (idols) that were harmful and damaging to men. Note: their craft was profitable, very profitable. It was their livelihood, the basis of their wealth and social standing. Demetrius was apparently an influential citizen in the city, perhaps the head of the silversmith guild.
2. The Lord changed men's lives: He demanded they face the truth and deny all false gods and commit their lives to God alone. So many citizens and apparently tourists were being converted to Christ that they were no longer buying the idols, and it was cutting into the profits of Demetrius and the other tradesmen.

Note: when a man is truly converted, he does two things.

- a. He faces the truth. There are "no gods which are made with hands" (v.26) or created by the imaginations of men. If man imagines it or makes it, it is an idle, empty thought or else just material substance. It is not God, not the Sovereign Majesty of the universe...
  - who has life within Himself.
  - who is Creator of all.
  - who sustains and rules over all.
  - who is the Savior of men.

"As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one" (1 Cor.8:4).

"[There is] one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph.4:6).

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim.2:3-6).

"Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him" (Dt.4:35).

"Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears" (2 Sam.7:22).

"That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth" (Ps.83:18).

"For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone" (Ps.86:10).

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior" (Is.43:10-11).

**“For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else” (Is.45:18).**

- b. He denies all gods except God Himself. He repents and is converted: he “turns to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Th.1:9). (See note—Acts 17:23; 17:24-25 for discussion.)

**Thought 1.** There are too many Demetriuses in the world; too many greedy men who engage in evil professions—professions that harm and degrade men. The great need of the hour is for some to step forth as the *Pauls* of the world, step forth proclaiming that men must turn to God from the idols and evil professions of this world.

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**

**“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).**

**“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).**

**“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).**

**“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die” (Ezk.18:21).**

**3** (19:27-29) **Persecution—Society—Nations:** The Way of the Lord was falsely accused and attacked. Demetrius charged Paul and the Christians with being revolutionaries who were...

- destroying the livelihood and small businesses of all silversmiths in Ephesus.
- destroying one of the leading businesses of the city (the temple of Diana).
- destroying the tourist trade from Asia and the world.

The parallel with evil businesses of every generation is clearly seen in the charges made against Christianity. The business may involve such evils as drugs, alcohol, pornography, or gambling. But whatever the business, jobs and livelihoods are at stake; and when they are, emotions are easily aroused.

Demetrius stirred the silversmiths to move about and to incite the city against Paul and the believers. They were able to catch two of Paul’s companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, and drag them into the theatre. Note that the mob was “full of wrath,” in a wild rage.

**Thought 1.** Christianity does preach revolution, but not world revolution. It preaches spiritual revolution.

- ⇒ Christianity does not preach physical violence, but spiritual violence.
- ⇒ Christianity does not tell men to take up weapons of physical warfare, but weapons of spiritual warfare.
- ⇒ Christianity does not teach destruction and death; it teaches spiritual conversion and life.
- ⇒ Christianity does not destroy; it builds.
- ⇒ Christianity does not force; it preaches freedom.

Therefore, the charge was false. The Ephesians had no need to fear. The temple, as idolatrous as it was, would not be destroyed by the Christian believers; neither would citizens be coerced to follow The Way. The choice was each man’s. No force whatsoever was involved. All Paul and the believers wanted was the right of free speech, the right to proclaim...

- that *God is*.
- that *God is love*.
- that *God has revealed His love in His Son Jesus Christ*.
- that *God now invites men to love His Son Jesus Christ and to love each other, putting away every evil thing that hurts self and others*.

Note a clear fact: The Way of Christ and of God is the best way for every society. Righteousness, love, and justice always help and build society; they never tear down and destroy. Naturally there may be some shock for a society to go through as it rids itself of evil professions and replaces them with good and healthy professions. But think of the glorious results—the lives saved, the maimed bodies prevented, the crumbling families united, the enslaved bodies delivered, and on and on. Think of the health and strength of a society with no evil professions and little greed, a society with neighbors living for the welfare and love of each other.

**“By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked” (Pr.11:11).**

**“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pr.14:34).**

**“It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness” (Pr.16:12).**

**“Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness” (Pr.25:5).**

**“Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field” (Is.32:16).**

**“In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee” (Is.54:14).**

**4** (19:30-31) **Courage—Wisdom:** The Way of the Lord required great courage, but also wisdom. Paul and the other believers had naturally heard the uproar. “The whole city was filled with confusion,” caught up in the riot. When Paul discovered that his two dear disciples, Gaius and Aristarchus, had been dragged into the arena...

- note his courage: he rushed in and tried to save them.
- note that some of the local officials restrained Paul. These officials were “Asiarchs.” The word means the local representatives elected by a district to manage and oversee the public games and festivals of great cities. We do not know if the officials were believers, but they were at least friends of Paul.

**Thought 1.** We all need the courage to rush to the aid of God’s people when they are being ridiculed, abused, and persecuted for their faith. Too often, when a fellow believer is under attack, we sit quietly, fearing lest we are also turned against. The scene may be at work, school, neighborhood, or a host of other places; but no matter where, we must take a stand by the side of those being abused for Christ.

**“And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God” (Ph.1:28).**

**“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim.1:7).**

**“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Dt.31:6).**

**“I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about” (Ps.3:6).**

**“Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident” (Ps.27:3).**

**“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?” (Ps.118:6).**

**“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my sons; he also is become my salvation” (Is.12:2).**

However, there are times when wisdom tells us to refrain from action. We are to be as Paul, willing to risk our lives for others, but not to foolishly endanger our lives.

**“Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly” (Acts 19:36).**

**“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas.1:5).**

**“Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth” (Pr.19:2).**

**“A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished” (Pr.22:3).**

**“Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him” (Pr.29:20).**

**“Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time” (Amos 5:13).**

**5** (19:32-34) **Persecution:** The Way of the Lord was the object of mob action. What happened next is interesting. Paul and Aristarchus were both Jews, so the Jews began to fear the mob might connect them with Paul and turn against them. The Jews convinced one of their own, Alexander, to stand before the crowd and speak against Paul and the Christians. But when he arose and lifted his hand to quiet them, the mob went into a frenzy, crying out “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” Note how long the cry went on—for two whole hours.

**Thought 1.** Note three points.

- 1) Note how some forsake the truth when worldly pressure is applied. The Jews were against the evil profession (idolatry) as much as anyone could possibly be, but they feared retaliation, so they backed off and refused to support the believers.
- 2) Note how easily led and aroused the general public is by misleading and twisted information. Note what Scripture says:

**“Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the [majority] knew not wherefore they were come together” (v.32).**

- 3) Evil professions and men of greed will always work to incite the public against genuine believers. They will often use misleading and twisted information. It is the only way they can survive and continue to fill their pockets with their evil trade.

“But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues” (Mt.10:17).

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn.15:20).

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).

**6** (19:35-41) **God, Presence—Deliverance:** The Way of the Lord was miraculously protected by God. How God overruled is clearly seen in the verses above.

**Thought 1.** In facing persecution, if it is God’s will for us to be delivered He can and will use men of the world to bring reason to the persecutors and to violence. God overrules the spirits of men. We must always remember this when we find ourselves in the midst of trouble.

“[God] stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people” (Ps.65:7).

“And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of” (Gen.28:15).

“Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is.43:1-2).

| CHAPTER 20  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | <b>D. Europe &amp; Asia Minor, the Great Cities Revisited: The Faithful Minister, 20:1-12</b>   | unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.<br>7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.<br>8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.<br>9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.<br>10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourself; for his life is in him.<br>11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.<br>12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted. |
| <p><b>1 He considered the church above all</b></p> <p><b>2 He served quietly, exhorting much</b></p> <p><b>3 He faced constant threat courageously, but intelligently</b></p> <p><b>4 He grew disciples</b></p> <p>a. By trusting them to be on their own</p> <p>b. By joining them when he could<sup>DS1</sup></p> | <p>And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.</p> <p>2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,</p> <p>3 And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.</p> <p>4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.</p> <p>5 These going before tarried for us at Troas.</p> <p>6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came</p> | <p><b>5 He worshipped with believers wherever he was</b></p> <p><b>6 He preached long &amp; fervently</b></p> <p><b>7 He served tenderly &amp; warmly</b></p> <p>a. A young man fell asleep</p> <p>1) Paul's long preaching<br/>2) The man's deep sleep<br/>3) The man's fall &amp; death</p> <p>4) The man's restoration</p> <p>b. The fellowship continued all night</p> <p>c. The great miracle &amp; comfort</p>   |

## DIVISION IX

### THE THIRD GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO ASIA MINOR AND EUROPE, 18:23-21:16

#### D. Europe and Asia Minor, the Great Cities Revisited: The Faithful Minister, 20:1-12

(20:1-12) **Introduction:** this passage gives an eye-catching glimpse of the faithful minister. (See Map—Introduction to Acts, for a picture of the journey and cities.)

1. He considered the church above all (v.1).
2. He served quietly, exhorting much (v.1-2).
3. He faced constant threat courageously, but intelligently (v.3).
4. He grew disciples (v.4-6).
5. He worshipped with believers wherever he was (v.7).
6. He preached long and fervently (v.7).
7. He served tenderly and warmly (v.8-12).

**1** (20:1) **Minister—Church, Care for:** the faithful minister considered the church above all. There had been a terrible uproar and riot in Ephesus, an attack launched primarily against Paul, but which had also involved the believers. It was a narrow escape (cp. Acts 19:21-41). The point is this: Paul sensed that if he continued in Ephesus, he would endanger the believers. He thought first and foremost of the church, not wishing to bring any harm whatsoever to the believers. Therefore, he called them together and embraced them and left to undertake a ministry in Europe.

**Thought 1.** Every minister, in fact every believer, must consider the church and its welfare above all. No doubt Paul desired to minister in Ephesus a while longer. But he knew he was the center of controversy, and it would be better for the church if he left. He put the welfare of the church before his own desires.

**2** (20:1-2) **Exhortation—Minister—Faithfulness:** the faithful minister serves quietly, exhorting much. So much happened in Paul's life and ministry that will never be known. In fact, if it were not for Luke, the author of Acts, we would know very little about this extraordinary servant of God. He says little about himself in the letters to the churches which he wrote. Paul served quietly, without boasting and publicizing his own efforts for the Lord. He was interested in one thing: reaching people for Christ, not in promoting himself. In fact, this was the spirit of all the servants of the early church. Even Luke, when writing of Paul, does not glorify Paul because of his work but he glorifies the Lord as the source

and power lying behind Paul's work. In other words, even Luke presents the service of Paul in a quiet way, symbolizing that Paul served the Lord quietly, glorifying the Lord's name and not lifting up his own weak efforts (weak efforts that were made strong in the Lord).

A good example of Paul serving quietly and exhorting much is in these two verses. Paul's ministry in Macedonia (Europe) lasted almost a year and involved some outstanding events. Yet we know nothing about them except what little we can glean from Paul's own writing.

- ⇒ There was Paul waiting in Troas for Titus. Titus had been sent from Ephesus to Corinth to work out the problems there and to deliver *The Letter of First Corinthians* from Paul. Titus was supposed to meet and report back to Paul in Troas. But he was not there when Paul arrived. Paul, therefore, began to "preach Christ's gospel" and to minister while waiting for Titus (2 Cor.2:12-13).
- ⇒ There was Paul apparently suffering some serious illness or some awful burden while in Troas (2 Cor.1:8-10).
- ⇒ There was Paul leaving Troas because he had "no rest in his spirit." This refers at least in part to his concern over the problems in the Galatian and Corinthian churches. Titus was running way behind schedule and Paul was concerned. So he travelled on into Macedonia (Europe) (2 Cor.7:5-6).
- ⇒ There was Paul also meeting up with Timothy in Macedonia, probably at Thessalonica. He received reports on the welfare of all the churches Timothy had been visiting (Acts 19:22).
- ⇒ There was Paul finally meeting up with Titus in Macedonia, probably Philippi, and receiving news about the Corinthian church (2 Cor.7:5-6).
- ⇒ There was Paul sitting down immediately to write *Second Corinthians* and sending Titus right back to Corinth to complete the work of straightening out the church (2 Cor.8:16-24). Note that Timothy remained with Paul (1 Cor.1:1), but someone else was sent with Titus, perhaps Luke (2 Cor.8:18).
- ⇒ There was Paul refusing to visit Corinth, waiting until his letter and Titus had time to settle the problems in the church. While waiting he evangelized Illyricum (Ro.15:19; 2 Cor.13:1-2, 10).

Now just imagine—all these events and many, many more took place in one year, yet they were never mentioned. All Luke said was that Paul went into Macedonia and exhorted much. The point is this: the faithful minister serves quietly and exhorts much. He does not blow his own horn. He honors Christ and Him alone. He does not serve by concentrating on building himself up, but by reaching and evangelizing people for Christ and exhorting them in the faith.

**"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" (Tit.2:11-15).**

**"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb.3:13).**

**"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb.10:25).**

- 3** (20:3) **Persecution:** the faithful minister faced constant threats courageously, but intelligently. What happened to Paul was this: he had been ministering in Greece for three months and was about to sail for Antioch in Syria to visit his home church. Somehow he discovered a plot against his life. Apparently the Jews in Corinth had never gotten over the ruler's (Gallio's) judgment against them and had been waiting over the years for an opportunity to get rid of Paul. They were either going to throw him overboard or else kill him someplace on the dock. Paul immediately changed his plans and fled back into Macedonia.

**Thought 1.** The faithful minister faces constant threat because of the gospel and God's will. The faithful minister is constantly pressing for the church and its believers to live for Christ. He is constantly carrying the Lord's message to his own neighborhood and to the world. Righteousness and evangelism disturb people, even carnal believers. They are always a constant threat to genuine believers. The believer must live courageously, but intelligently; he must always be ready to change his plans under God's direction, even as Paul did.

**"But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues" (Mt.10:17).**

**"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (Jn.15:20).**

**"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Ph.1:29).**

**"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim.3:12).**

- 4** (20:4-6) **Discipleship:** the faithful minister grew disciples. These men were chosen by the various churches to help Paul deliver the relief offerings being sent to the Jerusalem church.

1. Sopater or Sosipater was from Berea. He may be the same person mentioned by Paul as being with him when he wrote Romans (Ro.16:21). He was a servant of the Lord who was held in high esteem by the church at Berea. He was the one trusted with their offerings to the church of Jerusalem.

2. Aristarchus (see note—Phile.24 for discussion).
3. Secundus. This is the only reference to him. He was a disciple of Paul, a man highly esteemed by his church at Thessalonica, being entrusted with the offering to the poor.
4. Gaius was a common name, and there are several possibilities as to who he was. Note that he was accompanying Paul.
  - ⇒ There was Gaius, a native of Macedonia and a disciple of Paul who was seized in the riot at Ephesus (Acts 19:29).
  - ⇒ There was Gaius, a native of Derbe and a disciple of Paul (Acts 20:4). This Gaius is most likely the same as the Gaius of Corinth.
  - ⇒ There was Gaius who was led to the Lord and baptized by Paul in Corinth (Ro.16:23; 1 Cor.1:14).
5. Timothy (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 16:1-3).
6. Tychicus (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Eph.6:21).
7. Trophimus was from Ephesus. There are only three references to him. He was the highly esteemed leader in the church at Ephesus who was entrusted with their offerings to the poor at Jerusalem (Acts 20:4-5). He was the reason why the Jews of Jerusalem rioted and arrested Paul. He was left sick by Paul in Miletus (2 Tim.4:20). (Note Paul was unable to heal him. It is not always God's will to heal. But we must always remember: God does will to heal sometimes.)

**Thought 1.** Paul was constantly making disciples, attaching men to himself and growing them in the Lord (see note, *Discipleship*—Acts 13:5-6 for discussion).

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching [making disciples] them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).**

**Thought 2.** Note that these men were chosen to handle the offerings of the church. They show us what kind of men (ushers) should be chosen to handle money for the church. (See outlines and notes—1 Cor.16:1-4; 2 Cor.8:16-24).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(20:6) **Ministers:** note the word “we.” Luke rejoined Paul at Troas.

**5** (20:7) **Worship:** the faithful minister worshipped with believers wherever he was. Note this: Paul was in Troas on the oceanfront for seven days, which means he was there for one Sunday. He was tired, exhausted, apparently having had no break for years. Instead of taking Sunday off and strolling out on the beach, praying and meditating, note where he was: worshipping with the believers. He was faithful...

- in worshipping on the first day of the week.
- in observing the day the Lord arose (the first day of the week).
- in observing the Lord's Supper, the breaking of bread weekly.
- in having fellowship with other believers no matter who they were or where they were nor how poor their facilities (note they had to meet in a house).
- in honoring the Lord with other believers on the Lord's Day.
- in being where the world expected him to be on the Lord's Day.

**“And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day” (Lk.2:36-37).**

**“And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God” (Lk.24:52-53).**

**“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Acts 2:46).**

**“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb.10:25).**

**6** (20:7) **Preaching:** the faithful minister preached long and fervently. He grabbed every opportunity he could to preach despite tiredness and the need for rest. Note he preached until midnight.

**Thought 1.** There is a lesson here for us all. There is a place for long messages and the need for much learning, which means alert and rapt attention.

**“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.10:7).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

**7** (20:8-12) **Minister:** the faithful minister served tenderly and warmly. The story speaks for itself. Note several points.

1. The boy’s name was Eutychus.
2. The boy’s accident was his own fault. He was sitting in a dangerous place, on a window sill three stories high. He went to sleep when he should have been listening and learning.

**Thought 1.** Too many miss too much by not staying awake and alert.

**Thought 2.** Note: there were many lights to help the people stay alert. Churches need to pay attention to the need for well lighted buildings.

3. Luke the physician says explicitly the boy “was taken up dead.” The words “taken up” indicate the boy was examined and moved someplace, perhaps into a bedroom or the first floor of the house.
4. Paul “fell upon” and “embraced” the boy. This is a picture of...
  - compassion
  - being determined to help the boy
  - being an instrument for the power of God’s life to flow through him into the boy

**Thought 1.** Symbolically, every believer should throw himself upon the lost of the world to impart the life of God to them (Jn.20:21; cp. Lk.19:10).

5. Paul fellowshiped all night with the believers. Note they celebrated the Lord’s Supper.

**Thought 1.** What a beautiful picture of sweet fellowship between believers and a visiting preacher! This scene says much to churches about the welcome and fellowship in the Lord that should be extended to visiting preachers.

6. The boy and his family and the church were all comforted by the wonderful restoration of the young boy. The scene is that of a most joyful occasion.

**Thought 1.** When the life of God is breathed into the life of a person, a great comfort results.

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

**“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do” (1 Th.5:11).**

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).**

**“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pt.5:7).**

**“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God” (Is.40:1).**

**“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Is.63:9).**

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| <p><b>1 Paul's passion—His face set for Jerusalem</b><br/> a. His desire to be alone<br/> b. His extreme hurry</p> <p>1) Was "taken aboard" the ship—quickly</p> <p>2) Moved from place to place, wasting no time</p> <p>3) Felt so rushed he was even planning to bypass Ephesus</p> <p>c. Was delayed, so he sent for the Ephesian elders<br/> d. Shared his testimony</p> <p><b>2 A constant, unswerving service</b></p> <p>a. In humility<br/> b. In tears<br/> c. In trials</p> | <p><b>E. Miletus, A Notable City in Ancient Myth (Part I): The Testimony of a Faithful Minister,<sup>DS1</sup> 20:13-27</b></p> <p>13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.</p> <p>14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.</p> <p>15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogylium; and the next day we came to Miletus.</p> <p>16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hastened, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.</p> <p>17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.</p> <p>18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,</p> <p>19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying</p> | <p>in wait of the Jews:<br/> 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,<br/> 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:<br/> 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.<br/> 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.</p> <p>25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.</p> <p>26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.</p> <p>27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.</p> | <p><b>3 A sense of urgency in evangelism &amp; teaching</b><br/> a. Taught the whole gospel<br/> b. Taught publicly &amp; privately<br/> c. Taught powerfully, as a man upon oath<br/> d. Taught Jews &amp; Greeks<br/> e. Taught repentance &amp; faith</p> <p><b>4 A nagging compulsion: To reach the lost</b></p> <p><b>5 A willingness to suffer</b></p> <p><b>6 A total abandonment to Christ</b><br/> a. To complete his course<br/> b. To complete his ministry</p> <p><b>7 A testimony of foreseeing his ministry in the future</b></p> <p><b>8 A clear &amp; pure heart</b><br/> a. He was free from the blood of all men<br/> b. Reason: He had proclaimed all the counsel of God</p> |
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**DIVISION IX**

**THE THIRD GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO ASIA MINOR AND EUROPE, 18:23-21:16**

**E. Miletus, a Notable City in Ancient Myth (Part I): The Testimony of a Faithful Minister, 20:13-27**

(20:13-27) **Introduction:** this is one of the most touching scenes in all of Scripture. It is a powerful message, especially to those who truly serve the Lord Jesus. (See Map—Introduction to Acts, for a picture of the cities and journey.)

1. Paul's passion—His face set for Jerusalem (v.13-18).
2. A constant, unswerving service (v.18-19).
3. A sense of urgency in evangelism and teaching (v.20-21).
4. A nagging compulsion: to reach the lost (v.22).
5. A willingness to suffer (v.23).
6. A total abandonment to Christ (v.24).
7. A testimony of foreseeing his ministry in the future (v.25).
8. A clear and pure heart (v.26-27).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(20:13-27) **Miletus:** the city was only about twenty-eight miles from Ephesus. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) It was a great harbor and commercial center in Paul's day. Its coasts were steeped in ancient history and myth. The city is well known from such writings as Homer's "Troy."

**1** (20:13-18) **Paul:** Paul was gripped with the passion to visit Jerusalem. He set his face for Jerusalem and nothing would stop him from going there. Note two interesting points.

1. Paul's need and desire to be alone. The journey to Assos was twenty miles by land and thirty miles by sea. Why did Paul wish to be alone and go by land instead of sea? The answer evidently lies in his need to be alone. Paul had been given a heavy burden by God to evangelize Rome and Spain (see note—Acts 19:21-23), and he had been warned by friends not to return to Jerusalem. But he delayed his evangelizing Rome and Spain; he wanted to minister in Jerusalem to his own dear people and to be present when the relief help was delivered for the poor. Paul was perhaps being disquieted by the Holy Spirit and questioning what he should do; thus he sensed the need to seek God's face and to think the matter through. He needed to share the matter with his Lord. Note the similarity between Jesus' determination to make His final journey to Jerusalem and Paul's own determination. Both had their faces set for "going up" to Jerusalem (Lk.9:51; Acts 20:22. See outline and notes—Acts 21:1-16 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** The servant of God must get alone and seek God's face for direction in his ministry, especially when significant changes or new directions are to take place.

2. Paul was extremely rushed and hurried. He was taken aboard the ship in Assos. The picture is that he rushed to get aboard and set sail. In fact Paul rushed so much, he left some baggage and his Scripture behind (cp. 2 Tim.4:13).

Note that Paul determined the course of the ship (v.16). He had either leased a ship or the captain was willing to oblige Paul. The scene is that of Paul rushing from place to place, wasting no time, struggling to reach Jerusalem before Pentecost (v.16). He wanted to celebrate the pouring out of the Holy Spirit with the believers in Jerusalem. Note: he even planned to bypass Ephesus. However, for some reason the ship was delayed for several days at the port of Miletus, so Paul sent for the elders of Ephesus to come and meet with him (v.17). When they came, he shared one of the most touching scenes in all literature, a scene that can be titled, "the final testimony of a faithful minister to his dear people."

**2** (20:18-19) **Steadfastness—Ministry:** the testimony of a constant, unswerving service. Note three points.

1. Paul was totally devoted from "the [very] first day" and through "all seasons" (chronon), that is, through all kinds of situations and circumstances.

2. Paul was "serving the Lord" (douleuon toi kurioi), not self and not others. Note the word "serving" (douleuon): it is taken from the word bond-slave (doulos). Paul constantly called himself the slave of Jesus Christ (see note—Ro.1:1 for discussion).

3. Paul's service was characterized by three things.

a. He served "with humility" (meta pases tapeinophrosunes) or lowliness of mind (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Humility*—Lk.14:11 for discussion).

⇒ He moved among all.

⇒ He recognized and acknowledged and shared with all, the lowly as well as the upper class.

⇒ He stopped to help in any way he could.

b. He served "with many tears." He had a tender, understanding, and compassionate heart. He wept over...

• the unsaved world (Acts 20:19, 31).

• the carnal believers (2 Cor.2:4).

• the sensual and apostate ministers (Ph.3:18).

c. He served "with many trials," especially in being attacked by the unsaved religionists (Jew). The point is this: despite the terrible trials, he kept on serving faithfully. (See note, *Paul, Sufferings*—Acts 18:9-11 for discussion.)

**"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (Jn.21:16).**

**"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor.15:58).**

**"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal.6:10).**

**"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim.4:2).**

**3** (20:20-21) **Evangelism—Exhortation:** the testimony of urgency in evangelism and exhortation. Note five important points.

1. Paul taught the whole gospel, plainly and simply. He kept nothing back. The Greek says he did not *shrink back nor draw back*. He did not *shrink back* or *hold back* any part of the gospel. He did not tiptoe around the gospel. The whole truth was proclaimed and taught. Note the words "showed" and "taught." Paul taught so plainly and simply it was like showing the truth, painting it before the very eyes of the people. He did not use flowery speech and big words. He spoke simply on the level of the people.

**"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God...and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor.2:1, 4).**

2. Paul taught publicly and privately. He used every opportunity he could to teach, even going from house to house. Note: his visits in homes were not strictly social calls. He, of course, did fellowship with believers in their homes, but the social visits were used to teach the Word as well.

3. Paul taught powerfully, as a man upon oath. This is seen in the word “testifying” (*diamarturomenos*). He proclaimed the truth as a man of integrity. He spoke with authority, as one who had the right of God Himself to testify.

4. He taught both Jew and Greek. He showed no favoritism or partiality. He was a Jew, but he did not favor the Jews. He was called by God to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and he was severely persecuted by the Jews, but he did not neglect the Jews. He preached to all men. Color, nationality, belief, status, poor, or rich—nothing mattered. He reached out to all.

**“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).**

5. He taught repentance and faith (see notes, *Repentance*—Acts 3:19; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—7:29-30; DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Faith*—Jn.2:24; note and DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 5:32 for discussion).

**“And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.3:2).**

**“Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops” (Lk.12:3).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Ro.10:9).**

**4** (20:22) **Zeal:** the testimony of a nagging compulsion to reach the lost. The words “bound in the spirit” mean Paul’s own spirit, not the Holy Spirit. Paul was driven to do all he could to reach his own people, the Jews (Ro.9:1-3; 10:1). The deep intensity of his compulsion can be seen in the fact that he was probably making the trip against what God really wanted him to do. There is a strong indication that God wanted him taking an evangelistic mission into Rome and Spain (see notes—Acts 19:21-23; 20:13-18. See outline and notes—Acts 21:1-16 especially for discussion.)

**“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jn.4:34).**

**“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).**

**“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).**

**5** (20:23) **Persecution:** the testimony of a willingness to suffer. Paul said the Holy Spirit bore witness to him that bonds and afflictions would come upon him in every city. Therefore, he knew that persecution awaited him in Jerusalem. He did not know what form they would take, but he would have to suffer when he arrived in Jerusalem.

- ⇒ Note the devotion of Paul: walking so closely to the Lord, the Holy Spirit prepares him for every trial he was to face.
- ⇒ Note the courage of Paul: marching forth despite knowing unbelievable trials and sufferings awaited him (see note, *Paul’s Sufferings*—Acts 18:9-11).
- ⇒ Note the enduring commitment of Paul: persevering and continuing on with the Lord despite an unending series of persecution, and despite knowing that such afflictions awaited him no matter where he went.

**“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn.15:20).**

**“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).**

**“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).**

**“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13)**

**6** (20:24) **Consecration—Dedication:** the testimony of total abandonment to Christ. This is a striking verse, but it is also a precious verse, and should be read many times to get the full impact of its message.

1. Paul did not count his life “dear” unto himself. His life was not for him to use and to do as he pleased, not for earthly comfort or pleasure. His life was not for himself; it was for Christ. His life was “dear” (timian), that is, *precious* and *valuable*;

but it was not for himself, not for his own use. His life was the *precious* and *valuable* possession of the Lord. The Lord possessed his life, for he had given it to the Lord, and the Lord was using it to the maximum.

2. Paul had given his life to the Lord for two reasons.

a. Paul wished to finish the course of his life with joy, faithfully and diligently running the Christian race to the end (1 Cor.9:24-27; Ph.3:13-14). Note: he did complete his course, proclaiming its fulfillment to Timothy (2 Tim.4:6-8).

**“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim.4:6-8).**

**“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor.9:24-27).**

**“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Ph.3:13-14).**

b. Paul wished to finish the ministry which the Lord Jesus had given to him (cp. Acts 9:15; 26:16-18; Gal.1:1, 11-12; 15-17). Note what his ministry was—to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Grace*—Tit.2:11-15 for discussion. Cp. how grace is stressed in Ephesians: Eph.1:2, 6-7; 2:5, 7-8; 3:2, 7-8; 4:7, 29; 6:24.)

**“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15).**

**7** (20:25) **Ministry:** the testimony of foreseeing his ministry in the future. Paul was probably thinking...

- of his future mission to Rome and Spain (see note—Acts 20:13-18).
- of possible persecution and martyrdom.

He knew that in either case he would not be able to visit the Ephesian church again. The scene was touching, tender, and solemn. Note: he had preached the Kingdom of God to these men. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Kingdom of Heaven*—Mt.19:23-24 for discussion.)

**“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jn.4:34).**

**“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (Jn.19:30).**

**“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).**

**“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim.4:6-8).**

**8** (20:26-27) **Ministry:** the testimony of a clear and pure heart. Paul made an astounding claim, a claim which he meant to be a challenge to the ministers who stood before him and thereby to all ministers of all ages.

1. He was free from the blood of all men. If any man was unsaved, it was the man’s fault (cp. Ezk.33:6).

2. The reason he was free was that he had proclaimed all the counsel of God. He had proclaimed the truth, warning every man.

**“[Christ] whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily” (Col.1:28-29).**

**“But if the watchman [minister, believer] see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand” (Ezk.33:6).**

**Thought 1.** The testimony of Paul should be the claim of every preacher and teacher in the church.

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| <p><b>1 Guard yourselves &amp; the church</b></p> <p><b>2 Feed the church of God</b></p> <p>a. Bc. God has purchased it with His own blood<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p>b. Bc. you are overseers, elders, &amp; shepherds</p> <p>c. Bc. false teachers will come in<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>1) From the outside</p> <p>2) From among you</p> <p>3) Pervert the truth</p> <p>4) Purpose: To draw away disciples</p> <p>d. Bc. of Paul's supreme example of faithfulness</p> <p><b>3 Live for God &amp; for God's Word</b></p> <p>a. God &amp; His Word are able to build you up</p> | <p><b>F. Miletus (Part II): The Last Words to Church Leaders, 20:28-38</b></p> <p>28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.</p> <p>29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.</p> <p>30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.</p> <p>31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.</p> <p>32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to</p> | <p>give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.</p> <p>33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.</p> <p>34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.</p> <p>35 I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.</p> <p>36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.</p> <p>37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,</p> <p>38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.</p> | <p>b. God &amp; His Word are able to give you an inheritance</p> <p><b>4 Labor &amp; give, not coveting worldly wealth</b></p> <p>a. Paul coveted no wealth</p> <p>b. Paul labored at secular work</p> <p>1) To meet own needs</p> <p>2) To help ministers</p> <p>3) To support the weak</p> <p>4) To be more like Jesus</p> <p><b>5 Conclusion: Pastor &amp; people departed</b></p> <p>a. They prayed</p> <p>b. They expressed a great affection &amp; love</p> |
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**DIVISION IX**

**THE THIRD GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO ASIA MINOR AND EUROPE, 18:23-21:16**

**F. Miletus (Part II): The Last Words to Church Leaders, 20:28-38**

(20:28-38) **Introduction:** these words are the last words of Paul to church leaders that are recorded. It is a critical message, a message that needs to be studied time and again by every church leader.

1. Guard yourselves and the church (v.28).
2. Feed the church of God (v.28-31).
3. Live for God and for God's Word (v.32).
4. Labor and give, not coveting worldly wealth (v.33-35).
5. Conclusion: pastor and people departed (v.36-38).

**I** (20:28) **Minister, Duty—Sheep:** the first duty is to guard yourselves and the church. This is a strong charge.

1. The minister must look after his own life, his character and conduct, before he can look after the flock of God. He must "take heed" (prosechete), that is, give attention to, concentrate upon, focus upon, attend to, watch after, and guard his life. There are specific areas he must guard.

a. He must guard against false teaching.

"In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven [false teaching] of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Lk.12:1).

b. He must guard against an unforgiving spirit.

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Lk.17:3-4).

c. He must guard against self-indulgence, drunkenness, and the possessions of this life.

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" (Lk.21:34).

- d. He must guard against the fables, myths, speculations, ideas, and false doctrines of men as well as the genealogies (roots, heritage, ancestry—useless knowledge) of men.

**“Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do” (1 Tim.1:4).**

- e. He must watch and give himself to reading, exhortation and doctrine.

**“...give attendance [heed] to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim.4:13).**

- f. He must especially give himself to *the doctrine* (te didaskalia), the teaching of Scripture.

**“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim.4:16).**

2. The minister must look after “*all* the flock.” There are three reasons stressed in Scripture.

- a. Sheep can wander about and get lost (see note—Lk.15:4 for five ways that a sheep loses its way).

**“All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is.53:6).**

**“The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead” (Pr.21:16).**

**“As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place” (Pr.27:8).**

**“Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting” (Jer.15:6).**

**“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Mt.24:12).**

**“If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Heb.10:38).**

**“Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Pt.2:15).**

- b. Sheep can be seized by the beasts (false teachers) of the world and within the church (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 20:29-30; Jn.10:1; 10:7-8 for discussion).

**“All ye beasts [false shepherds] of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter” (Is.56:9-11).**

**“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD” (Jer.23:1-2; cp. Jer.25:34-38).**

**“My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting-place” (Jer.50:6).**

**“Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them” (Ezk.34:2-6; cp. Ezk.34:7-31).**

- c. Sheep without a shepherd are in a pathetic condition (see note—Mk.6:34 for discussion).

**“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Mt.9:36).**

**“For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Pt.2:25).**

**2** (20:28-31) **Minister—Church:** the second duty is to feed the church of God. The word “feed” (poimainein) is shepherd, to act as a shepherd. Church leaders are to shepherd the church of God (see note, pt.4, *Shepherd*—Jn.10:2-3 for discussion on the seven functions of *feeding* or *shepherding*). There are four reasons why the church leader is to feed the church of God.

1. The church must be fed because God has purchased the church and paid the supreme price for it with His own blood. Note three all-important points.
  - a. Jesus is unequivocally said to be *God*. He is the One who shed His blood to purchase the church. He is very God, very Man. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.1:1-5 for more discussion. Cp. Ro.9:5; Col.2:9; Tit.2:13. See outlines and notes—Ph.2:5-11; Col.1:15; 1:16-17; 1:18-19.)
  - b. Jesus “purchased” (periepoiesato) the church. Therefore, it is His; He owns it and He has all say-so concerning everything about the church. As Purchaser, His Word about the care of His church is to be carried out explicitly, just as He dictates. There is to be no deviation whatsoever. Leaders are but overseers appointed by Him to shepherd His church as He says.
  - c. Jesus paid the supreme price for the church—His own blood (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 20:28 for discussion).
2. The church must be fed because it is the duty of church leaders to feed it. Church leaders are called overseers (episkopous) or elders (Jewish name) or bishops (Greek name) or presbyter or episkopate (overseer). Note the terms are used interchangeably: elder (v.17), bishop (v.28), overseer or episkopate (v.28), and shepherd (feed, v.28). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Elder*—Tit.1:5-9 for discussion.)

**“The elders which are among you I exhort...Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pt.5:1-4).**

3. The church must be fed because false teachers will come in among believers and seduce them (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *False Teachers*—Acts 20:29-30 for discussion).

4. The church must be fed because of Paul’s supreme example of faithfulness. Paul sets a dynamic example for all leaders of the church. He was a mere man as every leader is, yet he was able to please God immensely, able to feed the church exactly as God wished. He demonstrated perfectly that the man chosen by God to be an overseer can shepherd the church as it should be done (see note, pt.1—Acts 14:14-18 for more discussion).

- a. He “warned” (noutheton): admonished. The word means both to give advice and to warn.

**“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col.1:27).**

- b. He warned everyone, not neglecting any or favoring any. He gave attention to all, saw to it that they were fully fed and shepherded.
- c. He warned day and night: every day, every night, all the time, constantly and consistently, never missing an opportunity.
- d. He warned them “with tears,” full of compassion and concern, being touched by the misery and fate of the lost, the needs of the saved, and the glorious mercy of God.

**“He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:17).**

**“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1 Pt.5:2).**

**“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jer.3:15).**

**“And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD” (Jer.23:4).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(20:28) **Jesus Christ, Blood of:** Jesus paid the supreme price for the church—His own blood. Note a most precious fact: Jesus’ blood is said to be the blood of God. As Man, the blood that ran through His veins was the blood of God; therefore, it was precious, full of all dignity and value and worth. This is a critical fact for the ministry.

⇒ The blood of Jesus—being of God—is *most precious, the supreme and ultimate in value and worth.*

The point is this: Jesus gave the blood of God, the supreme price, to purchase the church. For this reason, church leaders are to give their blood—to sacrifice everything, all they are and have—to make the supreme dedication to shepherd the church. The church is the most valuable and precious asset on earth.

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(20:29-30) **False Teachers:** Paul said, “I know this,” that is, that false teachers will come in among believers. There is no question about the fact. The church must expect and be prepared for false teachers. (See outline and notes—Mt.7:15-20 for more discussion.)

1. False teachers come from outside the church.

**“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mt.7:15).**

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor.11:13-15).

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 Jn.7).

“For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect” (Mk.13:22).

2. False teachers come from inside the church (cp. Ezk.34:1-10).

“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mt.15:8-9).

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (1 Tim.1:5-7).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim.4:1-2).

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself” (1 Tim.6:3-5).

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers....whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” (Tit.1:10-11).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (1 Jn.2:18-19).

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” (1 Jn.4:1-3).

3. False teachers pervert the truth. The term “perverse things” (*diestrammena*) means turned aside, twisted, distorted. What they teach has *some truth and some error*. They take the truth and pervert it, coming up with a twisted truth. They teach “perverse things” that are not of God, not of His Word or will. (See notes—Mt.7:17; 7:18 for more discussion.)

4. False teachers “draw away” (*tou apospain*) disciples. The phrase means to separate, to drag and tear away. False teachers draw people away from the truth in three different ways.

- a. They attack the believers themselves: sowing discord and mischief among them.
- b. They teach error, perverting and distorting the truth, either taking away or adding to the Word of God.
- c. They attack the genuine leaders: blemishing and defaming their characters and ministries; stirring up believers against them.

Note, false teachers are called by two descriptive names in Scripture.

⇒ grievous wolves (see note—Mt.7:15).

⇒ dogs (Ph.3:2. See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mk.7:27.)

**3** (20:32) **Believer, Duty:** the third duty is to live for God and for God’s Word. The “Word of God’s grace” is the Word of God’s favor, of His glorious salvation in its fullness, of His truth, of His will. Therefore, the “Word of God’s grace” is His revealed Word, both the Living Word (Christ Himself) and the written Word (the Holy Bible). Now note the point: the church leader is to be commended (*paratithemai*) to God’s Word; that is, he is to place, commit, entrust, fix, lay, and deposit his life with God and His Word. Very simply, the church leader is to totally entrust his life to God and His Word, laying himself completely upon both. There are two reasons for trusting God and His Word so completely.

1. God and His Word will build up and edify the believer.

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward” (1 Cor.3:10-14).

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor.5:1).

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph.2:20).

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:12).

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.3:15).

2. God and His Word will give an inheritance to believers. The inheritance (kleronomian) is both...
  - present, in the here and now.

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col.1:12).

- future, in the new heavens and earth.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).

“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb.9:15).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).

(See notes, *Rewards*—Lk.16:10-12; Jn.4:36-38; Rev.14:13; 21:24-27 for a list of the rewards of believers.)

**4** (20:33-35) **Ministers—Financial Support:** the fourth duty is to labor and give, not coveting worldly wealth. Note two striking points.

1. Paul did not covet worldly wealth. He did not covet silver or gold or clothing. In the ancient world rich clothing was a sign of wealth. Many in the church had plenty and some were rich. They had...

- money
- stylish clothes
- property
- transportation

But Paul did not covet what they had. His mind and thoughts were not focused upon worldly things. Money, property, clothing, and the latest in transportation held no appeal for him. He craved something far more important:

- ⇒ the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.
- ⇒ meeting the desperate needs of the world.
- ⇒ delivering men out of the slavery of sin.
- ⇒ sharing the gospel of life everlasting.

**Thought 1.** The ministers and teachers of the gospel must be totally committed to sharing the gospel. And total commitment involves not only verbal preaching and teaching, but the spread of the gospel through the financial support of others. (See outline and notes—Mt.19:16-22; 19:23-26 for more discussion. These two passages need to be studied and applied by every believer, but especially by ministers and teachers of the gospel. Cp. 1 Sam.12:3-5; 1 Th.2:5-6; 1 Tim.3:3, 8; 6:10.)

2. Paul labored at secular work. He was a craftsman, a tentmaker (see note—Acts 18:3). There are at least five reasons why Paul labored at secular work.

- a. To meet his own necessities (v.34).
- b. To help fellow ministers serving with him (v.34).
- c. To support the weak (v.35).
- d. To be more like Jesus (v.35). This is a saying of Jesus that is not recorded in the gospels, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Jesus of course gave to the ultimate...
  - coveting nothing of this world.
  - giving all He had to others.
  - sacrificing His own life for others.

Paul sought to be like His Lord, to be conformed to His image. For that reason, Paul labored at secular work when needed.

- e. Not to be chargeable to the believers nor to the churches. This reason is not mentioned in this passage, but it is in several others (2 Cor.11:9; 1 Th.2:9; 2 Th.3:8). Paul meant at least two things by not being “chargeable” to any man, and these two things are powerful lessons for modern ministers of the gospel.

First, some unbelievers, and most unfortunately some carnal believers, were accusing Paul...

- of “coveting” a living from the churches.
- of seeking comfort and ease at the expense of believers and the churches.
- of receiving the offerings and stealing from them (2 Cor.1:17-18; 8:20-22. See note, pt.2—2 Cor.12:13-18.)

By working at secular work and not accepting money from the churches, Paul was able to combat these charges and prove they were lies. Note: he also had representatives appointed by the churches to carry the church offerings to Jerusalem (see note—Acts 20:4-6).

Second, Paul wanted to be free and independent of the churches and believers. He did not want the congregation to feel as though he was their man, that he had to do their bidding. He wanted no restraint and no pressure put upon his right to move about and minister and preach the gospel as he sensed the need.

⇒ He did not want any temptation whatsoever, any sense that he must cater to the desires and whims and fancies of the congregation, not unless they were truly of God.

**Thought 1.** Note four very significant points.

- 1) Paul received financial support from some churches. He did not always labor at secular work, not in every situation. He saw the value in being completely free from the burden of financial worries so that he could devote full time to the ministry. (See note—Acts 18:3 for more discussion.)
- 2) The minister of the gospel has the right to receive his living from the churches. In fact, Christ taught that the minister was definitely to be supported by the church. (See outline and notes—Mt.10:9-10 for more discussion and Scripture. This is an important passage, a passage that every minister and church should study, for it is our Lord's teaching.)
- 3) There are great benefits in following Paul's example when practical. Being financially free to minister as God directs without the influence of *carnal prejudices and fancies* would provide some clear advantages as pointed out above. However, every minister must always remember: there are some in every true church who walk ever so closely with the Lord, and have been doing so for years. God has given His vision for their church and their community to them. They have lacked only one thing—a Spirit-filled minister to help them. The minister needs to listen to these dear believers, even if he is self-supporting.
- 4) Every minister should be *laboring* so he can support the weak (v.35). No matter where his income is coming from, he is to set the example for all others in giving to meet the needs of the desperate.

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).**

**5** (20:36-38) **Conclusion:** the conclusion of Paul's exhortation to the Ephesian elders is a touching scene, the kind of affection being expressed that every minister and teacher of the gospel would covet. Note: Paul was so gripped with emotion he fell to his knees and began to pray for these dear men of God. (The scene was most unusual, for it was the custom of Jews to stand when praying in public.)

The elders...

- wept deeply.
- fell on Paul's neck, embracing and kissing him repeatedly (Greek).
- were gripped with sorrow.
- accompanied him to the ship.

| CHAPTER 21  |   |   |  |
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|   | <b>G. Jerusalem, the Final Miles: Warned, Yet Compelled to Preach, 21:1-16</b>  | were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.<br>9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.<br>10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.<br>11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.<br>12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.<br>13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.<br>14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.<br>15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.<br>16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. | <b>cution vs. an immovable compulsion to do God's will</b><br>a. An important contact to Luke<br>1) Philip was one of the first deacons<br>2) Philip had four daughters<br><br>b. A warning—by the Spirit<br><br>c. Paul was still immovable |
| <b>1 Paul journeyed over a land rich in ancient history</b><br>a. Coos<br>b. Rhodes<br>c. Patara<br><br>d. Cyprus<br><br>e. Tyre  | And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:<br>2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.<br>3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.<br>4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.<br>5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.<br>6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.<br>7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.<br>8 And the next day we that | 5 <b>The tug of loved ones vs. a readiness to die for the Lord Jesus if need be</b><br>a. A double warning<br>b. A strong sense of mission<br><br>c. The warnings ceased<br><br>d. The journey continued<br><br>e. The other disciples showed their love by escorting Paul part of the way  |  |
| <b>2 The pull of a Spirit-filled church vs. a sense of duty</b><br>a. A small church, but yielded to the Spirit<br>b. A church of closely knit families<br>c. A church of unashamed believers who bore public witness |   |   |  |
| <b>3 The remembrance of believers &amp; their needs everywhere vs. a deep sense of the Spirit's leading</b>   |   |   |  |
| <b>4 The fact of sure perse-</b>  |   |   |  |

## DIVISION IX

### THE THIRD GREAT MISSION OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES: TO ASIA MINOR AND EUROPE, 18:23-21:16

#### G. Jerusalem, the Final Miles: Warned, Yet Compelled to Preach, 21:1-16

(21:1-16) **Paul, Ministry:** Was Paul right in his insistence to go up to Jerusalem? There is no doubt that he sensed a deep compulsion to go. He said:

“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:22-24).

A man with so intense a conviction has to be respected and heard. Yet, great men are not beyond mistakes in judgment, and the Bible is pointedly frank in showing the errors of God's great men. This chapter throws some question on Paul's action.

- ⇒ The church at Tyre “said...*through the Spirit* that he should not go up to Jerusalem” (v.4).
- ⇒ Agabus took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said, “Thus saith the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle” (v.11).
- ⇒ Luke and the other disciples were in tears, strongly urging Paul not to go up to Jerusalem (v.12).

Who was right? (See notes—Acts 19:21-23; 20:13-18 for more discussion.) One thing is known: in the Book of Acts, Paul's voice was thereafter silenced in worldwide missions. His witness was to be limited to national leaders and to people who made their way to him. He was soon to become a prisoner for Christ throughout the remaining years of his life (as far as we know from Acts).

However, in behalf of Paul, he probably felt he would never be able to return to Jerusalem, not after he launched his mission into Rome and Spain. If he survived the strain of another major mission, in particular one that would take him so far away, he would most likely have to remain on the field. Such a mission would just take too much out of him. The toll upon his body would be too much. (See note, *Paul, Sufferings*—Acts 18:9-11; 2 Cor.6:3-10; 11:23-31.)

The point is this: Paul loved the Jews dearly, for they were his own people. He loved his people so deeply that he would have given his own soul for their salvation (Ro.9:1-3; 10:11). In addition, he loved the apostles and believers of Jerusalem. Because of this, he was driven to visit them and bear witness just one more time. Perhaps the drive became a compulsion he just could not handle. If so, the Lord, as always, understood, and salvaged the life of His dear servant and continued to use him for the furtherance of the gospel.

Whatever the case, Paul was confronted time and again by believers urging him not to go on, knowing that arrest and imprisonment lay before him in Jerusalem. The pressure to turn back was great. But Paul, being thoroughly "bound in the spirit" was constrained to go. This passage is a descriptive picture of strong warnings and a compulsion to preach.

1. Paul journeyed over a land rich in ancient history (v.1-3).
2. The pull of a Spirit-filled church vs. a sense of duty (v.4-6).
3. The remembrance of believers and their needs everywhere vs. a deep sense of the Spirit's leading (v.7).
4. The fact of sure persecution vs. an immovable compulsion to do God's will (v.8-11).
5. The tug of loved ones vs. a readiness to die for the Lord Jesus if need be (v.12-16).

**1** (21:1-3) **Coos—Patara—Tyre:** Paul journeyed over a land rich in ancient history. (See Map—Introduction to Acts, for a picture of the journey and cities.) A person can just imagine his early morning devotions, hour to hour thoughts and conversations with the Lord, his fellowship and discussions with his companions and the travellers and ship crew, and his witnessing to all who were open to listening to the gospel.

1. *There was Coos:* a great commercial and trading island on the major shipping route. It was also famous as a medical center with a major medical school and its famous temple of Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine. It was the birthplace of Hippocrates, the great Greek physician, and Apelles, the great Greek painter.

2. *There was Rhodes:* known as the island of roses. It was located at the very entrance of the Aegean Sea which made it extremely important as a major shipping center. The city was also known for its major university specializing in "Speech and Oratory."

3. *There was Patara:* located at the mouth of the Xanthus river which made it an important commercial city for all the towns that lay inland or either bordered the river. This fact plus its being on the major shipping route of the Mediterranean Sea made it an extremely prosperous and important city. Note that from Patara Paul was able to travel by ship directly across the Mediterranean to Tyre of Phoenicia, a journey of some four hundred miles.

4. *There was Cyprus:* see note—Acts 13:4 for discussion.

5. *There was Tyre:* one of the most famous seaports of the ancient world. The city had two major sections, one section built on the mainland and another section built on an island with an inlet running between the two sections. Because of this there were two harbors, and the mainland harbor was able to provide shelter for ships during storms and during the winter months. Tyre was a free city. It is mentioned in Scripture as follows:

- ⇒ David and Solomon entered alliances with its rulers (1 Ki.9:10-14; 2 Chron.2:3-16).
- ⇒ It was a great commercial center famous for its shipping, metal, glass and dye works (Is.23:8).
- ⇒ It was denounced by the prophets of old because of its self-centered worldliness and materialism (Is.23:1-17; Jer.27:3; Ezk.27:1f; 28:1-19; cp. Amos 1:9; Joel 3:5f; Zech.9:2).
- ⇒ Jesus visited the region bordering Tyre, but never entered the city (Mk.7:24-31).
- ⇒ Paul spent seven days with the church in Tyre (Acts 21:3-7).

**2** (21:4-6) **Church:** the pull of a Spirit-filled church vs. a sense of duty. Anytime a Spirit-filled church speaks, the messenger of God has to listen. The warning of this church was bound to put great pressure upon Paul. Note three striking traits of the church at Tyre.

1. It was a small church, but it was Spirit-filled. We know it was small, for Paul and his companions had to search for the church, and it apparently took a while before they *found* the believers.

- a. The church was Spirit-filled, so much so that they were able to warn Paul immediately about the trials he was to face. They were enabled by the Spirit to see into the future, to predict, to prophesy.

**Thought 1.** Every church should be just as Spirit-filled as the church at Tyre. The Holy Spirit should be able to use everyone of us to help others as they face the trials of life.

**"Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph.5:18).**

**"Know ye not that ye [the church] are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor.3:16).**

**"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor.3:6).**

- b. The church at Tyre believed the warning was a *prohibition*, but Paul accepted it as *information*, as the Spirit preparing him for what lay ahead.
- c. The picture is that of God's messenger being torn between...
  - listening to a Spirit-filled church vs. his own sense of duty.

The church felt strongly that they had heard from God, but Paul felt just as strongly. Who was right? Only God knows, but the messenger of God had to do what his sense of duty told him.

**Thought 1.** How many ministers and lay leaders have stayed or turned to a Spirit-filled church or to a more comfortable situation when God has been calling them to a more difficult situation? The servant of God must always do his duty, what the sense of duty within his heart tells him to do, even if the call involves a difficult move.

In the eyes of the church, there was no way the arrest of Paul could have been for the best, no way the silencing of his voice and ministry among the church could be best for the Kingdom of God. But we must always remember, the church could not see into the future—only God could. They could not see how God was going to use Paul to witness to the highest leaders and courts of the land, and how the Kingdom of God was going to be spread all throughout Rome and its empire.

2. The church was one of closely knit families. Note how whole families—men with their “wives and children”—were mentioned as accompanying Paul to the ship (v.5). The whole church was involved in saying *goodbye* to this travelling preacher—a very simple activity. But how it must have encouraged the preacher. What a tremendous example...

- for churches and believers of today to use their gifts of encouragement for God’s dear servants.
- for the children of the church.
- for Christian families of today.
- for family activities in the church.

**“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).**

**“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Ph.2:1-2).**

**“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb.10:25).**

3. The church was full of unashamed, witnessing believers. Note: they knelt on the dock in public and prayed with Paul. Again, what a dynamic example for all involved and for us today! What a glorious witness to the rough-hewn dock workers and to the travelling public and their families and friends who would be standing around saying their farewells.

**“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**3** (21:7) **Dedication—Zeal—Steadfastness:** the remembrance of believers and their needs everywhere vs. a deep sense of the Holy Spirit’s leading. Note that Paul was in Ptolemais for only one day, only time enough to greet believers briefly and share the gospel. So much would have to go unsaid. The thought of believers and their need to be rooted in the gospel worldwide was constantly upon Paul’s mind and heart. Reaching and grounding people was his life. Being with the believers for only one day and having just been warned about arrest in Jerusalem was bound to arouse his heart for world-evangelization and cause him to question his decision. But note: Paul was gripped with a sense of the Spirit’s leading. He staunchly continued on, being unswerved from his compulsion to preach and reach his own people in Jerusalem.

**“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jn.4:34).**

**“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (Jn.4:35-36).**

**“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal.6:9).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(21:7) **Ptolemais—Acco:** called Acco in Old Testament times. It was a seaport town about thirty miles south of Tyre, having one of the finest harbours along the coastline of Palestine. It was promised to the tribe of Asher, but was never conquered (Judg.1:31). It was a great commercial city lying on the major road between Syria and Egypt. Apparently the church at Ptolemais was founded by believers who fled the persecution surrounding Stephen’s martyrdom (cp. Acts 8:1, 4).

**4** (21:8-11) **Compulsion—Minister:** the fact of sure persecution vs. an immovable compulsion to do God's will. The confrontation with the prophet Agabus was an awakening scene.

1. Philip was the believer chosen to be one of the first deacons. He was a deacon who was on fire for God, so much so that he became an evangelist. He is the evangelist who had reached Samaria with the gospel some twenty years before (cp. Acts 6:5; 8:5-13, 26-40). Note: he now had a family, four unmarried daughters who were gifted by the Holy Spirit to prophesy.

**Thought 1.** Note how faithful Philip was in rooting his family in the Lord. All his children were serving the Lord.

2. Agabus' prediction would strike Paul and strike him deeply, for Agabus was a prophet greatly used by God. He was the prophet whom God had used to predict the famine in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-28). In taking Paul's girdle and his own hands and feet, Agabus was using a symbol such as the Old Testament prophets used to drive home their point (cp. 1 Ki.22:11; Jer.13:1-8; Ezk.4:1-6; 5:1-3). Again, Paul interpreted the warning to be a *warning of preparation* and not as a *warning of prohibition*.

3. Paul was still immovable. He would not be turned from what he understood God wanted him to do.

**"Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor.9:16).**

**"But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Lk.12:50).**

**"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (Jn.9:4).**

**"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).**

**"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer.20:9).**

**"The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8).**

**5** (21:12-16) **Commitment—Faithfulness—Minister:** the tug of loved ones vs. a fearless readiness to die for the Lord Jesus if need be. The scene was dramatic and touching. The prophecy of Agabus had shaken the loved ones of Paul.

Everyone present—Luke, Paul's companions, and Philip and his family—all who were so dear to Paul—were broken and in tears over what awaited Paul in Jerusalem. They begged him not to go.

Paul was touched, deeply touched. The words "break my heart" mean to crush, break in pieces, weaken. Paul was as broken as he could be over the love and care of the dear brothers and sisters as they wept and begged him to heed their pleas. But he could not listen, could not give in. He was utterly convinced that God had called him to go to Jerusalem. His answer to his loved ones is a memorial that stands as a pattern for every one who is called to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were words that every servant, preacher and teacher, should memorize and hold dear to his heart.

**"I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).**

Note the purpose of Luke and the others: "the will of the Lord be done." This should be the response of every family and friend who may oppose the person who senses the call of God.

Note also how some other disciples from Caesarea joined the ministry team and escorted Paul part of the way. Care, concern, and love were the picture. Nothing is known about Mnason except what is mentioned here. He was memorialized as...

- a disciple who had walked faithfully with Jesus for many years. He was apparently one of the very earliest disciples.
- a disciple who opened his home and welcomed the Lord's people.

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Lk.9:23-24).**

**"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Ro.1:14-16).**

**"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1 Cor.10:24).**

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| <p><b>1 Paul in Jerusalem</b></p> <p><b>2 Picture 1: The work of God was reported &amp; God was glorified</b></p> <p>a. Paul credited God, not himself</p> <p>b. God was glorified</p> <p><b>3 Picture 2: God's servant compromised in order to secure peace</b></p> <p>a. The existing problem: Thousands of Jews believed, accepting Jesus as the Messiah</p> <p>b. They were legalists: Followed the law</p> <p>c. They had heard that Paul taught that the law &amp; circumcision were to be forsaken</p> <p>d. Compromise was suggested</p> <p>1) The compromise: That Paul take a Jewish vow &amp; rite</p> <p>2) The purpose: To show his obedience to the law</p> <p>3) The reason: The Jewish church compromised with him before</p> | <p><b>X. THE BITTER EXPERIENCE IN JERUSALEM, 21:17-23:11</b></p> <p><b>A. Paul's Reluctant Decision: A Picture of Compromise, 21:17-40</b></p> <p>17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.</p> <p>18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.</p> <p>19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.</p> <p>20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:</p> <p>21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.</p> <p>22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.</p> <p>23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;</p> <p>24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.</p> <p>25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and</p> | <p>from fornication.</p> <p>26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.</p> <p>27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,</p> <p>28 Crying out, Men of Israel, Help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.</p> <p>29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)</p> <p>30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.</p> <p>31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.</p> <p>32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.</p> <p>33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.</p> <p>34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.</p> <p>35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for</p> | <p>4) The conciliation: Paul compromised</p> <p><b>4 Picture 3: Troublemakers twisted the truth in order to secure their way</b></p> <p>a. Outsiders, Asian Jews, seized Paul</p> <p>b. They made false charges</p> <p>1) That Paul insulted the Jewish people</p> <p>2) That Paul destroyed the law</p> <p>3) That Paul polluted the temple</p> <p>c. The riot: An attempt to kill Paul</p> <p><b>5 Picture 4: God overruled; used soldiers to protect His servant for a dynamic witness</b></p> <p>a. The soldiers were notified</p> <p>b. A strong detachment drove through the crowd to Paul</p> <p>c. Paul was chained for safety</p> <p>d. A frenzied, crazed mob</p> <p>1) The captain was unable to discover the cause</p> <p>2) Paul was literally carried by the soldiers</p> |
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| <p>3) The mob madly pursued Paul</p> <p>4) Paul was carried into a castle for safety</p> <p>e. Paul identified himself</p> <p>1) Was educated, cultured: Spoke Greek</p> <p>2) Was not the Egyptian revolutionary the captain thought he was</p> | <p>the violence of the people.</p> <p>36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.</p> <p>37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?</p> <p>38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were</p> | <p>murderers?</p> <p>39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.</p> <p>40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,</p> | <p>f. Paul requested to speak to the mob</p> <p>1) Granted permission</p> <p>2) Gestured for silence</p> <p>g. The miraculous silence</p> <p>1) The power of God flowed through Paul</p> <p>2) Paul spoke in Hebrew</p> |
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## DIVISION X

### THE BITTER EXPERIENCE IN JERUSALEM, 21:17-23:11

#### A. Paul's Reluctant Decision: A Picture of Compromise, 21:17-40

(21:17-40) **Introduction:** peace is necessary for the preaching of the gospel. Paul compromised, hoping to secure peace with those who opposed him so strongly. Why? So that he might be able to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ unhindered and unhampered.

1. Paul in Jerusalem (v.17-18).
2. Picture 1: the work of God was reported and God was glorified (v.19-20).
3. Picture 2: God's servant compromised in order to secure peace (v.20-26).
4. Picture 3: troublemakers twisted the truth in order to secure their way (v.27-30).
5. Picture 4: God overruled; used soldiers to protect His servant for a dynamic witness (v.31-40).

**1** (21:17-18) **Paul:** Paul was in Jerusalem and was well received by those with whom he stayed. This was apparently the unofficial welcome by a handful of believers. Paul requested an official meeting with James the next day. Note: all of Paul's companions and all of the Jerusalem elders were present at the official meeting, but the whole church was not called together. The rumors about Paul had probably affected the congregation so much that it would have been unwise for them to be present. The apostles were probably away on evangelistic missions at this time.

**2** (21:19-20) **God—Praise:** picture one is the work of God being reported and God being glorified. Note three striking points.

1. Paul covered the events of the third mission tour in detail. The word "particularly" means one by one, in detail, step by step. Note: it had been about five years since Paul had last visited in the Jerusalem church.
2. Paul gave all the credit to God for what had been done—without exception. It was what God had wrought, not what he had done nor what anyone else had done. The churches and the believers were the result of God's glorious grace and power.
3. It was James and the Jerusalem elders who glorified God, not Paul. It is important to note this, for it shows that they supported Paul and were not among those who opposed Paul.

**Thought 1.** Note the lessons for churches and believers of every generation.

- 1) Churches should be informed of mission tours in detail.
- 2) God alone should be recognized and credited with being the Person who does the work.
- 3) God alone should be praised for what is wrought.

**"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples"**  
(Jn.15:8).

**"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name"** (Heb.13:15).

**"And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing"** (Ps.107:22).

**3** (21:20-26) **Compromise—Weak, Support:** picture two is that of God's servant compromising in order to secure peace. James brought up a serious problem. The Scripture and outline give a clear overview of the problem and compromise Paul made. Note these facts.

1. Thousands of Jewish believers were disturbed with God's minister. The Greek word for "many thousands" (posai myriades) means thousands upon thousands, myriads upon myriads.
2. The disturbance was caused by rumors. Some were lying, saying that Paul was teaching false doctrine, that the law of Moses was no longer to be kept, nor was circumcision to be observed. The word "forsake" (apostasian) is the word

for apostasy. This is the most serious accusation possible to a Jew, apostasy from Moses and the law of circumcision. Of course, Paul never said this. He said that...

- a person could be circumcised and keep the customs of the law if he wished.
- a person, however, did not have to be circumcised or keep the law *to be saved*. The law is not what saves a person. Christ alone saves. (See note, *Salvation vs. Ritual*—Acts 15:1-3; outline and notes—Acts 15:6-22 for more discussion.)

3. The compromise suggested was a Jewish vow and rite. Apparently it involved some Nazarite vow such as shaving the head and making several offerings (Num.6:1-21). It was suggested that Paul pay for the animals or incense needed for the other four men as well as for himself. Often the poor were unable to undergo these expenses, so some wealthy benefactor paid the fees for the poor. This was highly commendable to the Jews. The attempt was to do everything possible to show that Paul was a true Jew, and was not teaching that Moses' law was to be forsaken. Contrariwise, he was even obeying the law himself.

4. James pointed out that he and the Jerusalem church had compromised with Paul before, and his suggestion now did not violate that compromise (v.25). The need now was for Paul to compromise and help bring peace. As expected, Paul did.

**Thought 1.** Note four important lessons.

- 1) Paul never taught that customs and rituals could not be practiced if a person wished. He only taught that they were not necessary to salvation. In fact, Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3) and taught throughout his epistles that ritual and customs were a matter of personal preference (1 Cor.7:18). (See note—Acts 15:1-3.)
- 2) Even true believers can be tragically influenced by rumors and untruths. We must always be on guard against troublemakers.
- 3) When believers become legalistic and begin to live by rules and regulations, they often become *witch hunters*. They seek out those who fail to meet their standards. Their very attitude creates an atmosphere ripe for rumor.
- 4) Paul was willing to become all things and to do anything not contrary to God in order to reach men for Christ.

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations [argue different opinions]” (Ro.14:1).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you” (1 Cor.9:19-23).

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).

**4** (21:27-30) **Troublemakers—Persecution:** picture three is that of troublemakers twisting the truth in order to secure their way. The troublemakers were outsiders, Asian Jews who were attending the feast of Pentecost. Apparently, the vow and rite which Paul underwent worked to please the Christian believers, showing them clearly that Paul was not teaching against the law of Moses.

The outsiders attacked and grabbed Paul, and stood him before the worshipping multitudes crying out three charges against him, all of them false. They cried out...

- that he insulted the Jewish people, turning the world against the Jews. Paul had said only that being a Jew (or another nationality) would not save a person.
- that he taught the law of Moses, with its customs and rituals, was not binding. Paul had said the law was not binding upon Gentiles, not for salvation.
- that he polluted the temple and taught against it. Paul had said that men could worship God anyplace and everyplace, not just in the temple.

Note: they accused Paul of taking a Gentile, Trophimus, into one of the inner courts of the temple. This was forbidden, and Paul would never have done such a thing. But these troublemakers would not be stopped, even if they had to stretch and twist the truth.

**Thought 1.** Outsiders are sometimes guilty of causing trouble in the church, but *too often* the trouble experienced by churches is caused by insiders—professing believers who seek their own way, who are bent on getting their own way and keeping the church like they want it.

“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor.3:3).

“For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults” (2 Cor.12:20).

“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord” (Ph.4:2).

“He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings” (1 Tim.6:4).

“For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (Jas.3:16).

“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not” (3 Jn.9).

**Thought 2.** Too often custom and ritual are allowed to replace Christ in the church, something that never should be allowed to happen. The critical issue is salvation and service, the fulness of God upon a life. Whatever is needed to bring about commitment and service to God is what should be used by a person and church. If ritual and custom help us in our worship, then we should use ritual and custom; if they do not help, then we should not use them.

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Mt.23:23).

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink: but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:17).

“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (Gal.4:10-11).

“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances” (Col.2:20).

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim.3:5).

“And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam.15:22).

“For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Ps.51:16-17).

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men” (Is.29:13).

**5** (21:31-40) **God, Sovereignty—Leadership:** picture four is God overruling to protect His servant. God used soldiers to protect His servant for a dynamic witness. The scene is an exciting drama; the Scripture and outline clearly describe what happened, making comments unnecessary. The point to see is God’s hand moving throughout the whole event. As the Scripture and outline points are read, note the power of God flowing through Paul and the miraculous silence that overtakes the mob (v.40).

**Thought 1.** The servant of God can entrust his life into God’s keeping through all trials, even in the midst of mob attack. No matter the trial, God is working out His will in the believer’s life.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Ro.8:28).

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Ph.1:6).

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).

“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb.13:6).

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).

“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him” (Ps.28:7).

“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence” (Ps.91:3).

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

| CHAPTER 22   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | <b>B. Paul's Testimony Before a Crazy Mob: A Message for Upset People, 22:1-21</b>   |   |
| <p><b>1 Paul's great love for his people</b><br/>                     a. His feelings: Called them brothers, fathers<br/>                     b. His appeal: Spoke in Hebrew</p> <p><b>2 His former life</b><br/>                     a. His personal heritage<br/>                     1) A Jew<br/>                     2) Of Tarsus, but reared in Jerusalem<br/>                     3) Educated under the greatest teachers<br/>                     4) Educated in the law<br/>                     5) Zealous toward God<br/>                     b. His hostility against Christianity</p> <p><b>3 His conversion</b></p> <p>a. The light from heaven</p> <p>b. The confrontation with the Lord<br/>                     1) The charge of sin<br/>                     2) The request to know the Lord<br/>                     3) The shattering truth: Jesus is Lord</p> <p>c. The witnesses to the event</p> <p>d. The surrender<br/>                     1) The acknowledge-</p> | <p>Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.<br/>                     2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith.)<br/>                     3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.<br/>                     4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.<br/>                     5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.<br/>                     6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.<br/>                     7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?<br/>                     8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.<br/>                     9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.<br/>                     10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said</p> | <p>unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.<br/>                     11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.<br/>                     12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,<br/>                     13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.<br/>                     14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.<br/>                     15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.<br/>                     16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.<br/>                     17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;<br/>                     18 And I saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.<br/>                     19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:<br/>                     20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.<br/>                     21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.</p> <p>ment: Lord<br/>                     2) The surrender<br/>                     3) The command: Arise—go</p> <p>e. The obedience</p> <p><b>4 His call &amp; commission through Ananias</b><br/>                     a. Ananias, the devout, God-fearing Jew</p> <p>b. Paul's call &amp; commission<br/>                     1) To know God's will<br/>                     2) To see the Just One<br/>                     3) To hear His voice<br/>                     4) To be a witness to all men<br/>                     5) To be baptized as a Christian</p> <p><b>5 His clear instructions from God</b><br/>                     a. When: While in prayer<br/>                     b. The instruction: To get out of Jerusalem<br/>                     c. The argument of Paul: Especially qualified to reach Jews<br/>                     d. The Lord's emphatic counsel: Depart! Go to the Gentiles</p> |

## DIVISION X

### THE BITTER EXPERIENCE IN JERUSALEM, 21:17-23:11

#### **B. Paul's Testimony Before a Crazy Mob: A Message for Upset People, 22:1-21**

(22:1-21) **Introduction:** Paul's testimony will always hold lesson after lesson for believers of every generation. Note: he was giving his testimony before a crazed mob that had just been rioting, seeking to kill him.

1. Paul's great love for his people (v.1-2).
2. His former life (v.3-5).
3. His conversion (v.6-11).

4. His call and commission through Ananias (v.12-16).
5. His clear instructions from God (v.17-21).

**1** (22:1-2) **Evangelism—Love:** Paul’s great love for his people. Why would Paul want to speak to the mob screaming for his death (Acts 21:39-40)? Why would he not want the soldiers to simply rescue him and to save his life? The answer is his love and passion for his own people, the Jews.

**“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart” (Ro.9:1-3).**

Very simply, Paul was willing to face death to save as many of his people as he could. He had been saved, and he knew the truth of the glorious salvation found in the Lord Jesus, and he desperately wanted every Jew to know the same salvation. Note how the love and passion just flowed out of his innermost being as he began to address the crowd. And remember, they had just attacked him and were crying for his blood.

His very first words were, “Men, brothers, and fathers.” He did not shout against them, did not rebuke them nor charge them with a crime. He called them *brothers* and *fathers*. The word father was the official title for the leaders of the nation, many of whom were present in the crowd. By using the words *brothers* and *fathers*, Paul was appealing to the closest relationship possible—that of a family, which in this case refers to the national family of the Jewish people. He was identifying with them, appealing to them in an attempt to reach them. At the same time, he was revealing his own feelings—the sense, the love he felt for them as the brothers and fathers of his people. Note that he spoke in the Hebrew tongue, that is, in the national language of the Jews.

**2** (22:3-5) **Paul—Old Life:** Paul’s former life. It had been about twenty-five years since Paul’s conversion. Although a few would have known about Paul’s past, many in the crowd had no idea who he was.

1. He shared his roots, his personal heritage, that is, the privileges and advantages of his genealogy.
  - ⇒ He was a Jew: not a foreigner, but as much a Jew as any of his listeners. He had been born a Jew.
  - ⇒ He was born in Tarsus but reared in Jerusalem so that he could be educated at the feet of Israel’s greatest teachers. He was brought to Jerusalem while still very young for the purpose of securing the very best education (cp. Acts 26:4).
  - ⇒ He was educated in the strictest law of the fathers (teachers). Paul had actually been a Pharisee, one of a small sect of men who had totally dedicated their lives to nothing but living out the law (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—ACTS 23:8).
  - ⇒ He was zealous toward God in keeping the law, as zealous as any Jew. Note: this is a crucial point in understanding Paul. He claimed to have never forsaken the practice and customs of the Mosaic law, not personally. He was as much a practicing Jew in keeping the law and customs as any of his audience.
2. Paul shared the early part of his life which was hostile against Christianity (see outlines and notes—Acts 8:1-4; esp.8:1; 8:3; 9:1-2 for discussion and verses).

**3** (22:6-11) **Paul—Conversion:** Paul’s conversion. The point to note is Paul’s claim: he claimed to have been saved by the Lord alone, by a personal confrontation with Him. Paul described the event exactly (see outline and notes—Acts 9:3-9 for discussion). The new facts presented by Paul in this account are as follows.

- ⇒ His conversion took place “about noon” (v.6).
- ⇒ The words “of Nazareth” are not mentioned in the event. By saying that Jesus, the despised Nazarene, was the Lord of heaven is striking.
- ⇒ The men with him heard a voice speaking, but could not understand the words (v.9).
- ⇒ The light was the cause of Paul’s blindness (v.11).

**Thought 1.** Paul had just covered his former life which included...

- a great personal heritage in which he boasted.
- a great zeal in persecuting the church, priding himself in his zeal, thinking he was pleasing God.

He had shared his conversion to Christ which focuses upon a brilliant light that struck him blind. He was stricken physically blind as a symbol to show that he was *spiritually blind*.

**“Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:3).**

**“Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth” (Jn.12:35).**

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**

**“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor.4:6).**

**“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph.5:14).**

**4** (22:12-16) **Call—Commission:** Paul’s call and commission through Ananias. Paul covered both Ananias’ character and his own commission in these verses.

1. Ananias’ character was above reproach. He never would have done anything of a questionable nature, never would have helped Paul if Paul had been an evil man.
  - ⇒ Ananias was devout, that is, a God-fearing man, living by the law of Moses and God.

- ⇒ Ananias was a reputable man, highly esteemed by all the Jews of Damascus.
- ⇒ Ananias was a true minister, a true servant sent to help Paul when Paul so desperately needed help. Note he called Paul *brother* and healed his eyes!
- ⇒ Ananias was the messenger of God sent to set Paul apart for God's work.

2. Paul's call and commission to serve God. Paul spelled out exactly what God had called him to do. Note how the emphasis was upon Paul knowing, seeing, and hearing God personally before he was to reach out to others. This is true with every believer. God expects the believer to *know* Him first, no matter who the believer is or how important the mission of the believer is. Paul spelled out exactly what God called him to do.

- a. To know God's will: His person, His salvation, His sanctification, His mysteries, His revelation, His commandments—all that is involved in the will of God.
- b. To see the Just One: the Messiah, the Son of God Himself, the Sinless One, the Righteous One.
- c. To hear the voice of the Just One: knowing Him personally, fellowshiping with, praying and sharing with, being guided and directed by, being instructed by.
- d. To be a witness for the Just One to all men (see outline, note, and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:8; 9:15-16 for discussion).
- e. To be baptized (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:38).

**Thought 1.** The same five points are applicable to the call of every believer. Every believer must know, see, and hear the Just One in his heart and life by faith; and he must bear witness to the Lord and be baptized.

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21; cp. Mt.20:28; Lk.19:10).**

**“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20).**

**“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Ph.3:10).**

**“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God” (Rev.3:2).**

**“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Is.43:10).**

**5** (22:17-21) **Call—Commission:** Paul's clear instructions from God through a vision. This event happened about three years after Paul's conversion (Acts 9:26-29; cp. Gal.1:18-19). Note four points.

1. Paul was in prayer when the trance came—so lost, so gripped with concern for his people and their hostility toward him that he lost all sense of the world around him. He was swallowed up in the thoughts of God, transported mentally out of this world (see note, pt.3—Acts 10:9-22 for more discussion). Note: Paul saw Christ in the trance.

2. The Lord's will was for Paul to get out of Jerusalem. The Jews were seeking to kill him because he was preaching Christ (see notes—Acts 9:26-28; 9:29-30).

3. The argument of Paul against the Lord. Paul felt he was especially qualified to reach the Jews. He had been the arch-persecutor of Christianity, so he felt the Jews would believe him, knowing about his past. They would know that he never would have been converted from such bitter hatred unless he had really seen Christ. But Paul was wrong. The Jews felt he was a traitor.

4. The Lord's command to Paul was emphatic: “depart,” go! Paul's mission was not at home; it was elsewhere—to the Gentiles.

**Thought 1.** Note four points.

- 1) A man is to fulfill his call, no matter what it is.
- 2) A man cannot always serve where he wishes.
- 3) A man is not always accepted by those for whom he cares.
- 4) When the Lord tells a man to go, he needs to “depart,” to go!

**Thought 2.** Note how Paul was making the same mistake made twenty-five years earlier, still trying to win the Jews over.

**Thought 3.** Too many try to *stay at home* when the Lord has called them to depart and go.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21; cp. Lk.19:10).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 Paul's claim to legal rights</b></p> <p>a. Paul rejected by the mob<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p>b. Paul rescued by the soldiers</p> <p>c. Paul claimed legal rights: He was a Roman citizen</p> <p>d. Paul before the chief Captain: Identified his Roman citizenship</p> <p>e. Paul &amp; his rights respected</p> <p>f. The chief Captain sought the cause for the riot</p> | <p><b>C. Paul's Testimony Before the Court, the Great Sanhedrin (Trial I): God's Guidance &amp; Presence Through Terrible Strain, 22:22-23:11</b></p> <p>22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.</p> <p>23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,</p> <p>24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.</p> <p>25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?</p> <p>26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.</p> <p>27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.</p> <p>28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.</p> <p>29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.</p> <p>30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 23</b></p> <p>And Paul, earnestly behold-</p> | <p>ing the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.</p> <p>2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.</p> <p>3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?</p> <p>4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?</p> <p>5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.</p> <p>6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.</p> <p>7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.</p> <p>8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.</p> <p>9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of that Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.</p> <p>10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.</p> <p>11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.</p> | <p><b>pure conscience</b></p> <p><b>3 Paul's due respect for the authority of Scripture</b></p> <p>a. The High Priest had Paul slapped: For blasphemy</p> <p>b. Paul rebuked the presiding officer: For breaking the law</p> <p>c. Paul was informed he was the High Priest</p> <p>d. Paul apologized for rebuking the high priest</p> <p><b>4 Paul's daring strategy launched by the Spirit of God</b></p> <p>a. His perception: Two opposing parties present</p> <p>b. His claim: He was being tried because he was a Pharisee</p> <p>c. His purpose: To cause dissension</p> <p>1) Sadducees' belief:<sup>DS2</sup><br/>No resurrection &amp; no spiritual world</p> <p>2) Pharisees' belief:<sup>DS3</sup><br/>Is a resurrection &amp; a spiritual world</p> <p>d. His strategy worked—too well</p> <p>e. His rescue</p> <p><b>5 Paul's terrible strain, but the Lord's glorious assurance</b></p> |
| <p><b>2 Paul's great claim: A</b></p>  | <p>And Paul, earnestly behold-</p>   |   |  |

## DIVISION X

## THE BITTER EXPERIENCE IN JERUSALEM, 21:17-23:11

## C. Paul's Testimony Before the Court, the Great Sanhedrin (Trial 1): God's Guidance and Presence Through Terrible Strain, 22:22-23:11

(22:22-23:11) **Introduction:** it is difficult to imagine the strain and pressure that constantly confronted Paul. The present passage shows how the Lord guides us and stands with us when pressure and strain weigh ever so heavily upon us.

1. Paul's claim to legal rights (v.22-30).
2. Paul's great claim: a pure conscience (Ch.23. v.1).
3. Paul's due respect for the authority of Scripture (v.2-5).
4. Paul's daring strategy launched by the Spirit of God (v.6-10).
5. Paul's terrible strain, but the Lord's glorious assurance (v.11).

**1** (22:22-30) **Paul—Persecution:** Paul's claim to legal rights. Note six points.

1. Paul was violently rejected by the mob. As soon as the crowd heard the word *Gentile*, they reacted violently. Full of fury and rage, they cried out for Paul's death. The picture is descriptive. They were casting off their cloaks, apparently to stone him, and throwing dust up in the air, a sign of fury and deep grief.

2. Paul was again rescued by the soldiers. However, this time the centurion was fed up with the matter. He could not figure out why the crowd exploded so violently against Paul, so he planned to get to the truth by scourging Paul (see DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Scourging*—Jn. 19:1).

3. Paul claimed his legal rights as a Roman citizen. It was a serious crime to scourge a Roman citizen. Every citizen was considered by law to be one of the citizens of the Emperor himself. Anyone who scourged a Roman citizen jeopardized his own life, so the centurion stopped the punishment immediately and went and told the chief captain.

4. Paul verified his Roman citizenship before the chief captain. Note: Paul's citizenship superseded that of the soldier's. He was born a Roman citizen whereas the soldier had bought his citizenship.

5. Paul and his rights were respected. The chief captain left Paul, "being afraid." And he had reason to be, for a Roman citizen was being attacked by a Jewish mob and he, the chief captain, had almost been drawn into a serious crime by the whole affair.

6. The chief captain was determined to find out what caused the riot. On the very next day he called the whole Sanhedrin to appear before him in an official meeting. Note: Paul had been held as a prisoner and had been chained all night. From this point on, Paul's long journey to Rome began, but it was not to be the journey Paul had planned. He would enter Rome as a prisoner, not as a man free to move about as he wished. His imprisonment would last about five years.

The chief captain "sets Paul before them" (the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court). This is the point: God was behind the scene of all that was happening, directing the whole affair. God sent Paul forth to bear witness before the Jews in Jerusalem. This is clear from what the Lord told Paul (Acts 23:11).

**Thought 1.** Note two striking lessons.

- 1) The Lord was able to use Paul as His witness because Paul was given over to the Lord entirely. How many of us, when facing opposition, arise and become more concerned about saving our own necks instead of bearing testimony for Christ? The great need of the hour is to be under the control of the Lord so much that we know that what is happening is being used *of the Lord*.
- 2) The Lord will move events to use us if we are truly His, no matter how trying and overwhelming the events may be.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(22:22) **Judaizers:** the Jewish mob did not object to Paul reaching the Gentiles. There were Gentile converts in Judaism. Their objection was that the Gentiles were being given the privilege of following God without becoming Jews first, without being circumcised and accepting the law. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.2:4.)

**2** (23:1) **Conscience:** Paul's great claim—a pure conscience. Note two points.

1. Paul *earnestly beheld*, looked steadfastly upon the council. He was trying to gain rapport with them or else stare them down. There is also a possibility that he was trying to see if he recognized any of his former acquaintances of twenty-five years ago.

**"Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces...fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks" (Ezk.3:8-9).**

2. Paul made one of the greatest claims possible—that he had lived "in all good conscience before God." He was apparently referring to the years since his conversion. He was saying to the council that his conversion to Christ and his life since that day had not been displeasing to God, but instead pleasing. He was innocent of breaking the law of God and Moses. His conscience was pure.

**"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16).**

“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake” (Ro.13:5).

“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (2 Cor.1:12).

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

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb.10:22).

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim.1:5).

“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1 Tim.1:19).

**3** (23:2-5) **Word of God—Profession, False:** Paul’s due respect for the authority of Scripture. The high priest interpreted Paul’s claim as blasphemy and had him slapped. Paul immediately reacted, firing the law of God against the high priest, accusing him of breaking the law by having him slapped. Very simply, Paul called the high priest a hypocrite, for while he sat in judgment, he broke the law.

William Barclay points out that striking a man was prohibited by Jewish law: “He who strikes the cheek of an Israelite, strikes, as it were, the glory of God.” And “He that strikes a man strikes the Holy One” (*The Acts of The Apostles*, p. 180). Therefore, Paul lashed out at the presiding officer, not knowing that he was addressing the high priest.

When Paul was informed that he had rebuked the high priest, he immediately apologized. Why? Not out of fear, but because Scripture forbade speaking against the ruler of God’s people (cp. Ex.22:28).

**Thought 1.** Note two significant lessons.

1) There was Paul’s loyalty to Scripture. As soon as he knew that he had disobeyed Scripture, he sought repentance.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Pt.1:19).

“Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12).

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (Ps.119:105).

“For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Pr.6:23).

2) There was Paul’s boldness in proclaiming the teaching of Scripture and the hypocrisy of those who professed to obey God but did not.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).

“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn.3:18).

**4** (23:6-10) **Holy Spirit, Guidance:** Paul’s daring strategy launched by the Spirit of God. Paul was being led step by step by the Lord to bear testimony for Him (v.11 cp. Mt.10:18-19; Lk.12:11-12). What happened in this scene is the height of drama. Paul knew that he had lost all hope of a fair hearing since he had rebuked the high priest. However, he perceived something. Representatives from the two major parties of Jewish belief were present, and he knew they were bitterly opposed to each other. He conceived a plan whereby he might be able to pit them against each other. He cried out that he was a member of the Pharisee party and had been dragged before the court because he held the belief of the Pharisees.

⇒ The Pharisees believed in the spiritual world and the resurrection (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 23:8 for discussion).

⇒ The Sadducees did not believe in the spiritual world nor in the resurrection (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 23:8 for discussion).

His strategy worked all too well. The two parties became so engaged in clamoring and arguing against each other that they were about to tear Paul apart. He had to be rescued by the soldiers again.

**Thought 1.** The leadership of God in this maneuver by Paul is phenomenal. On a human level, it is not likely the two parties would become so divisive that they would forget all about Paul. What happened is just what Christ

had promised: Christ said he would provide the answer when believers are called upon by the world to give an answer for their faith. Apparently, on a spiritual level, the Lord was guiding and maneuvering the situation, working it out for good by keeping Paul from being tried by the Jewish court. The point is that God leads the believer through pressure and strain, no matter how severe it may be.

**“But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak” (Mt.10:19).**

**“For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist” (Lk.21:15).**

**Thought 2.** Note two things.

- 1) Religious men of politics (Sadducees) can be tragically deceived about the truth of God and the spiritual world. Men seek power at the expense of their soul's salvation.
- 2) Religionists, even strict religionists who hold to Scripture, can be deceived and distort the truth for the sake of their own customs and traditions, position and livelihood. (See note—Acts 12:1-4 for more discussion.)

### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(23:8) **Sadducees:** the religious and political liberals of Christ's day. They were the wealthy, the aristocratic, the governing class of leaders in Israel. Many Sadducees served on the nation's governing body, the Sanhedrin. The Chief Priest himself was usually a Sadducee who presided over the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin ruled the people in behalf of the Roman empire (Acts 4:1-2; 5:17). The Romans readily saw to it that the Sadducees held the positions of leadership in the nation, for the Sadducees favored Greek customs over Jewish customs. And they aided the Romans in doing away with religious practices and instituting Greek and Roman customs (Hellenism).

They are thought to have arisen out of the same struggle as the Pharisees around B.C. 175. However, they were always the fewest in number among the various sects of Jewish belief.

Several things should be noted.

1. The Sadducees were secular and materialistic minded. They were the independent thinkers, the rationalists of their day.
2. They were heavily entrenched in the priesthood of Jesus' day (cp. Acts 4:1-2; 5:17). They readily collaborated with the Roman government in order to protect their position, power, and wealth.
3. For the most part they denied the supernatural: the resurrection and miracles, life after death, and the existence of beings in other dimensions such as angels and spirits (Mt.22:23; Acts 23:8). To them there was no heaven or hell, no existence whatsoever except on this earth. A man died and was annihilated, just ceased to exist. There was no such thing as rewards or punishment in an afterlife, no eternal life. (See notes—Mt.22:23-33.)

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(23:8) **Pharisees:** the word means *the separated ones*. The Pharisees were strict religionists. Their religious sect arose about B.C. 175. A Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes, tried to stamp out the Jewish religion and replace it with Greek customs and practices. A number of Jewish men opposed this threat and determined among themselves to save the Jewish religion. They refused to practice Greek customs and dedicated themselves to practicing the Jewish law in the strictest sense. They felt that by carrying out every little detail of the Jewish law and by teaching others to do the same, they could save the Jewish religion and nation and keep it from dying out. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.12:10.)

Several things should be noted.

1. They were the orthodox of their day—a sect or school of religious thought. They were organized solely for preserving the law and the Jewish religion. Thereby, they were to save the Jewish nation.
2. They were strict literalists. The Jewish law was expanded into thousands and thousands of little rules and regulations by the Scribes. These rules and regulations were known as the Scribal or Oral Law. More than fifty volumes or books were eventually needed to hold the regulations. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.6:2).
3. The Pharisees were a body of the most zealous religionists.
4. There were never many Pharisees—never more than 6,000. The strictness and demands of the sect were too hard for the common people.
5. They were in dead earnest—dedicated and zealous, self-denying, and moral. No man could give his life to so desperate and restrictive a task unless he was totally genuine.
6. They were self-righteous, heartless, and hypocritical (Lk.18:9). They lacked any sense of need or sin (Lk.7:39).
7. They were bitterly opposed to the Sadducees, hating and despising them, feeling that the Sadducees were traitors to the nation. However, the Pharisees were forced to quietly cooperate with the Sadducees because the Sadducees were the primary ruling party of the nation.
8. They were the main opponents of Jesus Christ and were unsparing in their denunciation of Him. Their savage attacks were primarily for two reasons. First, He was not a graduate of any of their rabbinical schools, nor a member of any of their religious sects. Second, He attacked their rules and regulations which had been added to God's law (see outline and notes—Mt.23:1-36; Lk.11:37-54).

**5** (23:11) **Paul—God's Care & Presence:** for two days Paul had been under a frightening, terrible strain. His mental and physical capabilities had been taxed to the limit. Twice he had to be snatched from the clutch of a frenzied mob by a Roman patrol. And the warning he had received not to venture into Jerusalem was bound to be preying upon his mind.

How much more could he take? What was his breaking point? God knew, just as He always does. The scene was this: it was the night following and Paul was deeply discouraged and questioning, sensing failure and feeling hopeless and helpless. And he had been in such a state for over twenty-four hours. Note a significant fact: no mention is made of any support from James or the other apostles or elders of the church (cp. Acts 12:5). Paul apparently stood alone. But note: the Lord stood by him.

- ⇒ The Lord gave some appearance to him.
- ⇒ The Lord said, “Be of good cheer” (tharsei), of good courage.
- ⇒ The Lord assured him that his witness in Jerusalem was of God.
- ⇒ The Lord assured him that he would bear witness in Rome.

**Thought 1.** The Lord will stand by our side, encouraging and seeing us through all—if we are bearing true witness for Him.

**Thought 2.** The Lord wishes His servants to always be cheerful and courageous, no matter the trial. The life of His servant is under the care and leadership of the Lord.

“I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Ps.23:4).

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Ps.27:1).

“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him” (Ps.28:7).

“But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God” (Ps.40:17).

“And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (Ex.33:14).

“Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is.43:2).

“Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he, that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up” (Is.50:9).

“Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:20).

“At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:16-18).

“He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).

“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb.13:6).

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev.2:10).

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| <p><b>1 The conspiracy: Some men deceived themselves</b></p> <p>a. They bound themselves under a curse before God</p> <p>b. They bound one another in the evil curse</p> <p>c. They sought the involvement of the leaders &amp; religionists</p> <p>d. They showed contempt for their bodies &amp; souls</p> <p>e. They showed contempt for God's will</p><br><p><b>2 The conspiracy discovered: God used a child to expose the work of darkness</b></p> <p>a. A very caring child</p> <p>b. A very courageous child</p> <p>c. A very young child</p> <p>d. A very wise &amp; affectionate child</p> | <p><b>XI. THE FINAL JOURNEY &amp; WITNESS OF PAUL: TO ROME AS A PRISONER, 23:12-28:31</b></p> <p><b>A. Paul's Providential Journey Begins: Man's Deception &amp; God's Providence, 23:12-35</b></p> <p>12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.</p> <p>13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.</p> <p>14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.</p> <p>15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.</p> <p>16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.</p> <p>17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.</p> <p>18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.</p> <p>19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me?</p> <p>20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee</p> | <p>that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly.</p> <p>21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.</p> <p>22 So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me.</p> <p>23 And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;</p> <p>24 And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.</p> <p>25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:</p> <p>26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting.</p> <p>27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.</p> <p>28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:</p> <p>29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.</p> <p>30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.</p> <p>31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took</p> | <p>e. A very trustworthy child</p> <p><b>3 The conspiracy failed: God used the decency &amp; justice of men to achieve His purpose<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p><b>4 The letter to Felix: The world's ignorance of spiritual truth</b></p> <p>a. The complimentary greeting</p> <p>b. The Jewish riot</p> <p>c. The rescue of a man because he was a Roman</p> <p>d. The trial before a Jewish court</p> <p>e. The apparent innocence</p> <p>f. The plot against his life: The reason for his transfer</p> <p><b>5 The providential delivery to Felix: Great men are</b></p> |
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| <p><b>prepared for a witness against themselves</b></p> <p>a. The soldiers escorted Paul to Caesarea</p> <p>b. The soldiers turned Paul over to Felix</p> | <p>Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.</p> <p>32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:</p> <p>33 Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.</p> | <p>34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;</p> <p>35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.</p> | <p>1) Paul was promised a speedy trial</p> <p>2) Paul was kept in custody</p> |
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**DIVISION XI**

**THE FINAL JOURNEY AND WITNESS OF PAUL: TO ROME AS A PRISONER, 23:12-28:31**

**A. Paul's Providential Journey Begins: Man's Deception and God's Providence, 23:12-35**

(23:12-35) **Introduction:** the journey Paul was to make was by the providence of God. (See Map—Introduction to Acts, for a picture of the journey and city.) Paul was to bear witness in Rome (Acts 23:11). Thus, God set in motion the human events to take Paul to Rome, and in so doing several pictures are painted for the believer.

1. The conspiracy: men deceived themselves (v.12-15).
2. The conspiracy discovered: God used a child to expose the work of darkness (v.16-22).
3. The conspiracy failed: the decency and justice of men being used by God to achieve His purposes prevailed (v.23-24).
4. The letter to Felix: the world's ignorance of spiritual truth (v.25-31).
5. The providential delivery to Felix: great men are prepared for a witness against themselves (v.31-35).

**1** (23:12-15) **Deception:** the conspiracy—a picture of men deceiving themselves. Paul had just appeared before the Sanhedrin, the high court and ruling body of the Jews. The Jews had their chance to convince the Romans that Paul was worthy of death. But the court had been thrown into disarray, the conservative Pharisees arguing against the liberal Sadducees. They had Paul in their grasp; they had the chance to get rid of him, but they had blown it. The Romans had taken him back into custody.

However, some Jews did not give up. They bitterly hated Paul, being convinced he stood against both the Jewish nation and the law of God. Therefore, they plotted to get rid of him.

The point to see is how men deceive themselves in their evil and sinful deeds. Paul was a man of God, a man who was proclaiming the message of God's salvation. These men did not like the message and did not want to hear it, so they plotted to get rid of it. Note five points.

1. The men bound themselves under a curse before God. The curse (anathematizo) was what may be called a *religious curse*. It was an anathema; that is, they devoted themselves to God; they would not eat or drink until they had killed Paul. They actually thought they would be pleasing God by getting rid of Paul.

Note how deceived they were. Paul was God's chosen vessel, yet they were so deceived they thought he was evil. They thought their sin was acceptable to God, that God understood it and was even pleased with their behavior.

**Thought 1.** How often men think their sin is acceptable to God, that God understands. He knows the trouble, the emptiness, the loneliness of the human heart; therefore, he understands the sin. Such thoughts are, of course, deception. Sin is never acceptable to God.

**Thought 2.** How many in the church have done evil against God's servant, preacher or leader, causing serious problems? How many have thought they were right, when they were really stifling the church and its call to reach out to a world reeling in desperate need?

**“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).**

2. They bound one another under the curse (evil). Whoever planned the evil dragged others into the sin. There were actually forty others involved in the plot against Paul.

**Thought 1.** There is great warning in Scripture about leading others into sin.

**“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Mt.18:6).**

3. They sought the involvement of the chief rulers and religionists. Note their confidence in securing the help of the leaders in their sin. They just *knew* the leaders and religionists would join them in their evil.

**Thought 1.** How worldly leaders and religionists can become! How deceived they too often are!

4. They showed contempt for their bodies and souls. The law said, “Thou shalt not kill,” yet they plotted to kill. Down deep they knew better, yet they plotted evil under a *religious* curse, saying they would not eat or drink until the evil was done. They disregarded the care of both their souls and bodies.

**Thought 1.** How deceived the human mind, the human heart! We know better; the law of God forbids the act. Yet, we think that because we hurt or have need, God understands and will not hold us accountable. What we fail to see is this: God wants to meet our need Himself. When we go ahead and take matters into our own hands, we are failing to trust Him, failing to believe He loves and cares enough and has the power to meet our need.

5. They showed contempt for God’s will. Note how they laid plans to carry out their evil deed, disregarding the clear teaching of God’s Word against the very sin they were planning.

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mt.22:36-39).

“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Lk.6:46).

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Ro.13:10).

“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic.6:8).

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim.3:5).

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).

**2** (23:16-22) **Children—Paul, Family of;** the conspiracy discovered—God used a child to expose the works of darkness.

This is a beautiful picture of what a child should be. The child was Paul’s nephew, the son of Paul’s sister who lived in Jerusalem. Note how God used what the world called a *mere child* to expose the works of darkness. The great lesson is that God can use children in the work of His kingdom. It is simply a matter of the child committing his life to the Lord.

1. The child was caring. He heard about the plot and he did not ignore it nor let it pass. He loved and cared for Paul, and he was alert enough to know the threat and danger of what was about to be done, so he rushed to tell Paul.

**Thought 1.** The child did not ignore nor set aside his duty until after he had finished playing or doing whatever he was doing. So many children would have, but not him. He loved and cared for Paul and he wanted to help his uncle as much as he could, so he jumped right to his duty.

2. The child was brave and courageous. Note where he had to go—into a castle and a prison around all kinds of soldiers and guards—and he had to go in all alone. The point is this: he knew what should be done and that it would be difficult, perhaps even dangerous for him. But he did it. He did it because it was the right thing to do.

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim.2:3-4).

**Thought 1.** Other examples of brave children are as follows.

“And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth” (1 Sam.17:33).

“And David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee” (1 Sam.17:37).

3. The child was very young. He is called “a young man,” but he was a child, for Lysias the chief captain took him by the hand (v.19). Imagine a child this young doing what this child did! A dynamic example for all!

4. The child was very wise. The child not only told the chief captain about the plot, but he suggested that the requests of the plotters not be granted (v.21). The idea of the child was simple and could not by itself solve the problem. Just outrightly denying the request would never satisfy the plotters. But note: the child was thinking, and he was offering his thoughts.

**Thought 1.** Compare other wise children.

“Joash was seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name also was Zibiah of Beersheba. And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the day of Jehoiada the priest” (2 Chron.24:1-2).

“Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in

the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images” (2 Chron.34:1-3).

“And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Lk.2:49).

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.3:15).

5. The child was very trustworthy. The chief captain instructed the boy to say nothing about the plot to anyone, not to other children, not even to his parents. The officer trusted the boy. He could have easily retained the child for a day or two until the whole affair was handled, but there was something about the child that indicated trustworthiness.

“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim.4:12).

**3** (23:23-24) **God, Sovereignty:** the conspiracy failed—the decency and justice of men being used by God to achieve His purposes prevailed. Note the enormous contrast between the leaders and religionists and the chief captain. The very ones who should have been standing forth for justice and godliness were involved in the evil. But note: God overruled the event. He used the decency and justice, the inner knowledge of right and wrong within a soldier to deliver His servant.

**Thought 1.** How many leaders and religionists are involved in evil? How often does God have to use a person of less rank to thrust back the evil of the higher rank?

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are” (1 Cor.1:26-28).

“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger” (Ps.8:2).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**  
 (23:23) **Centurion:** an officer in the Roman armed forces. He commanded about one hundred soldiers. To the Jew, the centurion had three things against him: he was bitterly hated because he was non-Jewish, a Gentile; he was of the nation that had conquered Palestine, Rome; and he was of the armed and occupying force. Every time a centurion is mentioned in the New Testament it is with honor.

1. There was the centurion who had great faith in the power of Jesus (Mt.8:5).
2. There was the centurion who recognized Jesus hanging on the cross as the Son of God (Mt.27:54).
3. There was the centurion, Cornelius, who was the first Gentile convert to the Christian church (Acts 10:22).
4. There was the centurion who recognized that Paul was a Roman citizen and rescued him from the rioting mob (Acts 23:17-23).
5. There was the centurion who took steps to deliver Paul from being murdered after being informed of the Jews’ plan (Acts 24:23).
6. There was the centurion whom Felix ordered to escort and look after Paul (Acts 24:23).
7. There was the centurion who escorted Paul on his last journey to Rome. He treated Paul with great courtesy and accepted him as the leader when the storm struck the ship (Acts 27:43).

The structure of the Roman military was built around the Roman legion which consisted of 6000 men.

- ⇒ The Roman legion was divided into cohorts: each cohort had 600 soldiers. This means there were ten cohorts in each legion.
- ⇒ The cohort was divided into centuries. Each century had 100 men and was led by a centurion. The centurions were the backbone of the Roman legions. They were the leaders in closest contact with the men; therefore, they were the officers upon whom the top brass depended so heavily (William Barclay. *The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol.1. “The Daily Study Bible.” Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1956, p.306).

**4** (23:25-30) **Ignorance, Spiritual:** the letter to Felix, the governor—the world’s ignorance of spiritual truth. The letter speaks for itself. It is simply Lysias, the chief captain, relating the events and putting the case before the higher court of Felix the governor. The point to note is this: the chief captain was ignorant of spiritual truth. He was apparently a man of honor, justice, and decency, a man committed to do the right thing. Yet, when it came to understanding the charges against Paul, all he could say was that Paul was “accused of *their law*” (v.29). He did not understand the issue because he was ignorant of God’s law and Word.

**Thought 1.** What a striking lesson for us all!  
 1) How many are decent and just and honorable, yet ignorant of God’s law?

- 2) How many do not really understand the questions and issues of life because they are ignorant of God's Word?

**“For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Ro.10:3).**

**“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).**

**“The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace” (Is.59:8).**

**“Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God” (Jer.5:4).**

**“For they know not to do right, saith the Lord, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces” (Amos 3:10).**

**“But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor” (Mic.4:12).**

- 5** (23:31-35) **Deliverance:** the providential deliverance to Felix—great men being prepared for a witness against themselves. Jesus had said:

**“Ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them” (Mk.13:9).**

The Lord was working things out for Paul to fulfill His Word. He wanted a witness before the rulers of the world, and there is no greater witness for Christ than a believer standing up for Christ in the face of persecution (cp. Acts 24:1f; 25:1f; 25:13f; 26:1f).

1. Standing firm demonstrates the truth of the gospel. Its message of love and salvation is clearly seen by the persecutor.
2. Standing firm gives the Holy Spirit a unique opportunity to reach the hearts of those standing by with the truth of the gospel.
3. Standing firm is a testimony *against* the persecutors. It shows how deep the wickedness and evil of their hearts are, and it will stand as a testimony against them in the day of judgment (Mt.25:45-46; Ro.2:5-6).

| CHAPTER 24   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>1 A courtroom scene</b></p> <p>a. The prosecution led by a hired Roman lawyer, Tertullus</p> <p>b. The nauseating, lying flattery</p> <p>c. The charges against Paul</p> <p>1) An insurrectionist, a traitor, a trouble-maker</p> <p>2) A ringleader of the Nazarenes, a rebellious sect</p> <p>3) A profaner of the temple</p> <p>d. The claim against the chief captain</p> <p>1) He obstructed justice</p> <p>2) He could verify his action</p> <p><b>2 Paul could do only one thing: Tell the truth</b></p> <p>a. He did not flatter nor</p> | <p><b>B. Paul &amp; Felix,<sup>DS1</sup> the Roman Governor—Trial Two (Part I): What Real Worship Is, 24:1-21</b></p> <p>And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.</p> <p>2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,</p> <p>3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.</p> <p>4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.</p> <p>5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:</p> <p>6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.</p> <p>7 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,</p> <p>8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.</p> <p>9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.</p> <p>10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, For-</p> | <p>asmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:</p> <p>11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.</p> <p>12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:</p> <p>13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.</p> <p>14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:</p> <p>15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.</p> <p>16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.</p> <p>17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.</p> <p>18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.</p> <p>19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.</p> <p>20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,</p> <p>21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.</p> <p>lie about Felix's accomplishments</p> <p>b. He went to Jerusalem to worship, not to arouse people into a disturbance</p> <p>c. He was not guilty of the charges; they could not be proven</p> <p><b>3 Paul could confess only one thing: A genuine worship of God</b></p> <p>a. By approaching God through "The Way"</p> <p>b. By believing the Scriptures</p> <p>c. By hoping for the resurrection</p> <p>d. By striving for a pure conscience</p> <p><b>4 Paul had come for only one purpose: To bring alms</b></p> <p>a. He had been unjustly attacked by Asian Jews who were not there to accuse him before the court</p> <p>b. He was being unjustly tried by the Jewish council</p> <p><b>5 Paul was guilty of only one thing: Proclaiming the resurrection</b></p> |

## DIVISION XI

### THE FINAL JOURNEY AND WITNESS OF PAUL: TO ROME AS A PRISONER, 23:12-28:31

#### B. Paul and Felix, the Roman Governor—Trial Two (Part I): What Real Worship Is, 24:1-21

##### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(24:1-27) **Felix:** was originally a slave who along with his brother was freed by the mother of the emperor Claudius. His brother Pollus was highly favored by Claudius, and as a result, Felix was able to secure his position as governor of Judea. Felix was a monstrous ruler, cruel and despotic, lustful and full of greed and corruption. He was known for taking and maneuvering for bribes. He was removed from office because of racial riots between Jews and Syrians.

(24:1-21) **Introduction:** this is a picture of Paul's defense before the Roman governor. It is a defense declaring what real worship is.

1. A courtroom scene (v.1-9).
2. Paul could do only one thing: tell the truth (v.10-13).
3. Paul could confess only one thing: a genuine worship of God (v.14-16).
4. Paul had come for only one purpose: to bring alms (v.17-20).
5. Paul was guilty of only one thing: proclaiming the resurrection (v.21).

**1** (24:1-9) **Paul, Legal Trials of:** the scene was a courtroom. The Jews were no doubt furious when they found out Lysias had transferred Paul to Caesarea in the middle of the night, foiling their plot. This can be imagined by their quick pursuit to appear before Felix. In just five days they had hired a Roman lawyer, prepared their case and were appearing in court before the governor Felix, ready to do all they could to have Paul condemned to death. Note four things.

1. The prosecution was led by the high priest himself and a Roman lawyer, Tertullus. The fact that the high priest himself would take the lead against Paul and that he would hire a Roman lawyer to prosecute the case is a real eye-opener. He and the other leaders probably felt that the lawyer (being a Roman) could handle the civil trial much better than they (being Jewish), and that he would be more likely to secure a judgement than themselves. This shows the extreme importance they placed upon destroying Paul and silencing his message forever.

**Thought 1.** The believer can easily see the hand of evil—of Satan—at work against Paul. Just imagine what would have happened if Paul and his message had been stomped out. Would the gospel be free today, free of rules and regulations, ritual and ceremony, religious custom and Jewish practice? Would the gospel have ever spread worldwide? Would we be saved?

**“If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Ro.8:31).  
“Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 Jn.4:4).**

It was God's will for Paul to continue witnessing for Christ, so Paul was under the care of God, no matter how desperate his plight looked. What a lesson for us as we face the trials of life! Our task is to simply make sure we are walking faithfully in serving the Lord.

2. Note the nauseating, lying flattery of Tertullus. Felix was anything but what Tertullus was saying (see note, *Felix—Acts 24:1-27*).

**Thought 1.** Note four tragedies.

- 1) A lawyer playing up to the judge in order to receive a favorable opinion.
- 2) Religionists defiling themselves by becoming a part of this corrupt scene, a scene involving...
  - murder in the name of religion.
  - evil and sin in the name of God.
  - flattery to secure a favor.
  - the failure to stand up and proclaim the truth of the case.
- 3) The flattery of an evil man.
- 4) Saying an evil man is good.

3. The charges against Paul were threefold.

- a. Charge 1: he was an insurrectionist: a troublemaker, a disturber of the peace, a man who caused trouble and sedition and disorder among the Jewish people. (Note how this is often the charge brought against God's servants even by leaders in the churches where they often serve.)
- b. Charge 2: he was a ringleader of the Nazarenes, a rebellious sect. This was a name given to Christian believers, the followers of Jesus the Nazarene. Note: Christianity is called a sect. This, of course, is not true. Christianity...
  - does not promote sects and sectarianism; but unity and brotherhood, love, peace, and quietness.
  - does not promote selfishness, worldliness, indulgence, extravagance, wealth, injustice, or disorderliness. It promotes care and concern, ministry and help, giving and justice, government and obedience to law.

c. Charge 3: he was a profaner of the temple. This was totally untrue and probably was of no interest to Felix.

4. Note the claim against the chief captain, Lysias. The charges and lies involved in the charges are clearly seen (cp. Acts 21:27f for the actual facts of what happened). The great tragedy is found in the words “the Jews also asserted, saying that these things were so.”

**Thought 1.** How tragic that we allow ourselves to become *religious* and follow religion instead of following Christ Himself. It is when we follow religion and our *own ideas* about religion that we get into trouble. It is when we seek to *maintain* our religion and our ideas of religion that we begin to follow the wrong leader. Our call is not to *maintain* religion, but to follow Christ and His Word. The great need of the hour is to follow in the steps of our Lord.

**“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).**

**“Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning” (1 Jn.2:7).**

**2** (24:10-13) **Paul, Legal Trials—Truthfulness:** Paul could do only one thing—tell the truth. He did three things immediately.

1. Paul truthfully and tactfully said what he could. He simply said that Felix had been a judge of the nation for years (about seven years). Paul did not flatter nor lie about Felix’s accomplishments. Paul acknowledged his position as judge, letting Felix know that he, Paul, was fully aware that his fate was in Felix’s hands. Felix must have been stricken with the simple, straightforward, and honest address.

2. Paul went to Jerusalem to worship, not to arouse people into a disturbance. He said that he had arrived in Jerusalem only twelve days earlier. Felix knew three things from this, and he knew it because Paul had been arrested on the fifth day.

⇒ Five days were not enough time for Paul to do what the Jews were saying. He could not have planned and mobilized an insurrection that would arouse all the people, not in five days time.

⇒ Since all the events had happened within twelve days, Paul’s account could be checked out thoroughly.

⇒ By mentioning the time frame and knowing that his account could be checked meant that Paul was probably being honest in what he said.

3. Paul was not guilty of the charges. The charges could not be proven. Note the facts that Paul mentioned.

a. He was in the temple when attacked: the temple would not be a place where insurrection would be carried out.

b. He was worshipping and participating in the services...

- not arguing
- not stirring up or inciting the crowd
- not creating a revolution in the temple or synagogue or city

**Thought 1.** Note how truthful Paul was. When giving an answer or a defense, we must always be truthful, even go overboard to be truthful. God will honor the truth, but He will expose and dishonor the lie.

**“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph.4:22).**

**“The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment” (Pr.12:19).**

**“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Pr.23:23).**

**“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” (Zech.8:16).**

**3** (24:14-16) **Worship:** Paul could confess only one thing, a genuine worship of God. Paul admitted that the second charge against him was true. He was a follower of the Nazarene, Jesus. Note: Paul said that “the way” of the Nazarene was heresy to the Jews, but...

1. He worshipped the same God, the God of the fathers of Israel, not a new god (see outline and notes—Acts 17:24-25; 17:26 for discussion).

2. He believed all things written in the Scriptures, denying nothing (see outline and notes, *Scripture*—Ro.1:1-7; 2 Tim.3:16 for discussion. Cp. also 2 Pt.1:19-21.)

**“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mt.24:35).**

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).**

**“But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Pt.1:25).**

3. He hoped for the resurrection the same as Israel did (see outline and notes—1 Cor.15:1-58; DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Cor.5:10; note—1 Th.4:13-5:3 for discussion of Paul’s belief. Cp. also Rev.20:4-6; 20:11-15; 21:1-22:5.)

**“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).**

**“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Th.4:16).**

4. He always sought to have a pure conscience. Paul said three things.

a. He “exercised” (en toutoi) himself—actively trained, disciplined, practiced, labored, strove, struggled, even to the point of pain—to keep a pure conscience.

b. He struggled to be “void of offense” (aproskopon), to keep from stumbling, to keep from causing others to stumble, to keep from hurting himself and from hurting others.

**“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even**

as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved” (1 Cor.10:31-33).

“That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Ph.1:10).

c. He struggled to have a clear conscience toward both God and men.

“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (2 Cor.1:12).

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim.1:5).

“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1 Tim.1:19).

“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pt.3:16).

**4** (24:17-20) **Deliverance:** Paul had come to Jerusalem for only one purpose—to bring alms for the poor of Jerusalem. Far from being an insurrectionist, Paul had returned to the city to bring financial help to the poor. His return was not to incite the people against their government, but to minister and show mercy by helping all he could. Note: Paul related exactly what had happened.

1. He was unjustly attacked by Asian Jews. The attack was not even by those Jews who lived there, but by foreign Jews. In addition...

- they attacked him while he was worshipping.
- they were not present in the court to accuse him of the charges.

2. He was unjustly tried by the great Jewish court, the Sanhedrin (cp. Acts 22:30-23:11).

**Thought 1.** Note a crucial point. Paul was in the midst of a terrible trial, but he was there because of a righteous deed. Therefore, he could expect to be delivered by God exactly as God willed. So it is with every believer.

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).

“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God” (1 Pt.2:20).

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).

**5** (24:21) **Paul, Trials:** Paul was guilty of one thing—that of proclaiming the resurrection (see outline and note—Acts 23:6-10 for discussion).

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p><b>1 He knew "The Way," but postponed justice</b><br/> a. He knew Paul was innocent</p> <p>b. He put Paul under house arrest</p> <p><b>2 He desired to hear about Christ, but not about</b></p> | <p><b>C. Paul &amp; Felix (Part II): The Great Tragedy—A Man Who Knows Better, 24:22-27</b></p> <p>22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.</p> <p>23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.</p> <p>24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his</p> | <p>wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.</p> <p>25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.</p> <p>26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.</p> <p>27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.</p> | <p><b>repentance</b></p> <p>a. He sent for Paul: Desired to learn from a celebrated leader of "The Way"</p> <p>b. Paul shared: Righteousness, self-control, &amp; judgment</p> <p>c. He trembled under conviction &amp; postponed a decision</p> <p><b>3 He sold justice for greed</b></p> <p><b>4 He was a man-pleaser</b></p> |
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**DIVISION XI**

**THE FINAL JOURNEY AND WITNESS OF PAUL: TO ROME AS A PRISONER, 23:12-28:31**

**C. Paul and Felix (Part II): The Great Tragedy—A Man Who Knows Better, 24:22-27**

(24:22-27) **Introduction:** in Felix we see the picture of a man who knows better, but who still goes ahead and pursues his own cravings and passions.

1. He knew "The Way," but postponed justice (v.22-23).
2. He desired to hear about Christ, but not about repentance (v.24-25).
3. He sold justice for greed (v.26).
4. He was a man-pleaser (v.27).

**1** (24:22-23) **Compromise:** the man knew "The Way," but postponed justice. Felix knew more about Christianity than the prosecutors and religionists thought he knew.

- ⇒ Believers were scattered throughout all the province.
- ⇒ Philip the evangelist lived in Caesarea.
- ⇒ There were churches scattered all throughout that part of the world.
- ⇒ Apparently, there was a large church established in the city.
- ⇒ Caesarea was also the city where the Roman centurion had been converted.
- ⇒ Drusilla, the wife of Felix, was a Jew who probably knew something about Christianity.
- ⇒ Christianity was the subject of much of the talk of that day.

The point is this: Felix had a "more perfect knowledge," that is, a more accurate knowledge of Christianity than anyone supposed. He knew enough about Christian believers and their message of righteousness to know that Paul was telling the truth. Yet he postponed justice; he did not do the right thing. He knew Paul should be set free, but he lacked the courage to do it. Why? There are probably four reasons.

1. Felix could not risk upsetting the Jewish authorities too much. If he let Paul go, they might report him to Caesar, which could cause considerable problems for him—even his being removed from office.
2. Nero had just assumed power in Rome. Felix's brother Pallus no longer carried the influence he did when Claudius was emperor. Therefore, Felix could not run the risk of seriously upsetting the Jewish authorities.
3. Felix simply lacked the moral strength to do the right thing. He preferred compromise to righteousness, compromise to being a real man. He saw a way out of the predicament. He could postpone the decision, claiming he must wait upon the testimony of Lysias, the chief captain who was still in Jerusalem. Of course, Felix had already received the testimony which declared Paul innocent, but the Jews did not know it (cp. Acts 23:25-30).
4. Felix had hopes of lining his pockets with a huge bribe from Paul (cp. v.26). He had heard in the trial about the large *relief fund* Paul had brought to Jerusalem, and he knew Paul was one of the major leaders of the Nazarene religion. He felt Paul would have influence with some wealthy friends who would perhaps be willing to offer a bribe. This was probably the reason he gave Paul so much freedom as a prisoner. Paul was put under *house arrest* under the care of a centurion instead of being placed in prison. He was also allowed guests and freedom of movement within the castle. Felix was apparently *playing up* to Paul, making him *ripe* for the offering of a bribe.

**Thought 1.** How many lack the moral strength to do the right thing? How many try to play both sides? How many compromise? Postpone? Stand in the middle? Seek money instead of righteousness? Seek *payoffs*? Seek bribes?

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt.6:24).

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mt.16:26).

“I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality” (1 Tim.5:21).

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor” (Lev.19:15).

“Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law” (Mal.2:9).

**2** (24:24-25) **Indecision—Rejection:** the man desired to hear about Christ, but not about repentance. Felix apparently left Caesarea but soon returned. The idea is that only a short time elapsed between the two trips. Note three significant points.

1. As soon as he returned, Felix sent for Paul to visit him and his wife to discuss Christ. According to the Scripture he had two motives, one pure and the other impure.

a. Felix and his wife apparently wanted to learn more about “The Way,” more about the Nazarenes and their faith in Christ. He and his wife, who was a Jewess, were curious; and Paul was a celebrated leader among the Christians. They could learn about the new movement from no better person.

b. Felix also wished to line his pockets with a bribe from Paul (v.26). Building rapport was therefore essential.

2. Paul shared a threefold message courageously and forcibly. No doubt the conversation between Paul and the ruler and his wife was striking; Paul expounded the gospel and the two rulers questioned him. What Paul had to say was a forceful lesson for all believers, even for those who have the privilege of witnessing to the powerful of the world. Fearlessly, Paul declared that *faith in Christ* concerned living a righteous and controlled life in this world and facing God’s judgment at the end of this life.

a. Faith in Christ concerns righteousness. Felix and Drusilla had never received the “righteousness of God” (see note 5 and DEEPER STUDY # 5,6—Mt.5:6; Ro.3:21-22 for discussion).

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor.15:34).

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Ph.1:11).

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Mt.5:6).

b. Faith in Christ concerns temperance (egkrateias), that is self-control. Both rulers lacked in this area. They were living lives focused upon indulgence and extravagance, wealth and possessions, materialism and secularism, selfishness and pride, greed and covetousness, lusts and urges, sensuality and fleshiness (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.9:23).

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Ro.6:12).

“He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich” (Pr.21:17).

“And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite” (Pr.23:2).

c. Faith in Christ concerns judgment to come. If either ruler knew anything about a judgment before God, they apparently had never given much thought to the fact. Felix was an unjust judge; now he was hearing that he must stand before God some day and give an account of his life and labor upon earth. He was hearing for the first time in his life that his work upon earth was considered by God to be a trust, a stewardship, and that God held him accountable for performing his work well (soberly, righteously, and godly). (Cp. Tit.2:12.)

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt.25:31-32).

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb.9:27).

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Pt.3:7).

**“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14-15).**

3. Felix trembled under conviction. The word “trembled” means to be terrified and frightened. Felix was living a life diametrically opposed to what God demanded. He was under conviction, for if Paul was right—if Jesus was truly the Son of God—then he, Felix, was condemned and doomed.

Tragically, Felix postponed making a decision for Christ. Again he delayed making the right choice. He did what so many do—simply put the decision off for some other time.

**“When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are” (Lk.13:25).**

**“For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (Heb.12:17).**

**Thought 1.** How many want to know the facts about *faith in Christ*, but not the message of repentance?

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**

**“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).**

**“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).**

**Thought 2.** In his ministry and preaching Paul...

- proclaimed the truth, compromising nothing.
- showed no favoritism or partiality.
- struck at the consciences of men, seeking to stir a change within them (how grossly we fail at this point!)
- sought the soul of the man, not *good relationships*.

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**3** (24:26) **Bribery—Greed:** the man sold justice for greed. This was a practice of Felix, to seek payoffs for favors done.

How deeply greed seeps into the halls of justice and government! What terrible hunks of character are ripped away by the fangs of greed! The love of money ruins many a person. Bribery, payoffs, and corruption too often seem to be the way of life among those who have wealth and who hold power.

Note the strong character of Paul. He never offered a bribe, not a single penny. Felix even seemed to become impatient, perhaps thinking he was dealing with a novice, a man who did not know the ways of the world. Therefore, he tried to reach out more and more to Paul, seeing him quite often.

**Thought 1.** Paul stands as a convicting testimony to every man who is gripped by greed and who seeks and pays bribes. He is a convicting testimony to every corrupt official.

**“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).**

**“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).**

**“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim.6:10).**

**“Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days” (Jas.5:3).**

**4** (24:27) **Man-Pleaser—Compromise:** the man was a man-pleaser. A historical incident lies behind this scene. Racial violence had broken out between the Jews and Gentiles in Caesarea. Felix had acted rather swiftly, killing a number of Jewish leaders. As a result, the Jews reported Felix to Nero, the Roman emperor. This happened two years after Paul first appeared before Felix. Paul had been a prisoner for two years. Note two things.

1. Felix again refused to do the right thing. In setting the affairs of his government in order, he still refused to free Paul. The reason is clear: he could not risk arousing the Jews anymore. He was fighting for his own political survival, and to do the right thing might jeopardize his position and power and wealth. So again, he gave in to the world and its things, to greed and wealth and power instead of righteousness. He compromised righteousness in order to please men.

2. Felix paid the price. The world may not know it, but the Sovereign Majesty of the universe again brought about the downfall of a ruler. Felix was removed from office and Festus was given the rule. One can only wonder what would have happened if Felix had accepted Christ.

**“How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” (Jn.5:44).**

**“For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (Jn.12:43).**

**“Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God’s: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it” (Dt.1:17).**

**“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe” (Pr.29:25).**

CHAPTER 25

**D. Paul & Festus,<sup>DS1</sup> the New Roman Governor, & King Agrippa<sup>DS2</sup>—Trial Three (Part I): A Contrast of Attitudes, 25:1-27**

**1 Festus, the new governor, made an appeasing visit**

Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

**2 The Jewish conspiracy: Men who tried to do away with God's servant**

2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

- a. Their request: To try Paul before the Jewish court
- b. Their purpose: To kill Paul
- c. Festus' sense of justice: Rejected their request

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

**3 The trial before the local Roman governor: Men who lied & made false charges against God's servant**

4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. 5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

**4 The defense of Paul: A man full of godly strength**

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.

**5 The failure of Festus in justice: A man who attempted an unjust compromise**

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

**6 The appeal of Paul to Caesar: A godly man being delivered**

a. He appealed to the law

8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.

b. He was willing to abide by the law's judgment

9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing

worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.

13 And after certain days King Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth.

18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar.

22 Then Agrippa said unto

**7 The new governor sought the counsel of King Agrippa: A man spiritually blind & confused**

- a. A protocol visit (v.13)
- b. The new governor sought council
  - 1) A prisoner left by the former governor

- 2) Not familiar with the whole case
- c. The account of the hearing before Festus
  - 1) The Jews' request for a Jewish trial
  - 2) Festus' ruling for a civil trial

- 3) Festus' puzzlement over the charges: He expected civil charges, but instead he heard a disagreement over religion

- 4) Festus' suggestion to Paul for a Jewish trial

- 5) Paul's appeal to Caesar

**8 The hearing before King**

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| <p><b>Agrippa: Men arrayed in their worldly pomp &amp; formal injustices</b></p> <p>a. The hearing set for the next day</p> <p>b. The hearing held in great pomp</p><br><p>c. The speech of Festus before the court</p> <p>1) He greeted all respectfully</p> <p>2) He related the Jews' spite</p> | <p>Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.</p> <p>23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.</p> <p>24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live</p> | <p>any longer.</p> <p>25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.</p> <p>26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.</p> <p>27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.</p> | <p>3) He confessed Paul's innocence</p> <p>4) He stated Paul's appeal to Caesar</p> <p>5) He requested assistance in examining the case: He lacked understanding of the charges &amp; needed to gather facts for his report</p> |
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**DIVISION XI**

**THE FINAL JOURNEY AND WITNESS OF PAUL: TO ROME AS A PRISONER, 23:12-28:31**

**D. Paul and Festus, the New Roman Governor, and King Agrippa—Trial Three (Part I): A Contrast of Attitudes, 25:1-27**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(25:1-26:32) **Festus, Porcius:** (reign A.D. 59-62?). Very little is known about Festus. He died two years after being appointed governor of Judea. He was a more reasonable and upright ruler than Felix, and apparently wished to establish and administer a just rule throughout his domain. Note...

- his appointment to office (Acts 24:37).
- his immediate attempt at conciliation with the Jews (Acts 25:1).
- his concern for true justice (Acts 25:4-5).
- his attempted compromise and failure in justice (Acts 25:9).
- his being the ruler before whom Paul appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:10-12).
- his seeking the counsel of King Agrippa about how to word the formal charges against Paul (Acts 25:13-21, 26).
- his scorning Jesus and the resurrection (Acts 25:19).
- his witnessing Paul's memorable testimony before King Agrippa (Acts 26:1-32).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(25:13-26:32) **King Herod Agrippa II:** (reign A.D. 53-70) was the son of Herod Agrippa I. He was the last ruler of the Herod family, ruling only a small part of Palestine which included Galilee and Peraea. It was only natural that he visit the new Roman governor of Palestine. He had to maintain good relations with the Roman governor, for the governor could easily have him removed from office.

Herod Agrippa II was mainly of Jewish blood, being of the Maccobean priest-kings. He got along fairly well with the Jews by making generous gifts to Jewish causes and maintaining a palace in Jerusalem. However, the Jews considered Herod a base man who lived an adulterous and licentious life, one who ignored the law of God. For example, he was living with Bernice, his half-sister. Herod's rule ceased when Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70. He was transferred to Rome and returned and died there somewhere around A.D. 100.

(25:1-27) **Introduction:** this chapter presents an interesting scene. It is a chapter that paints a picture of all kinds of men.

1. Festus, the new governor, made an appeasing visit (v.1).
2. The Jewish conspiracy: men who tried to do away with God's servant (v.2-5).
3. The trial before the local Roman governor: men who lied and made false charges against God's servant (v.6-7).
4. The defense of Paul: a man full of godly strength (v.8).
5. The failure of Festus in justice: a man who attempted an unjust compromise (v.9).
6. The appeal of Paul to Caesar: a godly man being delivered (v.10-12).
7. The new governor sought the counsel of King Agrippa: a man spiritually blind and confused (v.13-21).
8. The hearing before King Agrippa: men arrayed in their worldly pomp and formal injustices (v.22-27).

**1** (25:1) **Festus—Political Movement:** Festus, the new governor, made an appeasing visit to Jerusalem. The former governor Felix had treated the Jews harshly, causing a severe reaction among the Jews. As a result, Felix was removed from office and was replaced by Festus. Note how quickly Festus sought to appease and show his respect to the Jews. Within *three days* after assuming the governorship, he travelled to Jerusalem. What happened with Festus from this point on paints a picture of various kinds of men.

**2** (25:2-5) **Hypocrisy—Deception:** the Jewish conspiracy was a tragic picture, a picture of men trying to do away with God's true servant. The request of the Jews to have Paul tried in Jerusalem before the Jewish court was a sly political move. The Jewish leaders were attempting to take advantage of Festus. He was new at the job of governorship and his domain was a seed-bed of constant trouble for Rome. He would be anxious to secure the approval, friendship, and support of the Jewish authorities. Their purpose as stated would be to ambush Paul somewhere along the way between Caesarea and Jerusalem. However, Festus was apparently somewhat suspicious of their unusual request to try a man whom Felix had not tried for over two years. He acted justly. He gave two just reasons for denying their request: the place to hold court was in Caesarea, and he could stay in Jerusalem for only two days, having just assumed the governorship. In a move of appeasement, however, he suggested their leaders accompany him back to Caesarea, and he would try the case immediately upon his return.

**Thought 1.** The picture is that of men trying to silence and do away with God's true messenger. And note: they were religionists *within* the body of religion. How often men fear and fight against the truth of Christ and His messengers and fear the loss of their own influence, position, and esteem (see note, *Religionists—Acts 4:2-4* for discussion).

**“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt.6:24).**

**“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).**

**“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Ph.3:18-19).**

**“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).**

**“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).**

**“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).**

**3** (25:6-7) **Lying—False Witness:** the trial before the Roman governor was a tragic picture, a picture of men who lied and made false charges against God's servant. What happened is descriptive. Festus was upon the throne with Jews standing around the courtroom in a semi-circle. Right in the midst was God's servant, Paul. The action began and everyone in the court heard a barrage of charges made against Paul. But note: they could not prove anything. Their accusations were lies and false charges.

**Thought 1.** The scene may be within or without the church, but it is always the same. When a group of men, either of the world or of religion, wish to get rid of God's servant, they begin to lie and make false charges.

**“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).**

**“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pt.3:16).**

**Thought 2.** Lying is a serious offense in the sight of God. Just imagine the scene here: religionists, including the leaders, were lying and falsely accusing Paul and even plotting to kill him.

**“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor” (Ex.20:16).**

**“Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness” (Ex.23:1).**

**“He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight” (Ps.101:7).**

**“A false witness shall not be unpunished; and he that speaketh lies shall perish” (Pr.19:9).**

**“All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).**

**4** (25:8) **Trials, Deliverance:** the defense of Paul is the picture of a man full of godly strength. What is given in this verse is a brief statement of Paul's denial of the three charges against him. (See outline and note, pt.3—Acts 24:1-9 for the charges against Paul. See outline and notes—Acts 24:10-21 for Paul's answer to the charges against him.) The

point to see is the God-inspired strength of Paul, strength that was coming from God Himself. The Lord was standing by the side of Paul just as He had said He would when the believer faces the terrible trials of life (see note—Acts 23:11 for discussion and verses).

**5** (25:9) **Compromise—Cowardice**: the failure of Festus in justice is a common picture, the picture of a man attempting an *unjust compromise*. Festus knew the truth; Paul was not guilty (v.10, 25). He was innocent and should be acquitted, but Festus knew he must appease the Jewish leaders. He conceived an idea that could get the case out of his hands and free him of the matter. If he could get Paul to be tried *before him* in Jerusalem, then he could declare Paul innocent of the civil charge of insurrection and turn the two religious charges over to the Jews. Note how Festus failed, and note how his failure pictures the man...

- who lacks the courage to stand up for what he knows is right.
- who chooses popularity over righteousness (v.9).
- who chooses to compromise rather than do what is right.

“For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (Jn.12:43).

“I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality” (1 Tim.5:21).

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor” (Lev.19:15).

“Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God’s: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it” (Dt.1:17).

“How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?” (Ps.82:2).

“And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there” (Eccl.3:16).

“Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law” (Mal.2:9).

**6** (25:10-12) **God, Sovereignty—Guidance**: the appeal of Paul to Caesar is a picture of God’s servant being delivered by God’s power. Once again, note the godly boldness of Paul. He told Festus...

- that he would stand where he should be standing, in a Roman court of justice.
- that he had done no wrong to the Jews.
- that Festus himself knew it.
- that he would not refuse to die, not if he were guilty.
- that he refused to give in to false charges.

Then Paul dropped the bombshell. He took a most momentous step: since Festus lacked the courage to act justly, Paul shouted out “I appeal to Caesar.” It was the right of a Roman citizen to appeal his case before Caesar if the charge involved a capital offense, and once the appeal was made, nothing could stop it. The person was to be tried before Caesar himself. The appeal shook Festus, for now he knew he had made a serious blunder. Things had gotten out of hand, for the words, “I appeal to Caesar” were irrevocable; the words could not be reversed. He had lost his chance to appease the Jews, and he had to send a Roman citizen to trial in Rome with such weak charges that his own lack of wisdom in justice would be questioned. Note: he immediately consulted with his advisors, returned, and pronounced that the request had to stand.

The point is that Paul was forced to appeal to Caesar (Acts 28:19). It is the picture of God overruling earthly events both to protect and to carry His messenger to a new place of ministry. (See notes—Acts 23:11 for more discussion.)

“To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Lk.1:79).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).

“For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death” (Ps.48:14).

“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps.73:24).

“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Is.30:21).

**7** (25:13-21) **Blindness, Spiritual**: the new governor seeking the counsel of King Agrippa is the picture of a man spiritually blind and confused. The scene was King Agrippa making a protocol visit to Festus, congratulating him on being appointed governor of Palestine. What followed is clearly seen by glancing at the Scripture and outline. Festus was simply puzzled over Jesus and the resurrection of the dead (v.18-19). He did not know how to write up such charges in the formal draft for the officials in Rome. He wanted King Agrippa to help him. Note: when he spoke of Jesus, it was with scorn. He was ridiculing Paul’s claim.

**Thought 1.** The point is the confusion and hardness of Festus in spiritual matters. He had been ignorant of Jesus and the resurrection. But not now: the gospel had just been proclaimed to him by Paul. He was now responsible to respond to Christ. But observe: his response was to scorn the idea of Jesus arising from the dead. He refused to trust and surrender to Christ.

“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Mt.6:23).

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).

“But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (1 Jn.2:11).

**8** (25:22-27) **Worldliness:** the hearing before King Agrippa is the picture of men arrayed in their worldly pomp and formal injustices. The scene is descriptive and clearly pictured in the Scripture and outline. Note these three facts.

1. Worldly pomp adds nothing to the truth, righteousness, or justice of the case, nor to the excellency of the leader's character. Pomp only seeks to satisfy man's cravings for recognition and show, conceit and self-exaltation, honor and glory.

2. The pomp and show of history disappears, but not the men of character. Note how Festus and Agrippa are remembered in comparison with the prisoner Paul who stood before them.

3. The speech of Festus was a formal speech on a formal occasion, but it was the speech of a judge who was presiding over an unjust trial, and he knew it.

**Thought 1.** How many commit unjust deeds and then continue the injustice in a formal setting before the public? How many deceptive and public shows are put on for the sake of *saving face*?

“How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” (Jn.5:44).

“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away” (1 Pt.1:24).

“Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish” (Ps.49:12).

“For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him” (Ps.49:17).

“Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment” (Ps.73:6).

“Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Pr.16:18).

“Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it” (Is.5:14).

| CHAPTER 26   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <b>E. Paul &amp; Festus &amp; King Agrippa—Trial Four (Part II): A Life-Changing Conversion, 26:1-18</b>  |  |
| <p><b>1 Paul signaled to testify</b></p> <p>a. Paul's courtesy<br/>b. Agrippa's knowledge of Jewish customs</p> <p>c. Paul's request for patience</p> <p><b>2 A very strict life</b><br/>a. A strict Jewish youth</p> <p>b. A strict Pharisee—the strictest religious sect</p> <p><b>3 A very orthodox life</b><br/>a. The main belief of the Jews: God's promise of the Messiah &amp; of the resurrection<br/>b. The main charge against Paul was the very promise in which the Jews believed</p> <p>c. The main misunderstanding: Considered incredible</p> <p><b>4 A very hostile life: A bitter enemy of Jesus</b></p> <p>a. He had jailed believers</p> | <p>Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:<br/>2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:<br/>3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.<br/>4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;<br/>5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.<br/>6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:<br/>7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.<br/>8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?<br/>9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.<br/>10 Which thing I also did in</p> | <p>saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.<br/>11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.<br/>12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,<br/>13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.<br/>14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.<br/>15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.<br/>16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;<br/>17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,<br/>18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.</p> |
|  |   | <p>b. He had voted for the death of believers</p> <p>c. He had punished believers in the synagogue</p> <p>d. He had compelled believers to blaspheme</p> <p>e. He had hunted believers down</p> <p><b>5 A very changed life</b><br/>a. The astounding light<br/>1) While launching a cruel campaign<br/>2) Shown at midday<br/>3) Brighter than the sun<br/>4) Shown around everyone travelling with Paul<br/>5) Struck all to the ground</p> <p>b. The strange voice<br/>1) A charge of persecution<br/>2) A charge of kicking against conscience</p> <p>c. The phenomenal appearance by Jesus<br/>1) He identified Himself as Jesus<br/>2) He appeared to Paul<br/>3) He commissioned Paul: To be a minister &amp; a witness</p> <p>d. The promise to deliver Paul</p> <p>e. The incredible commission to the Gentiles<br/>1) To open their eyes<br/>2) To turn them from darkness to light<br/>3) To turn them from the power of Satan to God<br/>4) To forgive their sins<br/>5) To give them a spiritual inheritance</p>  |

**DIVISION XI**

**THE FINAL JOURNEY AND WITNESS OF PAUL:  
TO ROME AS A PRISONER, 23:12-28:31**

**E. Paul and Festus and King Agrippa—Trial Four (Part II): A Life-Changing Conversion, 26:1-18**

(26:1-18) **Introduction:** Paul gave a clear description of his life and conversion. This is the third account of Paul's conversion given in Scripture. It is a clear picture of the transforming power of Christ—no matter how far away a person has gotten from God.

1. Paul signaled to testify (v.1-3).
2. A very strict life (v.4-5).
3. A very orthodox life (v.6-8).
4. A very hostile life: a bitter enemy of Jesus (v.9-11).
5. A very changed life (v.12-18).

**1** (26:1-3) **Paul, Legal Trials:** Paul was signaled to testify by King Herod Agrippa. Note three things.

1. Paul's courtesy. It was the custom for a prisoner to raise his hand to the court as an act of appreciation for the privilege to speak. Paul did not flatter King Agrippa at all, but he came straight to the point. He was pleased to have the opportunity to bear witness to "the things" of which he was charged. Paul's purpose was twofold: to defend himself and to bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ before one of the high courts of the land.

2. Herod Agrippa's knowledge of Jewish customs. Herod was King of the Jews; therefore, he was familiar with Jewish law and customs. He was actually responsible for the appointment of the high priest and the care and maintenance of the temple. Paul knew King Agrippa would better understand the charges against him and could easily see he was not guilty.

3. Paul's request for patience. Note an important point: Paul knew he could not be released, not by this court. He had appealed to Caesar and he must be tried before Caesar. What was Paul doing? Two things. He was using the opportunity both to witness and to influence the two judges (Festus and Agrippa) to write a favorable draft to Caesar declaring his innocence. Observe that Paul requested the patience of the court, for his defense would take considerable time.

**2** (26:4-5) **Paul, Life of:** Paul's life was very strict.

1. Paul's youth was that of a strict Jewish youth. He was born in Tarsus, but...
  - he was taken to Jerusalem for his education at a very early age.
  - he was educated in Jewish law.
  - he was under the greatest Jewish teacher (Gamaliel).

Note: Paul said that the Jews, even his very accusers, knew this. (See outline and note—Acts 22:3-5 for more discussion.)

2. Paul was reared a Pharisee, a strict religionist, one of the strictest religionists ever known in history (see outline and DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 23:8; Ph.3:4-6 for discussion and verses).

**3** (26:6-8) **Paul, Life of:** Paul's life was very orthodox. Paul's hope was the same hope held by the Jews—the hope of the Messiah and of the resurrection from the dead. Note three points.

1. One of the main beliefs of the Jews was the promise of God to send the Messiah and to establish His rule over all the earth, of His ruling forever and the resurrection of all followers of God. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.1:18, notes—11:1-6; 11:2-3; DEEPER STUDY # 1—11:5; DEEPER STUDY # 2—11:6; DEEPER STUDY # 1—12:16; notes—22:42; Lk.3:24-31; Jn.1:23; note and DEEPER STUDY # 3—1:45; note and DEEPER STUDY # 4—1:49 for more discussion.)

2. The main charge against Paul was the very promise in which the Jews themselves hoped. The people who were accusing Paul were the very ones who believed as he did. The only difference was that Paul believed the Messiah had already come—that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, who had been raised from the dead by God. He believed that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Jewish hope. (See notes—Acts 2:25-36; DEEPER STUDY # 4—2:24 for discussion.)

3. The main misunderstanding was the resurrection of the Messiah and of all men someday in the future. Note the critical question: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (v.8). God is God. God...

- possesses all wisdom, knowing exactly what should be done.
- possesses all power, the power to do as He wills.
- possesses the power of life, to give life to whom He will.

Why should it be thought incredible that God raise the dead? He has the wisdom and the power and the breath of life to do it.

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (Jn.5:25).**

**"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn.6:40).**

**"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (2 Cor.4:14).**

**"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Th.4:16).**

**Thought 1.** God is God, and as God, He is love, willing to give life to all those who believe and love Him.

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).**

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (Jn.5:24).**

**"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness" (Jn.12:46).**

**"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Ro.10:9-10).**

- 4** (26:9-11) **Paul, Life of:** Paul's life was very hostile. The Scripture and outline give a clear picture of Paul's persecution of Christ and Christian believers (see outline and notes—Acts 8:1-4, esp. 8:1; 8:3; 9:1-2 for discussion).

Note the words, "I gave my voice against them" (*katenegka psephon*). The word "voice" means vote. The word actually means a little *stone* or pebble used by the Sanhedrin that was thrown into an urn indicating how a person was voting. A black pebble meant condemnation. The point to note is this: Paul was saying that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, actually casting a vote against the Christian believers. This says that Paul...

- was a member of the highest court of the land.
- was probably married prior to his conversion (a man had to be married to be a member of the Sanhedrin).

- 5** (26:12-18) **Paul, Life of—Mission—Ministry:** Paul's life was totally changed. He had been converted, completely turned around from what he had been. Paul shared four significant facts about his conversion. (See outline and notes, *Paul's Conversion*—Acts 9:1-9; 22:6-11 for a discussion of these points.)

1. There was the astounding light (see note—Acts 9:3 for discussion).
2. There was the strange voice coming out of the light. The voice made two charges against Paul.
  - a. A charge of persecuting Jesus (see note, pt.1—Acts 9:4-5 for discussion).
  - b. A charge of kicking against conscience (see note, pt.3—Acts 9:4-5 for discussion).
3. There was the phenomenal appearance by Jesus.
  - a. The strange voice identified the Person as Jesus (see note, pt.1—Acts 9:4-5 for discussion).
  - b. The Lord actually appeared to Paul. Paul declared this without hesitating.
  - c. The Lord commissioned Paul to be a minister and a witness...
    - of this appearance (revelation) by the Lord.
    - of future appearances (revelations) by the Lord.

**"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal.1:11-12; cp. Acts 18:9; 22:17-21; 23:11; 2 Cor.12:1-4).**

- d. The Lord promised to deliver Paul when the Jews and Gentiles persecuted him, preserving him to carry on the ministry for which he was chosen.

**Thought 1.** The genuine believer can depend upon God to deliver him so that he can complete his ministry on earth.

4. There was the incredible commission to the Gentiles. Paul probably expected to be struck down and condemned by the Lord; but instead, he received the marvelous mercy of God. He was not only saved, he was given a task to do for God.

Note a crucial point: Paul's task was to be a witness to the marvelous grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the very same task that is given to every believer.

- a. To open the eyes of men: to help them see the truth of God and of themselves, and of their world; to give men purpose, meaning, and significance in life.

**"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor.4:6).**

**"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph.1:18).**

**"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pt.2:9).**

- b. To turn men from darkness to light: to save men from stumbling about, falling and dooming themselves in the darkness of sin and shame; to turn men from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness. (See notes—Jn.8:12 for more discussion.)

**"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47).**

**"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Ro.13:12).**

**"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph.5:8).**

**"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Ph.2:15).**

**"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pt.1:19).**

- c. To turn men from the power of Satan to God: to turn men from the slavery, control, and bondage of evil to the liberty and power and life that is in God Himself.

**“Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (Jn.12:30-31).**

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb.2:14).**

**“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn.3:8).**

- d. To forgive men their sins (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Forgiveness*—Acts 2:38 for discussion).

**“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).**

**“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 13:38).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn.1:9).**

- e. To give men a spiritual inheritance: to give them a part in the promised land of heaven and eternity; to give every man a share of God’s glorious promise of life eternal (see notes—Lk.16:10-12; Jn.8:51; Acts 7:2-8).

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).**

**“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col.1:12).**

**“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).**

**“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:3-4).**

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p><b>1 He was obedient to God's call</b></p> <p>a. He witnessed to all men—everywhere</p> <p>b. He preached repentance, the need to turn to God &amp; to do the works of repentance</p> <p>c. He was persecuted &amp; charged because of his obedience to God</p> <p><b>2 He continued to bear witness: To small &amp; great</b></p> <p>a. Preached only the Scripture</p> <p>b. Preached Christ's death</p> <p>c. Preached Christ's resurrection</p> <p><b>3 The conclusion: The verdict upon Paul</b></p> <p>a. Verdict 1: Mad</p> <p>1) A loud charge by Festus</p> | <p><b>F. Paul &amp; Festus &amp; King Agrippa (Part III): A Much Needed Testimony &amp; Message, 26:19-32</b></p> <p>19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:</p> <p>20 But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.</p> <p>21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.</p> <p>22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:</p> <p>23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.</p> <p>24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning</p> | <p>doth make thee mad.</p> <p>25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.</p> <p>26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.</p> <p>27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.</p> <p>28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.</p> <p>29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.</p> <p>30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:</p> <p>31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.</p> <p>32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.</p> | <p>2) Paul's denial: He preached the truth soberly</p> <p>3) Paul's charge: Agrippa knew these things</p> <p>4) Paul's question: Do you believe the prophets?</p> <p>b. Verdict 2: Evangelistic—King Agrippa accused Paul of trying to convert him</p> <p>c. Verdict 3: Paul was really innocent of the charges</p> <p>1) Did nothing to deserve death</p> <p>2) Should be set free</p> <p>3) Must be tried before Caesar because of his appeal<sup>DS1</sup></p> |
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DIVISION XI

THE FINAL JOURNEY AND WITNESS OF PAUL: TO ROME AS A PRISONER, 23:12-28:31

**F. Paul and Festus and King Agrippa (Part III): A Much Needed Testimony and Message, 26:19-32**

(26:19-32) **Introduction:** this passage is a loud declaration of Paul's testimony and the verdict of King Agrippa upon Paul's life. As such, it is also a loud declaration of the testimony and message so desperately needed by the world.

1. He was obedient to God's call (v.19-21).
2. He continued to bear witness: to small and great (v.22-23).
3. The conclusion: the verdict upon Paul (v.24-32).

**1** (26:19-21) **Call—Minister:** there was Paul's obedience to the call of Jesus. Paul declared emphatically that his call was from heaven, a call from the Lord Himself. He was the most unlikely person in the world to receive a call from God, but it came. The Lord Jesus appeared to him and called him, and the call was a...

- command
- demand
- charge
- mandate
- decree
- ultimatum
- stipulation
- claim
- dictate

The Lord's call was not up for discussion or questioning. There was no need to confer with family or friends; no need to seek their opinions about the call, nor to consider his own secular interest (cp. Gal.1:15-16). The Lord had called him and the Lord expected Paul to fulfill his call. Paul declared emphatically that he had not disobeyed the heavenly call. The charges against him were unjust; he was not disobedient to God. He had been faithful to the Lord, doing exactly what the Lord wanted done. He was a sinner, yes; but the Lord in mercy saved and called him, and he was now obeying the Lord. Therefore, all men—whether ruler or common person—should heed the call of God.

**Thought 1.** The Lord means business when He calls a person. The call is from heaven; therefore, it supersedes all other calls and interests. It is not up for discussion nor is it to be subjected to any other desire. God knows the

need of the world for the gospel, and He knows whom He wants to fill that need. Therefore, we must hear His call when it comes and surrender to it.

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15).**

1. Paul witnessed to all men everywhere. As soon as he was saved, he began immediately to witness for Christ. He proclaimed Christ...

- at Damascus, the very city where he was visiting when he was converted (cp. Acts 9:20).
- at Jerusalem where he had been educated and was so well known as a Pharisee (Acts 9:29).
- throughout all Judea, all the cities, towns, and villages—to everyone whose path he crossed.
- to the Gentiles, those who were at odds with the Jews, but whom God loved as much as the Jews.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).**

2. Paul preached repentance, the need for every man to turn to God and to do the works of repentance. Note several points.

- a. Proclaiming repentance to men is the call of God to believers (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Repentance*—Acts 17:29-30 for discussion).
- b. Turning to God implies faith. No man is going to turn to God who doesn't believe in God. Therefore, proclaiming faith and repentance toward God is the call of believers.
- c. Proclaiming that men must do the works of repentance is also the call of the believer. A man has truly repented when he is living a life of repentance. It does not matter what the man claims: if he is living a sinful life, he is a sinful man and not a repentant man. Repentance concerns...
  - how a man lives
  - what a man does
  - where a man goes
  - what a man reads
  - how a man talks

The *works*, the *acts*, the *behavior*, the *deeds* of a man...

- are always the works of repentance if a man has repented.
- are always the works of a sinner if a man has not repented.

**Thought 1.** Today believers neglect proclaiming the works of repentance. Yet, a changed life is the very foundation of salvation: it is what salvation is all about. There is no salvation apart from a life of righteousness. It is this message that must be proclaimed loudly and clearly; for multitudes are deceived and resting in the false security of religion, ritual, ceremony, church membership, baptism, worship attendance, heritage, good parents, morality, and a host of other ideas.

**“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.3:2).**

**“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).**

**“Repent ye therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).**

**“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).**

**“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron.7:14).**

**“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).**

**“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die” (Ezk.18:21).**

3. Paul said that he was being persecuted and charged because he was obedient to the Lord's call; that is, he was proclaiming the simple message that men should repent and turn to God and do good works. Note Paul's emphasis: What harm was there in his message, the message of the gospel? It was not harmful to men; it was good—good for individuals and for society. The charges against him made no sense. The gospel changed people's lives, turned people...

- from evil to good
- from immorality to morality
- from defeat to victory
- from enslavement to freedom
- from discouragement to meaningfulness
- from barrenness to fruitfulness
- from weakness to power
- from hopelessness to assurance

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see you good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).**

**“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim.6:18).**

**“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Tit.2:7).**

**“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Heb.10:24).**

**“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pt.2:12).**

**2** (26:22-23) **Witnessing:** there was Paul's faithfulness—he continued to bear witness to both small and great. Opposition had not stopped him, discouraged him, nor defeated him. Note Paul's glorious testimony to God's love and care: God had always been there to help him, encouraging and strengthening him to continue on in his call.

**Thought 1.** The faithful believer can always depend upon God's help when needed. But we must always remember: God sometimes allows us to suffer trial in order to make us tougher, but God always steps in when it is time. Heavy trials always make us stronger and more able to do greater things for God through the new toughness we gain.

Another significant fact is this: Paul did not select his audience. He went after and witnessed to all: small and great, poor and rich, unknown and known, ignorant and intelligent, common person and ruler, child and adult. He exempted no one from his message and efforts. The witness of Paul included three striking facts.

1. He bore witness to the Scripture, to all “which the prophets and Moses did say should come” (v.22). Paul bore witness to nothing else—only to the Scriptures—and he concentrated on the prophecies of the Scriptures. (See outline and notes—Acts 24:14-16; Ro.1:1-7; 2 Tim.3:16 for more discussion. Cp. also 2 Pt.1:19-21.)

**“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th.2:13).**

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).**

2. He bore witness to Christ's death. The words “that Christ should suffer” (ei pathetos ho Christos) are spoken from the Jewish point of view. Paul was declaring that Christ, the Messiah, *must suffer*; He was *destined to suffer*. The Messiah was a man who was not only capable of suffering, but He *had to suffer*. His death was ordained; it was a *must* in the mind of God and prophesied in the Scripture. There was no other way for God to save man other than by the death of His Son, the Messiah. (See outline and notes, *Jesus Christ, Death*—Acts 2:22-24; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:23 for more discussion.)

It is this point—the cross—that was such a stumbling block to the Jews. They could see a Messiah of glory, power, fame, and wealth; but not a Messiah of suffering and death (see outline and notes—1 Cor.1:22-24 for more discussion).

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

**“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal.1:4).**

**“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

3. He bore witness to Christ's resurrection (see notes, pt.4—Acts 13:23-41; DEEPER STUDY # 4—Acts 2:24; note—2:25-36 for discussion). Note the statement that Jesus was the first to arise from the dead. This means He was the *first-fruits*, the *preeminent One*, the *prominent One*, the *first in importance* to arise from the dead. He was the *first* to arise who never again had to die (Ro.6:9). The few who had arisen before Him had to die again.

**“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:23-24).**

**“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses” (Acts 3:14-15).**

**“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).**

**“And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly” (Acts 10:39-40). “And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (Acts 17:2-3).**

**“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Ro.10:9).**

**“And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor.15:4).**

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pt.1:3).**

**3** (26:24-32) **Faithfulness—Testimony:** there was the conclusion, the verdict upon Paul. Three striking verdicts can be gleaned from this passage.

1. The first verdict was madness. This was the view of Festus. The scene is, of course, tragic; but it was also somewhat humorous. There was Paul preaching away as earnestly and diligently as he could, and then he came to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Note what happened.

a. Festus, the practical materialist and humanist, blurted out with a loud voice, “Paul, you are beside yourself, mad, insane. There is no such thing as arising from the dead. Such is impossible! Totally impossible!”

Festus charged Paul with having conceived the resurrection in his own mind. He shouted out that the resurrection was nothing more than imagination, fanciful thinking, wild madness, foolish thought, empty hope—the idea of a man who had studied and reasoned too much in religious theology.

b. Paul's response to Festus was calm and straight-forward. He declared that he preached the truth and did it soberly, that is, rationally, in complete control of his senses.

c. King Agrippa knew the Scripture. If he would, he could confirm...

- that Scripture predicted the coming of the Messiah.
- that news of Jesus' claims and death and resurrection had swept the whole country and surrounding areas.

d. Paul put King Agrippa on the spot by asking, “Do you believe the Scripture, King Agrippa?” Note that Paul answered his own question, convinced that the King did believe the Old Testament Scripture. Apparently, Paul noticed some interest or conviction working in Festus and he was appealing to him to come forth for Christ.

2. The second verdict was *evangelistic fervor*. The words of King Agrippa are known by Christians worldwide, having served as a basic text for preachers of every generation. Some translate King Agrippa as saying, “You expect to make me a Christian in so short a time.” Others, “You almost persuaded me to be a Christian.” Whatever King Agrippa meant, he was familiar with the Scripture and apparently was gripped by Paul's message. His interest was aroused by the possibility that Jesus really was the Jewish Messiah. He saw Paul's point, what Paul was after, and what he, the King, and all the others sitting there had to do. Paul was after them, out to lead them into belief and repentance toward the Lord Jesus. But note: interest and knowing what to do, even conviction, are not enough to save a person.

Paul longed for all who were under the sound of his voice to be saved. He apparently raised his chained hands toward the audience sitting in the great hall and poured out his heart:

**“I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds” (v.29).**

**Thought 1.** Every believer should bear witness with the same evangelistic fervor that was so aflame in Paul.

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (Jn.4:35).

“For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Ro.9:3).

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Ro.10:1).

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law” (1 Cor.9:19-20).

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20).

“And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 23).

3. The third verdict was that Paul was innocent of the charges. The Scripture and outline need no explanation.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(26:32) Paul, Appeals to Caesar: see note—Acts 25:10-12.

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| <p><b>1 The journey to Rome began</b></p> <p>a. Paul &amp; some prisoners were placed under a centurion, Julius</p> <p>b. Passage was secured on a ship from Adramyttium</p> <p>c. Luke &amp; Aristarchus accompanied Paul</p> <p>d. A close relationship was developed &amp; demonstrated at Sidon<sup>PS1</sup></p> <p><b>2 A picture of greed &amp; godly counsel</b></p> <p>a. Difficult winds</p> <p>1) Were contrary</p> <p>2) Switched over to a large ship</p> <p>3) Sailed ever so slowly, barely making it</p> <p>b. A dangerous journey</p> <p>c. Paul's counsel: Not to sail</p> <p>d. Paul's counsel rejected</p> <p>1) The centurion's worldly-mindedness</p> <p>2) The ship owner &amp;</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 27</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>G. Paul Sails for Rome: Great Trust &amp; God's Care, 27:1-44</b></p> <p>And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.</p> <p>2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.</p> <p>3 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.</p> <p>4 And when he had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.</p> <p>5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.</p> <p>6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.</p> <p>7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone;</p> <p>8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.</p> <p>9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,</p> <p>10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.</p> <p>11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were</p> | <p>spoken by Paul.</p> <p>12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.</p> <p>13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.</p> <p>14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.</p> <p>15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.</p> <p>16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:</p> <p>17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.</p> <p>18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;</p> <p>19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.</p> <p>20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.</p> <p>21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.</p> <p>22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.</p> <p>23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,</p> <p>24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before</p> | <p>master's greed</p> <p><b>3 A picture of deceptive calm &amp; great courage</b></p> <p>a. The deceptive calm</p> <p>b. The old enemy—the violent northeastern wind called Euroclydon</p> <p>1) Its engulfing, swallowing power</p> <p>2) Its driving force</p> <p>c. The desperate effort</p> <p>1) To save the lifeboat</p> <p>2) To tie &amp; hold the ship together</p> <p>3) To escape quicksand</p> <p>4) To lighten the ship</p> <p>d. The hopeless depression</p> <p>e. The commanding courage of Paul</p> <p>1) Preached their failure to heed</p> <p>2) Preached God's promise to him: All would be saved</p> |
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| <p>3) Preached his faith in God's promise</p> <p>4) Preached the necessity of trial first</p> <p><b>4 A picture of man's way vs. God's way to save men</b></p> <p>a. The fateful hour of shipwreck arrived</p> <p>b. The terrifying grip of fear</p> <p>c. The last ditch effort at saving one's self: Deserting the promise of God</p> <p>d. The way of God for saving men is declared again</p> | <p>Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.</p> <p>25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.</p> <p>26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.</p> <p>27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;</p> <p>28 And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.</p> <p>29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.</p> <p>30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,</p> <p>31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.</p> <p>32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.</p> <p>33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.</p> <p>34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.</p> <p>35 And when he had thus</p> | <p>spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.</p> <p>36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.</p> <p>37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.</p> <p>38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.</p> <p>39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.</p> <p>40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.</p> <p>41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.</p> <p>42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.</p> <p>43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:</p> <p>44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, they they escaped all safe to land.</p> | <p>to God<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>e. The moment of joy</p> <p>f. The number feasting &amp; rejoicing: 276</p> <p>g. The resumption of work</p> <p><b>6 A picture of trial &amp; God's providence</b></p> <p>a. The escape route spotted</p> <p>b. The preparations made</p> <p>c. The ship broke up slowly</p> <p>d. The attempt by some to live by the immoral code of the world</p> <p>e. The utter trust &amp; confidence of a commanding leader</p> <p>f. The saving hand of God &amp; Paul's vindication</p> |
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**DIVISION XI**

**THE FINAL JOURNEY AND WITNESS OF PAUL: TO ROME AS A PRISONER, 23:12-28:31**

**G. Paul Sails for Rome: Great Trust and God's Care, 27:1-44**

(27:1-44) **Introduction:** this is one of the most dramatic scenes imaginable; it is fascinating reading. The detail given on shipping and a shipwreck in the ancient world is one of the most graphic in all literature. At the same time, it is a picture of a believer's great trust and of God's great care. As such it is a challenging lesson for every believer to trust God through all the trials of life, even through the most terrifying trials.

1. The journey to Rome began (v.1-3).
2. A picture of greed and godly counsel (v.4-12).
3. A picture of deceptive calm and great courage (v.13-26).
4. A picture of man's way vs. God's way to save men (v.27-32).
5. A picture of fear and hunger and godly trust (v.33-38).
6. A picture of trial and God's providence v.(39-44).

**1** (27:1-3) **Paul, Life:** the journey to Rome began. This would be the last journey for Paul. Never again would he return to his beloved Palestine and people, not as far as Acts is concerned. The Book is about to be closed on his life. Note four introductory facts as the journey began.

1. Paul and some other prisoners were placed under a centurion named Julius (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Centurion—Acts 23:23*). The fact that the prisoners were being shipped to Rome for trial would mean...
  - that some had appealed to Caesar just as Paul had.
  - that others were condemned to appear as combatants in the gladiatorial shows of the Roman arena to feed the immoral and violent *cravings* of the populace.

**Thought 1.** Note the paradox of society, executing a *sensitive justice* (the right to appeal to Caesar) while also...
 

- allowing and feeding the sinful urges of men for immorality and violence.
- using disadvantaged human beings to feed the lusts of men for immorality and violence.

**Thought 2.** Note how the believer is counted among the worthless, the violators, the useless, the prisoners of society. Believers are often conceived as being useless, unproductive, and worthless by society—especially in societies where Christian believers are a minority. Christian believers seldom have and seldom will be esteemed by society. Persecution and abuse are the fate of the believer (cp. Ph.1:29; 1 Th.3:3; 2 Tim.3:12; 1 Jn.3:13; 1 Pt.4:12f).

2. The group took passage on a ship from Adramyttium which was a port near Troas on the Asian coast. Note the ship was to hug the coastline, stopping at ports all along the coast unloading and loading cargo. It was only temporary transportation until Julius could find a larger ship in one of the ports that was heading directly for Italy.

3. Luke and Aristarchus accompanied Paul. Luke had dropped from the scene when Paul was arrested after being attacked by the mob in the temple (cp. Acts 21:18), but note the “we” sections begin again. Aristarchus was the disciple from the Thessalonian church...
  - who helped Paul carry the relief offerings to the Jerusalem church. (See note, *Aristarchus—Acts 20:4-6*.)
  - who had been seized by the mob in Ephesus (Acts 19:29).

**Thought 1.** In great trial, believers must accompany and stand by the side of each other.

4. A respect and friendship developed between Paul and Julius, the centurion (cp. Acts 27:43; 28:16). Julius allowed Paul to visit the Christian believers in Sidon (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Sidon—Acts 27:3*). Note the words “refresh himself” (*epimelerias tuchein*). This may mean either hospitality or medical attention.

**Thought 1.** Note the lesson on being considerate and helping those less fortunate or in worse situations than ourselves, no matter the circumstances.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(27:3) **Sidon:** the city is ancient, the oldest city of Phoenicia, lying just twenty miles above the city of Tyre and about the same distance south of modern Beirut or ancient Berytus. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) The city was an excellent port in ancient history, having several islands lying right off the mainland. The city was a bustling commercial center, but it was eventually bypassed in importance by its sister city, Tyre (Is.23:12). Sidon...

- fell prey to all the conquering empires that moved in upon that part of the world: Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.
- bordered the land given to the tribe of Asher (Josh.19:28).
- was known for its timber (1 Ki.5:6; Ezra 3:7).
- was known for its pagan worship, especially of Baal and Ashtoreth.
- influenced Israel, tragically leading the nation into idolatrous worship, especially under Jezebel who was from Sidon (1 Ki.16:31-33; 18:18-40; Is.23:1f; Ezk.28:21f).
- was never visited by Christ, but He did visit its borders and surrounding area (see note—Mt.15:21).
- had some citizens who followed Jesus (Mk.3:8; Lk.6:17).
- had a Christian church founded by laymen who had fled the persecution surrounding Stephen (Acts 27:3; cp. 8:1-4; 11:19).
- was visited by Paul as a prisoner on his final journey to Rome (Acts 27:3).
- will be judged in the last day for its worldliness, but less severely than many cities (Mt.11:21-22).

**2** (27:4-12) **Greed:** there is the picture of greed and godly counsel. Note four significant facts.

1. It was a difficult season for sailing, that is, the days of late fall, right before the winter months when no sailing was possible because of winter winds and storms (November through February). The outline of this fact shows just how difficult sailing was.

- a. The winds were “contrary” (*enantious*): strong and forceful, a northwest headwind faced them. Therefore, they could not strike a straight course through the open sea. They had to sail north of Cyprus instead of south, using the island and the mainland of Asia to break the force of the wind and to provide some shelter

and safety. The body of water over which they sailed was known as the Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia. Eventually they reached the port of Myra, a city of the province of Lycia.

- b. Julius found just what he wanted at Lycia—a large ship heading for Italy. The group transferred over to the ship, a grain ship from Alexandria, the chief city of Egypt. Most grain ships of that day carried passengers as well as grain.
- c. The ship ploughed ahead, but ever so slowly. Note...
  - it took “many days” to spot Cnidus, a city on the southwest tip of Asia minor. It was only 130 miles from Myra.
  - the wind was so strong they could not risk docking at Cnidus.
  - they were forced by the winds to turn southward and pass under Crete, using the island to break the wind.
  - they barely made it, docking at a small port on the south side of Crete.

2. The season for sailing passed—to sail ahead now would be dangerous (v.9). Note: the feast referred to was the great Day of Atonement which at this time was celebrated in the first part of October (Lev.16:29).

3. Paul counseled everyone not to sail. They were weatherbound in Fair Havens for a long time, past the time when safe sailing weather was assured. To sail now would be risky. Paul said, “I perceive.” How did Paul perceive? Probably from...

- his sea experience as a traveller.
- his experience of having already been shipwrecked three times (2 Cor.11:25).
- his close communion with the Lord.

4. Paul’s counsel was rejected. And note why: the centurion’s worldly-mindedness and the greed of the ship’s owner and master. This is the very point: the godly man’s counsel was rejected because of greed and worldliness. The centurion was concerned about the suitability of the harbor, Fair Havens, for the winter; and about the town, Lasea, not providing enough conveniences and pleasures for his soldiers. The ship owner and master were concerned about the expense of preserving the wheat or else the possibility of losing the wheat over the winter if they remained at Fair Haven.

**Thought 1.** Men often risk their lives and souls because of...

- pleasure: food, drink, fleshly satisfaction, partying, and social opportunities.
- greed: getting more and more of the things of this world.

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim.6:10).

“Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days” (Jas.5:3).

**Thought 2.** The centurion, as the imperial authority of Rome, had the authority to make the decision. He followed the advice of the experienced seaman. But note: both profession and skill are doomed to failure without God. A man, no matter his experience and skill, needs God to give direction and guidance through the terrible trials of life.

**Thought 3.** Note how Paul’s mission to Rome was being delayed by natural circumstances and hindrances. He was not able to sail through his ministry on a straight course without facing trials. He had to live through the trials and troubles of life.

“There hath no temptation [trial] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [trials]; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (Jas.1:2-4).

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [trial]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (Jas.1:12).

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).

**3** (27:13-26) **Courage—Stedfastness:** there is the picture of deceptive calm and great courage. The ship’s officers hoped to reach Phoenix which was the major port on the west side of Crete some 60 miles from Fair Haven. Note five points.

1. The deceptive calm. All of a sudden, nature seemed to favor the decision of the worldly men. A soft, calm breeze began to blow out of the south. The crew quickly loosed anchor and set sail, sailing as close to the shoreline as possible—just in case their fate changed course.

2. And change course it did. Just when nature seemed to be blessing them, the old enemy, the violent Euroclydon, the violent northeasterly storm, blew in. It came unexpectedly, so suddenly that the ship could not be turned to face the wind. It was a typhoon-like storm with engulfing, swallowing power; and it drove the ship out into the sea, making control utterly impossible. Note the words, “We let her drive,” that is, let the storm drive the ship at will. They could do nothing else.

3. They tried desperately to save the ship. The storm drove them under (south of) a small island, Clauda, and the island broke the wind so that they were able to take some measures in an attempt to save the boat and their lives. Working at a feverish pitch before the tempest drove them beyond the shelter of the island...

- they struggled with great difficulty, hoisting the lifeboat up on deck.
- they struggled, using strong ropes or chains to wrap around the boat to hold it together against the force of the slapping waves. The storm was violent and there were terrifying dangers. There was the danger that the ship’s timbers might come apart or that the mast might be torn loose by the force of the wind. This in turn would rip the timbers loose. So the crew literally tied the ship together. They passed howsers under the ship and used their wrenches to draw them tight.
- they struggled to keep the boat out of the quicksand off the north African coast. (Note how far they were being driven off course.)
- they struggled to lighten the ship, throwing overboard everything they could do without. Even the tackling (furniture and sailing equipment) was sacrificed to save the ship.

4. It was only natural that a hopeless depression set in upon the sailors and the passengers. They had been caught in the storm so long that it had been *many days* since they had seen the sun and stars. All hope of their being saved had passed.

5. God’s man stepped forth with a commanding courage. And his courage in the midst of a fierce storm is a picture of the courage every man can have through the trials of this life. Note what Paul did.

- a. He proclaimed the failure of the worldly to heed the warning of the godly. Paul had warned that if they proceeded to follow the course of pleasure and greed, they would run the risk of...
  - hurt
  - damage
  - loss
  - doom
- b. He proclaimed God’s promise. In the case of Paul, God promised that all on board the ship would be saved. But to be saved, the worldly crew and passengers would have to obey God and His messenger. Note...
  - the angel of God assured Paul.
  - Paul stressed his God, the only true God, in contrast to the heathen gods of the worldly on board.
- c. Paul proclaimed his faith in God’s promise. There was no way that Paul could have known that no one would lose his life except by a revelation from God. However, the point is this: *Paul’s great faith in his God*, the only living and true God. God had spoken and Paul believed what God had said. The lesson to us is clear: we can trust the promises of God. God will save us if we will trust and believe.
- d. Paul proclaimed the necessity of trial first. The trial of shipwreck would force everyone to prove their trust in the promise of God. Hereafter, every man would have to listen to God’s Word, would have to go through the trial of being shipwrecked if he was to be saved (cp. v.27-31).

**Thought 1.** The proof of true faith in God is enduring to the end, through all trials, no matter how severe.

**“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Mt.24:13).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**4** (27:27-32) **Jesus Christ, Mediator—Salvation:** there is the picture of man’s way vs. God’s way to save men. *Fourteen life-threatening days* had passed since the ship had left Fair Haven. It was midnight and the sailors had no idea where they were, but they sensed they were close to some land. In sounding the depth, they discovered they were being driven toward shore. They were terrified, for the likelihood was that they were going to crash upon a rocky shore. Quickly, they dropped anchor, awaiting day break and hoping for the best. What happened is graphic. The sailors plotted an escape, ignoring the Word and promise of God entirely. Paul discovered the plot and proclaimed that *God’s way for saving everyone had to be followed if anyone wished to be saved.*

**Thought 1.** Men are always plotting their own way of salvation. But God has proclaimed the way, and there is no other way any man can be saved.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn.6:68).**

**“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).**

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:5).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).

**Thought 2.** Note the trust of the centurion in God’s promise. The life boat could have been used to save some of the people, but the centurion trusted Paul’s proclamation that his God would save them *all*. He destroyed the life boat.

**5** (27:33-38) **Fear—Trust:** there is the picture of fear and hunger and godly trust. The scene is self-explanatory (see Scripture and outline above). Note two significant points.

1. The gripping power of fear is understandable. They had been held by the hands of the fierce storm for fourteen days, captured under the canopy of pitch darkness and without food and sleep. Just imagine—fourteen days!

**Thought 1.** The desperate trials of life grip men with fear, hopeless fear. How desperately we need the glorious promise of God’s Word.

2. The invitation to eat was extended by Paul, and the assurance of God’s saving promise and power was given again (v.34). Note how Paul focused everything upon God. The crew and passengers began to take heart and to trust the promise of salvation.

**Thought 1.** The messenger of God must...

- believe and trust God’s Word and promise.
- focus everything upon God’s Word and promise.

Then he can expect men to take heart and to begin responding, trusting the Word and promises of God to save them.

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(27:35) **Prayer, Before Meals:** cp. Mt.14:19; Mk.6:41; Lk.9:16; Jn.6:11.

**6** (27:39-44) **Trial—God, Providence:** there is the picture of trial and God’s providence. Again the scene is self-explanatory (see Scripture and outline above). Note several things.

1. Why did God not just allow the ship to make it safely to shore without wrecking? Why was the trial made so difficult for the crew and passengers? Very simply...

- trials are used by God to cause men to turn to God for salvation.
- trials prove that a person really trusts God.
- trials make a believer stronger so he can stand against even tougher trials in the future and demonstrate the presence and power of God to a greater degree. The world needs to see the demonstration of God’s presence and power, and the only way they can see it is in the life of believers as they go through trials.

2. The soldiers were governed by a law that if they allowed a prisoner to escape they were to be killed (v.42). It was a merciless law, a code of the world that was devoid of morality.

3. Note how God *overruled* both the soldiers’ plan to kill the prisoners and the shipwreck to *fulfill* His promise and Word. God will always fulfill His promise and Word, no matter how much He has to twist and overrule the plans and plots of men and the circumstances of nature and events.

4. God did exactly what He had said and promised; He saved everyone and vindicated His messenger. But note: each one had to go through the frightening trial of being shipwrecked and scrambling to shore.

“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us” (2 Cor.1:10).

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).

“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him” (Ps.28:7).

“Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

| CHAPTER 28   |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1 Shipwrecked—but saved<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p><b>2 Marooned &amp; facing island natives—but accepted &amp; helped</b></p> <p><b>3 Snakebitten—but healed</b></p> <p><b>4 Facing superstition &amp; heathenism—but given an opportunity for evangelism</b></p> | <p><b>H. Paul—Shipwrecked &amp; Stranded on an Island: God’s Protection Through Trial After Trial, 28:1-15</b></p> <p>And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.</p> <p>2 And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.</p> <p>3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.</p> <p>4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.</p> <p>5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.</p> <p>6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.</p> <p>7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man</p> | <p>of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.</p> <p>8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.</p> <p>9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:</p> <p>10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.</p> <p>11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.</p> <p>12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.</p> <p>13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:</p> <p>14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.</p> <p>15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.</p> | <p><b>5 Destitute &amp; stranded—but had necessities met</b></p> <p><b>6 Apprehensive &amp; lonely—but encouraged &amp; strengthened</b></p> <p>a. Encouraged by brothers at Rome’s harbor, Puteoli<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>b. Encouraged by a greeting party from Rome</p> <p>1) Appii Forum: 43 miles from Rome</p> <p>2) Three Taverns: 33 miles from Rome</p> |

**DIVISION XI**

**THE FINAL JOURNEY AND WITNESS OF PAUL: TO ROME AS A PRISONER, 23:12-28:31**

**H. Paul—Shipwrecked and Stranded on an Island: God’s Protection Through Trial After Trial, 28:1-15**

(28:1-15) **Introduction:** God’s protective hand in looking after His servant is clearly seen in this passage. The genuine believer can study this passage and rest assured of God’s protective hand through all the trials of life, no matter how severe they may be. (See Map—Introduction to Acts for a picture of Paul’s journey and the cities he touched on his journey.)

1. Shipwrecked—but saved (v.1).
2. Marooned and facing island natives—but accepted and helped (v.2).
3. Snakebitten—but healed (v.3-5).
4. Faced superstition and heathenism—but given an opportunity for evangelism (v.6-9).
5. Destitute and stranded—but had necessities met (v.10-12).
6. Apprehensive and lonely—but encouraged and strengthened (v.13-15).

**1** (28:1) **Deliverance:** God’s messenger was shipwrecked, but saved. God had promised to save Paul and He did, and God also saved everyone else on the ship. But there were terrible trials, trials so threatening that only God could have saved His messenger. There was...

- the violent storm which mercilessly drove the ship under its own ferocious power for fourteen days (Acts 27:14f).

- the utter hopelessness of the situation: everyone except Paul had lost all hope of being saved (Acts 27:20).
- the attempted abandonment of the ship by the sailors to save their own lives, dooming all passengers to shipwreck and death (Acts 27:30).
- the soldiers' plan to kill all prisoners, including Paul, to prevent their escape (Acts 27:42).

The point is that God promised to deliver Paul and God kept His promise. He always does.

“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; ye also helping together by prayer for us” (2 Cor.1:8-11).

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).

“And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer” (2 Sam.22:2).

“I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears” (Ps.34:4).

“For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?” (Ps.56:13).

“And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar [gray] hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Is.46:4).

“Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD” (Jer.1:8).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(28:1) **Melita**: the island on which Paul was shipwrecked is known as Malta or Melita. (See Map—Introduction to Acts.) It lay about sixty miles south of Sicily and was placed under the province of Sicily by Rome. The governor of Sicily therefore appointed the ruler of the island. The populace were native islanders, neither of Greek or Roman blood. The island was relatively unimportant in the trade of the world.

**2** (28:2) **Trials—Deliverance**: God’s messenger was marooned and faced island natives, but he was accepted and helped. Note two things.

1. The natives were called “barbarians,” but this does not mean they were an uncivilized people. In the ancient world all who did not follow Greek customs and speak the Greek language were called barbarians. All non-Greeks and non-Romans were foreigners, a barbarian people.

2. The island natives were, however, isolated on a somewhat insignificant and poor island. They could have easily...
- felt threatened by the shipwrecked victims and killed them.
  - taken advantage of the situation and killed and stolen whatever valuables the survivors had such as rings and gold chains.

But note God’s overruling protection. The natives showed a kindness beyond the ordinary. The word “kindness” (philanthropic) is the word from which we get our word philanthropy. In Greek it means a love for mankind, the kind of love that reaches out in special kindness. Apparently, the natives helped the shipwrecked victims by extending many kindnesses to them. The point to see is how God takes care of those who believe His promises and follow His instructions. He had said that He would save His messenger and everyone else, but the crew almost ruined it. They set out to save themselves, not accepting God’s Word. Only the strong warning of God and the destruction of the lifeboat (man-saving devices) saved the crew. And note: it was from this point on that things began to go well for everyone. When there was nothing on board to save the ship’s crew and passengers, when their only hope and trust was in Paul’s God, then God was able to take over and begin to bless all. They were saved, gloriously so, and welcomed abundantly by the natives of the island. God again fulfilled His glorious promise.

**3** (28:3-5) **Trials—Deliverance**: God’s messenger was snakebitten, but healed. Why did God let His dear servant be snakebitten? Had he not already suffered and gone through enough? He had just gone through...

- a terrifying storm for fourteen days.
- struggling for his life in the blackness of the storm.
- being abandoned by mutinous sailors on a ship about to be wrecked upon the rocks of the shore.
- having his life threatened by Roman soldiers who feared he might escape.
- having to jump overboard and swim for his life in the midst of a terrifying typhoon.

And now, he was rushing about in a torrential rain bitterly soaked and cold, gathering wood for the fire which had just been built. He had not even had a chance to get warm when the snake leaped out of the fire and latched onto Paul’s hand.

**Thought 1.** How often believers ask, “Why? O God, why do I have to keep on suffering so much pain, so many trials?”

Note two very significant points.

1. God took care of Paul through the trial, healing him instantaneously.
2. God used the trial to reach many for Christ. The natives saw the delivering power of God, and by seeing His care for Paul, they were more ready to listen to the gospel. They would soon learn that God was the only true and living God, the God who was truly alive and who saved and looked after all who truly trusted Him. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Suffering—Mt.8:1-4* for more discussion as to why God allows trials in the believer’s life.)

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mk.16:17-18).

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pt.5:7).

“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro through out the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth, thou shalt have wars” (2 Chron.16:9).

“He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler” (Ps.91:4).

“Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

**4** (28:6-9) **Superstition—Heathenism:** God’s messenger faced superstition and heathenism, but he was given a unique opportunity for evangelism.

1. Note the belief of superstition and heathenism. The natives thought a *god* (justice, vengeance) had finally caught up with Paul. They knew he was a criminal, guilty of some major crime, for he was chained and being shipped to Rome either for trial or execution. The snake bite was sure death, so they reasoned he was a murderer, receiving from the gods equal punishment for an equal crime.

**Thought 1.** Note how men of every generation hold to the same superstition and heathenism. Natural man has always felt...

- that he suffers because of *foolishness, wrongdoing, irresponsible behavior, sin.*
- that he is being punished for his evil deeds.
- that the *god or gods* are after him because of his *wrongdoing.*

There is, of course, some truth to the belief. A man does reap what he sows. However, he does not always bear severe suffering in this life. Many do, but some do not, not personally. The trials of this life are usually normal and natural trials, trials that just result from a corruptible, sinful world. The major judgment for sin is to take place after this life, when we enter eternity, and it is to be handled in a *face to face confrontation* with God.

2. The instability of the human soul without Christ. How quickly the natives switched their thoughts about Paul when they saw he was unharmed by the snakebite. They immediately thought he was a god-like man.

**Thought 1.** Men cannot understand the miracles of God, the miracles...

- of changed lives, lives radically and completely changed.
- of healed bodies, bodies made whole, unexplainably so.
- of circumstances triumphed over, victoriously and powerfully so.

Miracles confuse and disturb most people. They cannot understand miracles, so they deny or else explain them away. If miracles are true and God is living, then they are doomed unless they repent, and most persons are just unwilling to repent. The point is this: man’s soul apart from God is unstable, reaching out into the natural world and grasping at whatever...

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| • becomes visual      | • materializes   |
| • seems to be real    | • builds esteem  |
| • appears explainable | • gives pleasure |
| • emerges evident     |                  |

Most persons grasp at everything except God Himself. As a result the souls of people are unstable and unsure of eternity.

3. Note that the results of the miracle were directed by God. Paul and his Christian companions and some others (probably the officers of the soldiers and of the ship) were greeted and given lodging for three days by the chief ruler of the island, a man named Publius. Nothing is known about the ruler other than what is given here. Malta was a province of Sicily and under the jurisdiction of its governor; therefore, the ruler of Malta was placed in power by the Roman governor. He may have been a Roman magistrate placed on the island or a local native who had been placed in power.

The point is that God used the trial and miracle of the snakebite to open the door of the island for Paul to minister and preach the gospel (cp. v.8-9).

**Thought 1.** Note two significant lessons. Believers are...

- to bear up under their trials enduring all, no matter how severe, knowing that God is planning to use the trial for His glory.
- to use their trials as opportunities for evangelism.

**Thought 2.** Note Paul's faithfulness, the focus of his whole life. He was not moaning and groaning, not down and defeated, not questioning and wondering why so much *bad* had happened to him (see note—Acts 28:3-5). He was *out* witnessing and ministering. Just picture the scene, all he had just gone through which was enough to crush most men. Yet here he was marching forth, bearing up under all, proclaiming the Lord Jesus.

**"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10).**

**"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (2 Tim.1:8).**

**"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" (Tit.2:15).**

- 5** (28:10-12) **Care—Necessities:** God's messenger was destitute, but God took care of his necessities. Paul and all the others had lost practically everything in the shipwreck. Yet God is seen working behind the scenes to take care of the necessities of His servant. And note: those surrounding him had their needs met also. (See outline and note—Mt.6:25-34 for more discussion.) One of the needs, of course, was passage to Rome. The island of Malta, although insignificant in the trade of world commerce, had a port on the other side of the island from where Paul's ship had crushed upon the rocks. Note how a major grain ship had been forced to winter there. The name of the ship was *Castor and Pollux*, which was the name of the two mythical sons of the god Jupiter. They were the twin gods who were the protectors of navigation. Paul and the others were able to catch this ship and begin their journey to Rome.

**Thought 1.** Note how the hand of God is ever maneuvering events, working all things out for the good of His dear servants.

**"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt.6:33).**

**"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Ro.8:28).**

- 6** (28:13-15) **God's Care—Paul Sustained:** God's messenger was apprehensive and lonely, but God encouraged and strengthened him. Note the words, "He thanked God and took courage." Apparently, Paul was experiencing some intense apprehension and loneliness. Such emotions under the circumstances are certainly understandable.

**"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Dt.31:6).**

**"Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it" (Ezra 10:4).**

**"Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Is.41:10).**

**"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Is.43:2).**

As the ship slowly inched its way into the great harbor of Puteoli, Paul stood on deck with his head turning slowly from side to side. He viewed the great Roman war ships anchored in the harbor, the beaches and yachts of the wealthy, the mass of storehouses and shops, and the endless stream of people. How deeply he must have sensed the awesomeness of imperial Rome! He must have sensed that Rome was more than just a new and strange city for him to conquer for Christ. It was the capital of the world. All of a sudden he felt all alone and apprehensive. What was going to happen to him? What kind of new sufferings lay before him as he stood trial for his life? How would the believers of Rome receive him? He was entering the city not as a flaming evangel for God, but as a prisoner of imperial Rome, a prisoner being charged with a capital crime. Would they fear to be associated with him? They did not know him, not personally. They only knew about him through the letter he had written to them about three years earlier. Had they forgotten? Had they fallen back into the world, forsaken the faith? What was their status and what would their spirit be toward him?

In such an apprehensive moment, being gripped with thoughts of being all alone, God entered the scene. God met the need of His dear messenger. Christian believers were found in the seaport and God granted seven days with them. And much more, God sent two welcoming parties from the church in Rome, one that travelled over forty miles and the other over thirty miles—both to escort him into the great city of Rome. The picture in the Greek language is that of the welcoming parties coming to give God's precious servant a welcome fit for a conqueror, fit for a king.

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(28:13) **Puteoli:** the chief port of ancient Rome known today as the Bay of Naples. It was about one hundred and forty miles from Rome, but it was the great import and export center for both the great capital and the mainland of Italy.

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| <p><b>1 Paul entered Rome as a prisoner</b><br/> a. He was allowed to live in a private house<br/> b. He was chained to a guard (v.20)</p> <p><b>2 Step 1: An explanatory meeting with the religious leadership<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> a. He called the chief Jews<br/> b. He declared his innocence &amp; the injustice done</p> <p>c. He declared the verdict of the Roman governors</p> <p>d. He blamed the Jews for his need to appeal to Caesar</p> <p>e. He claimed he was imprisoned for the hope of Israel, the hope of the Messiah</p> <p>f. He was granted another session</p> <p><b>3 Step 2: A clear procla-</b></p> | <p><b>I. Paul in Rome: A Strategy for Evangelism in the Great City, 28:16-31</b></p> <p>16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.</p> <p>17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.</p> <p>18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.</p> <p>19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.</p> <p>20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.</p> <p>21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee.</p> <p>22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.</p> <p>23 And when they had ap-</p> | <p>pointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.</p> <p>24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.</p> <p>25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,</p> <p>26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:</p> <p>27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.</p> <p>28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.</p> <p>29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.</p> <p>30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,</p> <p>31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.</p> | <p><b>mation of the message</b><br/> a. He proclaimed the Kingdom of God &amp; Jesus the Messiah</p> <p>b. He focused his message on the Scriptures</p> <p>c. The results<br/> 1) Some believed<br/> 2) Some disbelieved</p> <p><b>4 Step 3: A turning to those who would receive the gospel, the Gentiles</b><br/> a. Isaiah prophesied the rejection by the Jews</p> <p>1) Willfully rejected</p> <p>2) Hardened their hearts</p> <p>3) Deafened their ears<br/> 4) Closed their eyes<br/> 5) Denied what they saw</p> <p>6) Refused understanding<br/> 7) Fought conversion &amp; healing</p> <p>b. Salvation was sent to the Gentiles</p> <p>c. The Jews departed—disputing among themselves</p> <p><b>5 Step 4: A mission of continued evangelism<sup>DS2</sup></b><br/> a. He received all that came<br/> b. He preached the Kingdom of God<br/> c. He taught the Lord Jesus<br/> d. He worked unhindered</p> |
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**DIVISION XI**

**THE FINAL JOURNEY AND WITNESS OF PAUL: TO ROME AS A PRISONER, 23:12-28:31**

**I. Paul in Rome: A Strategy for Evangelism in the Great City, 28:16-31**

(28:16-31) **Introduction:** the last words of the great *Book of Acts* center upon evangelism, Paul's strategy for reaching the great city of Rome for Christ.

1. Paul entered Rome as a prisoner (v.16).
2. Step 1: an explanatory meeting with the religious leadership (v.17-22).
3. Step 2: a clear proclamation of the message (v.23-24).
4. Step 3: a turning to those who would receive the gospel, the Gentiles (v.25-29).
5. Step 4: a mission of continued evangelism (v.30-31).

**1** (28:16) **Paul:** Paul entered Rome as a prisoner. The other prisoners were turned over to the proper officer of the Roman guard. Paul was allowed to secure private housing for himself and allowed to have guests as he willed (v.16, 23, 30). This was probably due to the letter from Festus and King Herod Agrippa (Acts 25:13f) and a recommendation by Julius because of the help and cooperative spirit of Paul along the journey to Rome (Acts 27:1f). Paul was, however, placed under house arrest, being chained by the wrist to a soldier twenty four hours a day.

**Thought 1.** Note the providence of God in overruling the normal affairs of men. His messenger, in a private house, would be able to proclaim the gospel to all who visited him.

**2** (28:17-22) **Witnessing—Evangelism:** the first step in evangelizing the city was an explanatory meeting with the religious leaders. Paul was able to secure a house and settle down within three days. Note: despite the unbelievable ordeal of the last three months, he did not rest a single day. He launched right into his ministry of evangelism. Being under house arrest, he sent a request to all the Jewish leaders throughout Rome to meet him at an appointed time in his house. They would come, for Paul was well known for being the chief exponent and teacher of Christianity throughout the world. The Jews especially knew of him, for he had been one of the brightest stars of their nation until his conversion to Christ, and he was now the one who riled up the Jews so much wherever he went. They would come out of curiosity to see this man who had become such a controversial figure throughout the world, to see just what he had to say.

There were at least seven synagogues in Rome at this time. Just how many leaders from each attended the meeting is not known. Paul simply related what had happened to him, why he had been arrested and why he was now to appear before Caesar. His purpose was...

- to remove the doubts and questions, rumors and prejudices they might hold against him. He wanted to share the gospel with them. Paul's heart ached for his own people and he always reached out to them first wherever he went. He had written to the believers earlier that his love for his own people was so deep he would give his own soul for their salvation (Ro.9:1-3; 10:1).

The Scripture and outline of these verses show clearly what Paul says. Noting the points and referring to the events of the Scripture will explain them in detail (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Paul, Trials—Acts 28:17-22* for Scripture where each event is discussed).

**Thought 1.** Paul set at least three dynamic examples for us in these verses.

- 1) The example of dedication—an enormous dedication to reach people with the gospel, no matter what the circumstances or how exhausted one might be.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak (2 Cor.4:13).**

- 2) The example of love—an enormous love for one's own people, one's own nation. Paul never gave up on his people, no matter their ill treatment of him.

**“For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Ro.9:3).**

**“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Ro.10:1).**

- 3) The example of removing all doubts and questions, rumors and prejudices so that the gospel can have free course and flow freely as one proclaims it. (What an example for city-wide evangelism, when possible!)

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(28:17-22) **Paul, Trials:** Paul defended himself before (1) the Jerusalem mob (Acts 22:1-23); (2) the chief captain (Acts 22:24-30); (3) the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:1-10); (4) Felix (Acts 24:10-23); (5) Festus (Acts 25:8-12); (6) King Herod Agrippa II (Acts 25:23-26:32); and (7) the Jews at Rome (Acts 28:17-28).

**3** (28:23-24) **Witnessing—Preaching:** the second step in evangelizing the city was a clear proclamation of the message. Many had come to the meeting to hear what Paul had to say. Apparently, the house was packed and overflowing. Note three significant points.

1. Paul preached the Kingdom of God.  
⇒ He preached that Jesus is the true Messiah who had brought the Kingdom of God to earth.

**“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Mt.9:35).**

**“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.10:7).**

⇒ He preached that Jesus is the true Messiah who is to return to earth to establish the kingdom forever.

(See notes—Acts 1:6-7; DEEPER STUDY # 4—2:24; note—2:25-26; DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.1:20; note—1:23; DEEPER STUDY # 3—Mt.19:23-24 for more discussion.)

2. Paul focused his preaching in the Word of God, and there alone.

**“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:3-4).**

**“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believeth” (1 Th.2:13).**

3. The results were mixed. Some believed, but most did not believe.

**“He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (Jn.3:18).**

**“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).**

**“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).**

**4** (28:25-29) **Jews, Reject Gospel—Gentiles; History, Pivotal Point:** the third step in evangelizing the city was turning to those who would receive the gospel—the rejected Gentiles. This is a most significant fact, a pivotal point of history: the *Book of Acts*...

- opens with the great commission to carry the gospel to the Jew first (Acts 1:8).
- closes with the gospel being rejected by the Jews and being taken primarily to the Gentiles (Act 28:28).

The fact that the Jews rejected the gospel in the city which symbolized the world (Rome) and rejected it as preached by the apostle to the world (Paul) is climactic. It is a picture of the gospel being rejected by the Jews worldwide and being taken to the Gentiles. Paul declared the fact upon the authority of God’s Word, a fact that is tragic news to the Jew, but glorious news to the Gentile.

1. Paul declared that Isaiah prophesied the rejection of the gospel by the Jews (Is.6:9-10. See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Unbelief*—Jn.12:39-41 for more discussion.) Note three points.

- a. The unbeliever’s rejection is willful, always deliberate. He sees and hears, yet he refuses to really open his eyes and ears. He refuses to understand. But why? Why does a person act so illogically, rebel and refuse to understand? Christ says, “For the heart of this people is waxed gross” (v.27). The Greek says “This people’s heart has grown fat [overweight].” Being fat indicates sensuality and senselessness. To eat and eat, adding weight upon weight is living after the flesh and makes no sense at all. It is sensual and senseless. Christ is therefore saying that the unbeliever has become so sensual and senseless that he rebels and refuses to understand the mysteries of God. His sensuality is due to worldliness and to the lust for the things of the world (Ro.8:5-8; 1 Jn.2:15-16), and his senselessness is due to being deceived by the evil one, the devil himself (2 Cor.4:3-4).
- b. The unbeliever’s rejection is prophesied (Is.6:9-10; cp. Jn.12:40; Acts 28:26f). A man who willfully rejects God experiences a *judicial blindness and rejection* by God. The person who deliberately chooses to be blind and who rejects understanding is given over to a *just punishment*. His obstinate unbelief, constant sin, and continual rejection lead to a judicial blindness and to being rejected by God.

**“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness....For this cause God gave them up unto...vile affections....God gave them over to a reprobate mind” (Ro.1:24, 26, 28. See outline and notes—Ro.1:24-32).**

**“My Spirit shall not always strive with man” (Gen.6:3).**

**“But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would [have] none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels” (Ps.81:11-12).**

**“He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Pr.29:1).**

**“Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone” (Hos.4:17).**

- c. Note also the clear description of the unbeliever’s rejection. No clearer or stronger description could be given (see outline, v.27).

**Thought 1.** Why do men reject Christ, hardening their hearts, deafening their ears, and closing their eyes?

“Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn.3:19).

“They...believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Th.2:12).

“Thou (man) lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness” (Ps.52:3).

“Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked” (Pr.2:14).

**Thought 2.** One of the most tragic sights in all the world is to see people sitting under the most glorious message and falling asleep, or being listless, inattentive, disinterested, or wilfully hardened and close-minded. God will *give them up* to their slumber and deliberate hardness (see note—Mt.13:13-15).

**Thought 3.** What a person is fighting against is conversion and spiritual healing. If he listens and receives, he has to change his life, giving God all He is and has. Therefore, he rebels and rejects—deliberately. The person does not want to be turned “from darkness to light” (Acts 26:18).

2. Paul declared that salvation was being sent to the Gentiles, and *they would hear it*. Paul had been serving Christ for more than thirty years now. Everywhere he went, he attempted to bring the glorious message of salvation to the Jews first. What a dynamic and vibrant example of persevering love and undying hope! But how unfortunate this is: in the end of each mission and here at the end of his final mission journey, Paul was forced to turn to the Gentiles all alone! How often God had tried to appeal to the Jews to walk hand in hand with Paul among the Gentile nations, evangelizing all men everywhere (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Israel, God's Plan*—Jn.4:22 for more discussion). But as always, the Jews left Paul when he mentioned the Gentiles, arguing and discussing what Paul had declared. Their decision was final; they wanted absolutely nothing to do with Paul and the Christ he preached.

**5** (28:30-31) **Paul, Faithfulness:** the fourth step in evangelizing the city was a mission of continued evangelism. The Scripture and outline speak for themselves, but note two significant facts.

1. Paul preached and taught, proclaiming the gospel and rooting the new believers in the faith. He gave systematic instruction and follow-up as well as evangelizing all with whom he came in contact.

2. The epistles tell us some of Paul's activities during these two years. He wrote the letters of Philipians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. Luke accompanied Paul to Rome and remained with him for some time (2 Tim.4:11), as did Timothy (Ph.1:1; 2:19-30; Col.1:1; Phile.1); Tychicus (Eph.6:21); Epaphroditus (Ph.4:18); Aristarchus and Mark (Col.4:10). Other outstanding Christian leaders also spent some time with him (Col.4:10-14; Phile.10-11, 23-24). He was constantly witnessing, and his witness spread around the world through the Protorian Guard, the select troops of the palace.

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(28:30-31) **The Gospel:** Acts began with a few believers being commissioned to preach the glorious gospel at Jerusalem. This handful of believers was then to take the gospel throughout all Judea, then in Samaria, and then to the uttermost part of the earth. Now, as Acts closes, the gospel has reached the center and capital of the world, Rome itself. It is now being proclaimed by thousands throughout the whole world. Sometimes the message has flowed freely without opposition; at other times it has been threatened with a violent attempt to silence it. Sometimes the message has been silently counterfeited by false ministers and teachers who have infiltrated the church and were empowered by the *wicked one*. Sometimes the message has even been added to and at other times it has been subtracted from. But it has never been stamped out. The Word of the glorious God and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ marches on triumphantly, and will continue to march on triumphantly until He returns. The Acts of God are not yet done.

**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE**

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**ROMANS**



# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

## INTRODUCTION

**AUTHOR:** Paul, the Apostle. Paul clearly states that he is the author (Ro.1:1), and the personal references and facts given in Chapter 15 tell us beyond any doubt that Paul is the author.

**DATE:** A.D. 55-58.

Paul says, "Now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints" (Ro.15:25). This journey to Jerusalem was the trip made necessary by the extreme poverty of the believers in the Jerusalem church. Paul had taken a collection from the Gentile churches and felt compelled to deliver the offering himself. This occurred on his third missionary journey.

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints."

Several manuscripts have been found with the personal and local touches of chapters 15-16 omitted and the doxology included. This would definitely point to there being several churches. The place of writing seems to be Corinth, for Paul recommended Phoebe to the Romans. Phoebe was a deaconess from Cenchrea, the eastern seaport of Corinth.

**PURPOSE:** Paul had several reasons for writing.

1. Paul wished to evangelize Spain (Ro.15:25). To do so he needed a local church from which to launch his ministry--a church that would be much closer to Spain than Antioch. Antioch had been his home base up until now. By writing Romans, he was preparing the Roman church for the day when he would reveal his vision to them. He was making them familiar with his name, his mission, and his love.

2. Paul had a personal compulsion to visit and witness in Rome itself. His life-long strategy had been to evangelize the great metropolitan cities along the route that stretched from Jerusalem to Rome. He knew that a route so greatly traveled and cities so actively engaged in commerce would assure the spread of the Gospel. Rome was the capital, the center of the world; it provided the greatest strategic opportunity for world evangelism. A Rome conquered for Christ could mean a world conquered for Christ.

3. Paul was not sure he would ever reach Rome personally. He was going to Jerusalem and knew the danger. There was a chance he might be killed in Jerusalem. He requested the Roman church to pray for him: "I beseech you, brethren...strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea" (15:30-31). Yet despite the danger, Paul was a master strategist: he knew the strategic importance of Rome for the spread of the Gospel worldwide. The church had to be rooted and grounded in the faith; therefore he sat down and wrote this great letter. The message of the letter is what Paul would hammer into the believers' hearts if he ever did get to stand before them.

### SPECIAL FEATURES:

1. The church at Rome. The church was strong. Five factors show its strength. First, Rome was a *lay church*. A writer of the fourth century said that some Roman citizens "had embraced the faith of Christ...without any sign of mighty works or any of the apostles" (Ambrosiaster, a Latin Father, in his *Epistle to the Romans*. Quoted by F.F. Bruce. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* "The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963, p.13). The content of the epistle shows a people of great spiritual depth and maturity. But how did the gospel reach Rome? Who founded the church? The only thing known for sure is that there was a great and flourishing church in the capital. But just when the church was founded is unknown. There are several possibilities.

- a. At Pentecost there were "strangers from Rome, both Jews and proselytes" (Acts 2:10). Were any converted during Pentecost? There is no specific mention of converts among the Romans, but Romans are the only group identified among the European pilgrims.
- b. Many of the members of the Roman church were known by Paul personally. He had met them elsewhere, sometime long ago. The church could have been founded by these. He greets Aquila and Priscilla (16:3; cp. Acts 18:2-3). He also greets some well-known believers whom he says were "in Christ" even before himself: Andronicus and Junia (16:7). Rufus, perhaps the son of Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross of Christ, is also greeted (see note--16:13; cp. Mk.15:21). Paul may have known Rufus and his mother in Antioch.
- c. The lay followers of Christ were probably among the first to carry the gospel to Rome. This was Paul's great strategy as God's chief commander for world evangelization. Paul had penetrated the great cities of the world with the glorious gospel, and he did all he could to establish a strong church in each of the major cities. Each of these cities lay along the world's great roads that led right into the heart of the world's capital, Rome itself. In all the hustle and bustle of business and traveling to and fro, some men, racing throughout the world and carrying on their affairs, were bound to be reached for Christ and to become lay missionaries themselves. It was only inevitable that Rome be penetrated. A church was bound to be founded right in the heart of Rome.

Second, Rome had a *worldwide reputation*. Its faith was strong (1:8). It was spiritually mature, able to digest the *meat* of the Word. Practically every page covers a major doctrine or theological discussion.

Third, Rome was a *Gentile church*. The Gentiles, who comprised a vast majority of the membership, were reminded of the fact that Christianity had come from Jewish roots. Therefore, the Jews were to be deeply respected--even if they were outnumbered (11:18).

Fourth, Rome was a *persecuted church*. The church was severely persecuted seven years after Paul wrote this great letter to the believers. Nero had burned the older section of the great city in a fit of madness, and he blamed the burning of Rome upon the Christians. Believers were also charged with such crimes as cannibalism, immoral practices, and with being enemies of the state. They were actually charged with any other crime that could be connived. However, the blood of the church proved to be its seed (Tertullian, Apology 50. Quoted by F.F. Bruce. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* "The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.17). Believers, fleeing the persecution, spread all over the world; and wherever they went they shared the glorious news of eternal life in Christ Jesus. In addition, the citizens of Rome grew tired of so much savagery and eventually demanded that the savagery against the Christians stop. The church was left alone and the glorious news of salvation was allowed to be freely proclaimed.

Fifth, Rome was a *triumphant church*. The church was unashamed of its life and witness. It was willing to stand up and be counted by the side of those who suffered. When Paul was being escorted into the city as a Roman prisoner, while still some thirty to forty miles away, the Christian church marched forward to meet and give him a triumphant processional over those thirty to forty miles. The sight of these dear believers filled Paul with a sense of glory seldom experienced by men. (See note--Acts 28:13-15.)

2. Romans is *The Great Epistle of Theology* It is a statement of what Paul believed, a statement of his theology. Paul was not writing to meet a special problem or danger or error. He was writing primarily to root and ground the Roman believers in the faith as deeply as he could, for they lived in the great strategic center with explosive potential for world evangelization. He was completely free to set forth what he saw to be the essential theology for a living faith.

3. Romans is *The Epistle Written for Every Man* It is the Gospel of God (1:1). It is a book for the world (1:4-2:16; etc.); a book for the church (see 1:1-7; etc.); a book for theologians (see 3:1-5:21; etc.); a book for philosophers (see 1:1-2:16; etc.); a book for legalists (see 7:1f; etc.); a book for immature believers (see 6:1-8:30); a book for mature believers (see 8:12-14; etc.); a book for sufferers (see 7:1-8:39; etc.); a book for unbelievers (see 1:1-2:16; etc.); a book for religionists (see 2:17-5:21; etc.). Romans is the truth desperately needed by every man, whoever or wherever he may be.

4. Romans is *The Church's Last Testament* Although one of the driving forces of Paul's heart was to visit the Roman church, he was not sure he would ever get to see them face to face (See Purpose, point 3). Yet, the church's strategic importance necessitated that he do what he could to assure that they use their explosive potential for Christ. Thus, he was forced to write--just in case. And write he did. In the Book of Romans the church has what Paul wished to say to the church--just in case he never got there. In a sense it is *The Church's Last Testament*--just what the church needs to hear. Romans comes closest to being the one written possession a church needs, the most comprehensive statement of Christian truth.

5. Romans is *The Gospel's Main Truth* This is evident from Special Features, points 1 and 2.

6. Romans is *God's Worldwide Plan for Israel and the Gentiles* More clearly than any other book, Romans shows God's glorious plan for the ages in Israel and the Gentile nations. A panoramic view of history is given from a Christian perspective. This is quickly grasped by a study of the Outline, chapters 9-11.

## OUTLINE OF ROMANS

**THE PREACHER'S OUTLINE & SERMON BIBLE™** is *unique*. It differs from all other Study Bibles & Sermon Resource Materials in that every Passage and Subject is outlined right beside the Scripture. When you choose any *Subject* below and turn to the reference, you have not only the Scripture, but you discover the Scripture and Subject *already outlined for you—verse by verse*.

For a quick example, choose one of the subjects below and turn over to the Scripture, and you will find this marvelous help for faster, easier, and more accurate use.

In addition, every point of the Scripture and Subject is *fully developed in a Commentary with supporting Scripture* at the bottom of the page. Again, this arrangement makes sermon preparation much easier and faster.

*Note something else:* The Subjects of Romans have titles that are both *practical* and *Biblical*. The practical titles sometimes have more appeal to people. This *benefit* is clearly seen for use on billboards, bulletins, church newsletters, etc.

*A suggestion:* For the quickest overview of Romans, first read *all the major titles* (I, II, III, etc.), then come back and read the subtitles.

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### OUTLINE OF ROMANS

#### I. GREETING AND THEME: THE GOSPEL AND GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, 1:1-17

- A. Paul's Credentials: Enslavement to Christ, 1:1-7
- B. Paul's Interest in the Church: Enslavement to the Gospel, 1:8-15
- C. Paul's Boldness for Christ: Unashamedness of the Gospel, 1:16-17

#### II. SIN AND CONDEMNATION: THE WORLD'S NEED TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD, 1:18-3:20

- A. God's Case Against All Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men: Why God Shows Wrath, 1:18-23
- B. God's Case Against All Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men: How God Shows Wrath, 1:24-32
- C. God's Case Against the Moralists: Judgment, 2:1-16
- D. God's Case Against the Religionist (Jew), 2:17-29
- E. The Arguments of the Religionist (Jew) Against a Heart Religion, 3:1-8  
(Cp. Romans 2:23-29)
- F. God's Case Against All Men, 3:9-20

#### III. FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21

- A. Righteousness: The Way to be Right With God, 3:21-26
- B. Faith: The Way that Puts an End to Human Boasting and Pride, to Self-Righteousness and Works, 3:27-31
- C. Logic: The Evidence that Faith Alone Justifies a Man, 4:1-8
- D. Rituals, Rules, and Ordinances: The Wrong Way for a Man to Seek Justification, 4:9-12
- E. Law: The Wrong Way for a Man to be Justified, 4:13-16
- F. Abraham: The Example of a Man Justified by Faith Alone, 4:17-25
- G. God's Unbelievable Love (Part I): The Results of Justification, 5:1-5
- H. God's Unbelievable Love (Part II): The Great Depth of Justification, 5:6-11
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ROMANS

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| <p><b>1 He was a slave of Christ</b><br/> <b>2 He was an apostle of God</b><br/> <b>3 He was set apart to the gospel of God</b><br/>         a. The gospel promised long ago<br/>         b. The gospel that concerns</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 1</b></p> <p><b>I. GREETING AND THEME: THE GOSPEL AND GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, 1:1-17</b></p> <p><b>A. Paul's Credentials: Enslavement to Christ,<sup>DS1</sup> 1:1-7</b></p> <p>Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,<br/>         2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.)<br/>         3 Concerning his Son Jesus</p> | <p>Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;<br/>         4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:<br/>         5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:<br/>         6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:<br/>         7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.</p> | <p>God's Son, Jesus Christ, becoming a Man</p> <p>c. The gospel that declares Jesus Christ to be the Son of God<br/>         1) By Spirit of holiness<br/>         2) By the resurrection</p> <p><b>4 He had received God's grace &amp; God's mission<sup>DS2</sup></b></p> <p><b>5 He acknowledged the enslavement of others</b><br/>         a. They too were called<br/>         b. They too were beloved<br/>         c. They too were saints<br/>         d. They too were recipients of grace &amp; peace</p> |
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DIVISION I

GREETING AND THEME: THE GOSPEL AND GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, 1:1-17

**A. Paul's Credentials: Enslavement to Christ, 1:1-7**

(1:1-7) **Introduction:** no person is a true follower of Jesus Christ unless he is *enslaved by Christ*. In fact, it is *impossible* for a person to belong to Christ unless he is *enslaved by Christ*. This is the shocking message Paul wants to get across to the believers at Rome.

1. He was a slave of Christ (v.1).
2. He was an apostle of God (v.1).
3. He was set apart to the gospel of God (v.1-4).
4. He had received God's grace and God's mission (v.5).
5. He acknowledged the enslavement of others (v.6-7).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:1-7) **Gospel—Christianity:** in these verses Paul gives the raw outline of the gospel he preached (v.1-4). It is a penetrating look at primitive Christianity. Note the gospel's close agreement with the Apostle's Creed.

1. Paul's view of the Old Testament.
  - a. It comes from God.
  - b. It is given "through His prophets."
  - c. It is "holy" Scripture.
2. Paul's view of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - a. He is God's Son: "concerning His Son."
  - b. He is the promised Savior: "Christ," the Messiah.
  - c. He is Lord: "our Lord."
  - d. He is man: "born of the seed of David according to the flesh."
  - e. He is declared to be the very Son of God: "declared to be the Son of God with power."
  - f. He is divine or holy: "according to the Spirit of holiness."
  - g. He is risen from the dead: "by the resurrection from the dead."
3. Paul's view of the gospel.
  - a. It is of God: "the Gospel of God" (cp. Ro.1:1, 17; 3:21).
  - b. It was prophesied: "he had promised..."
  - c. It agrees with the Old Testament: "promised afore...in the holy scriptures."
  - d. It concerns God's very own Son: "concerning His Son."
  - e. It concerns the divine Savior: "Jesus Christ, our Lord...declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness [sinlessness]."
  - f. It concerns the human Savior: "made of the seed of David...."
  - g. It concerns the risen Savior: "the resurrection from the dead."

**1** (1:1) **Servant—Slave** (doulos): Paul was a "slave" of Jesus Christ. The word "slave" (doulos) means far more than just a servant. It means a slave totally possessed by the master. It is a *bond-servant* bound by law to a master.

A look at the slave market of Paul's day shows more clearly what Paul meant when he said he was a "slave of Jesus Christ."

1. The slave was owned by his master; he was totally possessed by his master. This is what Paul meant. Paul was purchased and possessed by Christ. Christ had looked upon him and had seen his degraded and needful condition. Christ looked, and the most wonderful thing happened: Christ loved him and bought him; therefore, he was now the possession of Christ.

2. The slave existed for his master and he had no other reason for existence. He had no personal rights whatsoever. The same was true with Paul: he existed only for Christ. His rights were the rights of Christ only.

3. The slave served his master and he existed only for the purpose of service. He was at the master's disposal any hour of the day or night. So it was with Paul: he lived only to serve Christ—hour by hour, day by day, and night by night.

4. The slave's will belonged to his master. He was allowed no will and no ambition other than the will and ambition of the master. He was completely subservient to the Master and owed total obedience to the will of the master. Paul belonged to Christ. In fact, he said that he fought and struggled to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor.10:5).

5. There is a fifth and most precious thing that Paul meant by "a slave of Jesus Christ." He meant that he had the highest and most honored and kingly profession in all the world. Men of God, the greatest men of history, have always been called "the servants of God." It was the highest title of honor. The believer's slavery to Jesus Christ is not cringing, cowardly, or shameful subjection. It is the position of honor—the honor that bestows upon a man the privileges and responsibilities of serving the King of kings and Lord of lords.

⇒ Moses was the slave of God (Dt.34:5; Ps.105:26; Mal.4:4).

⇒ Joshua was the slave of God (Josh.24:29).

⇒ David was the slave of God (2 Sam.3:18; Ps.78:70).

⇒ Paul was the slave of Jesus Christ (Ro.1:1; Ph.1:1; Tit.1:1).

⇒ James was the slave of God (Jas.1:1).

⇒ Peter was the slave of Jesus Christ (2 Pt.1:1).

⇒ Jude was the slave of God (Jude 1).

⇒ The prophets were the slaves of God (Amos 3:7; Jer.7:25).

⇒ Christian believers are said to be the slaves of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:18; 1 Cor.7:22; Eph.6:6; Col.4:12; 2 Tim.2:24).

(This point is built upon what William Barclay says. *The Letter to the Romans*. "The Daily Study Bible." Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1955, p.2).

**"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (Jn.12:26; cp. Ro.12:1; 1 Cor.15:58).**

**"[Laboring] not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph.6:6-7).**

**"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col.3:23-24).**

**"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb.12:28).**

**"And ye shall serve the Lord your God" (Ex.23:25).**

**"What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Dt.10:12).**

**"Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling" (Ps.2:11).**

**"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing" (Ps.100:2).**

**2** (1:1) **Apostle—Paul, Call of:** Paul was an apostle of God. The word "apostle" (apostolos) means either a person who is sent out or a person who is sent forth. An apostle is a representative, an ambassador, a person who is sent out into one country to represent another country. Three things are true of the apostle: (1) he belongs to the One who has sent him out; (2) he is commissioned to be sent out; and (3) he possesses all the authority and power of the One who sends him out.

Note three forceful lessons.

1. Paul said he was "called" to be an apostle. He was not in the ministry because he...

- chose to be.
- had the ability.
- had been encouraged by others to choose the *ministerial profession*.
- enjoyed working with people.

He was an apostle, a minister of the gospel for one reason only: God had called him.

**"But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I [the Lord] have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee" (Acts 26:16).**

**"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim.1:12).**

**"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy Father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee" (Gen.12:1).**

## ROMANS 1:1-7

“Come now therefore, and I will send thee [Moses] unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt” (Ex.3:10).

“And the Lord looked upon him [Gideon], and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?” (Judg.6:14).

“Also I [Isaiah] heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Is.6:8).

2. Paul had heard and answered God’s call. God did not override Paul’s will. God wanted Paul in the ministry, so He called Paul. It is important to note that it was up to Paul to hear and respond.

3. Paul was called to be an apostle, that is, to be a minister. He was not called to occupy a position of authority or to be honored by men.

**Thought 1.** Every servant of God is called for two primary purposes:

1) To serve and minister.

“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:27-28).

“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Lk.10:36-37).

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet” (Jn.13:14).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).

2) To go forth and bear fruit.

“Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Mt.3:8).

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (Jn.15:16).

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Ro.7:4).

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Ph.1:11).

“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col.1:10).

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Ps.1:3).

“Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God” (Ps.92:13).

**3** (1:1-4) **Gospel, Meaning:** Paul was set apart to the gospel of God. This is the reason God called Paul: that Paul might be separated (aphorismenos) or marked and set apart to the gospel of God. The word “gospel” simply means the *good news of God*.

⇒ Paul did not say he was called and set apart to a man-made religion, denomination, or sect; nor was he called primarily to a gospel of social justice and welfare, as important as these calls are.

⇒ Paul said he was set apart to the gospel, the good news of God (cp. 1 Th.2:2-13).

Note what the gospel is.

1. The gospel of the New Testament is the *same good news* of God which was promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the Subject and the Author of the gospel, but the gospel *began long before* the birth of Jesus. The gospel began long, long ago in the *mind and plan* of God. God foretold the coming of the gospel (His Son) through the prophets of old. Mark says what Paul was to later say: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Mk.1:1-3. See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Gospel*—Ro.1:1-7. See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Scripture Fulfilled*—Jn.1:45 for discussion. Also see, *Prophecy*—Master Subject Index.)

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (Jn.5:39).

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts 26:22.)

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets” (Heb.1:1).

**“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Pt.1:10-11).**

**“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pt.1:20-21).**

2. The gospel is the incarnation of “God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Gospel—Ro.1:1-7*). Note how Paul takes the names and titles of Jesus Christ and stacks them one upon another.

- ⇒ God’s Son. (See note—Jn.1:34.)
- ⇒ Jesus. (See DEEPER STUDY # 4—Mt.1:21.)
- ⇒ Christ. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.1:18.)
- ⇒ Our Lord. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 2:36.)

The gospel concerns “God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” He is both the *Subject* and the *Author* of the gospel. By Him and through Him the gospel is created and proclaimed. He brings the *good news* of God to man. He is the very embodiment of the good news of God Himself.

The gospel concerns two glorious truths.

a. The first glorious truth is that God’s Son became a man. He was made of the seed of David; that is, he was born as a man, as a descendant of David. David was the greatest ruler of Israel; he was one of the greatest ancestors of Jesus. (See note, *Jesus Christ, Davidic Heir—Lk.3:24-31*.)

The point is this: God sent His Son into the world in human flesh. The words “was made” (genomenou) mean to become. God’s Son *became* a man—flesh and blood—just like all other men. He had a human nature, and because He had a human nature...

- He suffered all the *trials of life* which we suffer.
- He is *able to succor* us through all the trials of life.

**“The Word [God’s Son] was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (Jn.1:14).**

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb.2:14-18).**

b. The second glorious truth is both profound and critical, for it proclaims the divine nature of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the Son of God *before He came into the world*. (See notes—Jn.1:1-2; 1:3; Ph.2:6; 2:7 for discussion.) However, since coming, He is declared to be the Son of God by two things.

⇒ The Spirit of holiness that dwelt in Him declares Jesus to be the Son of God. He was the very embodiment of holiness, of purity, morality, and of justice. His life upon earth proves the fact. He lived as a man for thirty some years and *never sinned*.

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb.4:15).**

**“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:26).**

**“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and *without spot*” (1 Pt.1:19).**

**“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pt.2:22; cp. Is.53:9; Jn.8:46).**

⇒ The resurrection from the dead declares that Jesus is the Son of God. All other men are dead and gone. The proof is demonstrated by one simple question: “Where are they? Where are our mothers, our fathers, our sisters, our ancestors?” Once they have left this world, they are gone and the earth never sees them again. But not Christ. He died, but He arose and walked upon the earth again. And today Jesus Christ lives forever in the presence of God. Death could not hold Him because He was the Son of God and possessed the perfect spirit of holiness. (See DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Jesus Christ, Resurrection—Acts 2:24* for more discussion.)

**“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24).**

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:30-31).

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).

“For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Ro.14:9).

“[God’s power] which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:20).

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Ph.2:8-9).

**4** (1:5) **Grace—Mission:** Paul had received God’s grace and God’s mission. Note the word “we.” Paul now speaks of all believers, not only of himself.

1. We have received God’s glorious grace: His favor, His mercy, His love, His salvation. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Grace—Tit.2:11-15.*) Grace includes all that God has done for us and all the wonderful blessings He showers upon us. Very simply, God’s grace includes...

a. His love for us from all eternity past.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Eph.1:3-4).

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim.1:9).

“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Tit.1:2).

b. His saving us freely, without any cost whatsoever.

“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts 15:11).

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Tit.2:11).

c. His care and looking after us day by day.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).

“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.1:14).

d. His glorious promise of eternal redemption: of our being transformed and being made perfect, and being given the glorious privilege of living with Him forever in worship and service.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).

“That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:7).

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).

2. We have received apostleship, that is, God’s mission. The idea is that we have received a special mission, God’s very own special task in the world. What is that mission? Paul said it is “*obedience to the faith*” (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Obedience—Ro.1:5* for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**  
 (1:5) **Obedience:** the Scripture clearly says that God saves us for two specific purposes...  
 • to obey Him.  
 • to lead other persons to obey Him—persons from all nations.

What God is after is for mankind to become His family: for men to freely choose to live together with Him and with all other believers in a perfect world. God wants mankind living together in perfect love, joy, peace, worship, praise, and service as the family of God. He wants men living soberly, righteously, and godly before Him. He wants men obeying Him as His dear children.

Therefore, when God saves us, He saves us primarily to obey Him and to carry the glorious message of obedience to a rebellious and corrupt world. God calls us to obey the faith and to proclaim obedience to all the nations.

Note several facts about obedience.

1. There is a massive difference between *forced obedience* and *free obedience*.

a. Forced obedience has no choice and reveals...

- fear of rebellion
- lack of control
- weakness of purpose
- selfishness and self-centeredness
- low self-esteem
- no sense of godliness

b. Free obedience has a choice and can choose to obey or not to obey. Therefore, free obedience reveals...

- love and trust
- interest and care
- a sense of godliness
- a sense of brotherhood
- strength of purpose and will
- knowledge of self and confidence in self

2. Scripture says the following about obedience.

a. Obedience demonstrates several things.

⇒ Obedience demonstrates that a person is wise.

**“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Mt.7:24).**

⇒ Obedience demonstrates love.

**“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn.14:21).**

⇒ Obedience demonstrates that God is worthy.

**“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).**

⇒ Obedience demonstrates that Christ is of God.

**“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn.7:17).**

b. Obedience assures several things.

⇒ Obedience assures a prosperous life and success.

**“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Josh.1:8).**

⇒ Obedience assures entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21; cp. Lk.8:21).**

⇒ Obedience assures the mercy of God.

**“And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Ex.20:6).**

⇒ Obedience assures that a person is a member of God’s family.

**“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Mt.12:50; cp. Mk.3:35).**

⇒ Obedience assures being blessed.

**“But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (Lk.11:28; cp. Dt.11:27).**

⇒ Obedience assures that we know the truth.

**“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn.7:17).**

⇒ Obedience assures the abiding presence of the Father and of Christ.

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).**

⇒ Obedience assures deliverance from enemies.

**“But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries” (Ex.23:22).**

⇒ Obedience assures that God will be our God and that all things will work out for our good.

**“But these things commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you” (Jer.7:23).**

⇒ Obedience assures being loved by God and by Christ.

**“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (Jn.15:10).**

⇒ Obedience assures a good and a longer life.

**“Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever” (Dt.4:40).**

⇒ Obedience assures being a friend of Christ.

**“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends” (Jn.15:14-15).**

⇒ Obedience assures eating the good of the land.

**“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land” (Is.1:19).**

c. Obedience is better than sacrifice, even the sacrifice of all one has.

**“Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam.15:22).**

**“Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God” (Heb.10:5-7).**

**5** (1:6-7) **Believers:** Paul acknowledged the enslavement of others. He said four things about believers.

1. Believers are the “called” of Jesus Christ, called just as Paul was.  
⇒ Believers are called to be saved, to be “of Jesus Christ.”

**“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:4-6).**

⇒ Believers are called to the mission and task of Jesus Christ.

“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21).

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).

2. Believers are “beloved of God,” held ever so close to His heart, counted precious and dear to Him and deeply loved.

“The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer.31:3).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God” (Jn.16:27).

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ” (Eph.2:4-5).

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not” (1 Jn.3:1).

3. Believers are called to be “saints” (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Saint*—1 Pt.1:15-16 for discussion).

4. Believers are recipients of God’s grace and peace. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Grace*—Ro.1:5; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Tit.2:11-15; note, *Peace*—Jn.14:27 for discussion.)

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:4-7).

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace” (Eph.2:13-14).

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn.14:27).

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).

“The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace” (Ps.29:11).

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| <p><b>1 A great church</b><br/> a. A cause for thanksgiving<br/> b. The reason: A world-wide testimony</p> <p><b>2 The gospel subjected his spirit to God's Son<sup>PS1</sup></b></p> <p><b>3 The gospel stirred him to pray without ceasing</b></p> <p><b>4 The gospel stirred him to seek people personally</b><br/> a. To impart some spiritual</p> | <p><b>B. Paul's Interest in the Church: Enslavement to the gospel, 1:8-15</b></p> <p>8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.</p> <p>9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;</p> <p>10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.</p> <p>11 For I long to see you, that</p> | <p>I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;</p> <p>12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.</p> <p>13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.</p> <p>14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.</p> <p>15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.</p> | <p>gift to establish them</p> <p>b. To be encouraged together with them</p> <p>c. To bear fruit among them</p> <p><b>5 The gospel stirred him with a deep sense of indebtedness &amp; a readiness to reach all men</b><br/> a. His indebtedness to reach all<br/> b. His readiness to reach all</p> |
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**DIVISION I**

**GREETING AND THEME: THE GOSPEL AND GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, 1:1-17**

**B. Paul's Interest in the Church: Enslavement to the Gospel, 1:8-15**

(1:8-15) **Introduction:** Paul had never visited the Roman church, and he had never seen the believers at Rome; yet here he is writing to them. How could he best reach them and express his purpose for writing them? How could he arouse their interest to such a peak that they would read what he was writing and heed it? This is the subject of the present passage. Paul wanted the Roman believers to know his great interest in them; therefore, to the best of his ability he shared why he was writing to them. Simply stated, he said he was writing because he could do nothing else; he was compelled to share the gospel with the whole world including the capital of the world, Rome itself. In fact he was enslaved by the gospel.

1. A great church (v.8).
2. The gospel subjected his spirit to God's Son (v.9).
3. The gospel stirred him to pray without ceasing (v.9).
4. The gospel stirred him to seek people personally (v.10-13).
5. The gospel stirred him with a deep sense of indebtedness and a readiness to reach all men (v.14-15).

**1** (1:8) **Church—Rome—Testimony:** the church at Rome was a great church—so great that Paul thanked God for the church "always" (v.2). The word "always" shows that the church held a very special place in Paul's heart. This is significant, for Paul had never been to the church. He did not know the church personally; he only knew what he had heard about it. Note: the church's testimony for Christ was so strong it was being talked about throughout *the whole world*. It had a phenomenal testimony, and wherever Paul travelled he heard about the strength of the church. What made the church at Rome so strong? Two significant things can be gleaned from Scripture.

1. The believers were living pure lives in the midst of an immoral, base, and unjust society. The citizens of Rome were known for their...

- immorality
- fleshiness
- drunkenness
- partying
- gluttony
- extravagance
- hoarding
- materialism
- greed
- selfishness
- license
- indulgence
- idolatry
- pride
- sin and wickedness

Nevertheless, the believers were standing firm for Christ and living pure lives, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need for morality and justice among men.

2. The believers were serving Christ faithfully and laboring ever so diligently for the Lord. Wherever they were, at home or away travelling, they were sharing Christ and ministering to people—so much so that some of them were known by name all around the world. Paul himself apparently had run across quite a few of them as they were travelling about and ministering. (See outline—Ro.16:3-16 for a list of the believers and a discussion of this point.)

**Thought 1.** The Roman church stands as a testimony for every church.

- 1) No matter how immoral and base, polluted and corrupt a society is, we are to stand firm for Christ.

**"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Ro.12:2).**

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

- 2) No matter where we are, at home or travelling away on business or for pleasure, we are to be witnessing and ministering for Christ.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).

**Thought 2.** Every church and every believer should have a strong testimony, a testimony so strong that it is talked about everywhere.

“[Timothy] which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium” (Acts 16:2).

“For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil” (Ro.16:19).

“For by it [faith] the elders obtained a good report” (Heb.11:2).

**2** (1:9) **Gospel—Salvation—Decision:** the gospel subjected Paul’s spirit to God’s Son. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Serve—* Ro.1:9 for more discussion.) Every man should subject his spirit to God’s Son. Why? Because of the gospel, the glorious salvation that is in Christ Jesus: the deliverance from sin, death, and hell. When a person considers that he is enslaved by sin and that he is actually going to die and have to give an account to God, he is most foolish...

- not to accept the salvation that is in God’s Son.
- not to subject his spirit to God’s Son.
- not to serve in the gospel of God’s Son.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:9) **Serve** (latreuo): labor of hire, service that is bought. Paul says, “I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son.” Note three points.

1. The believer’s labor and service is bought and paid for by the precious blood of Christ.

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt.10:28).

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Ph.2:5-8).

2. The believer owes his labor and service to the Lord. Once he has surrendered to the gospel, he has no choice. He is to diligently serve and work for Christ.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

3. The believer is to serve God in his spirit and in his body. The spirit controls the body. What the spirit does, the body does. Therefore, if the believer is serving God in spirit, he is serving God in body. If a man’s spirit is right, then his body will be right. For example, a man may feel bad; he may be down, depressed, and oppressed; but if his spirit is strong, he arises and conquers his feelings. He controls and overcomes the oppressing circumstances, and he lives a victorious day. But if his spirit is weak—whether at work or at play—he often wallows around in self-pity, grumbling and griping, and living a defeated day. And too often the day stretches into weeks and months until a person’s life is down more than it is up: all because the spirit is too weak to conquer.

**Thought 1.** The point is this: the believer is to serve God in his spirit and in his body. He is...

- to keep his spirit strong,
- to conquer his emotions,
- to overcome his weaknesses, the ups and downs of his body.

When a believer does this, then he can serve God to the fullest extent possible.

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).**

**“What doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Dt.10:12).**

**3** (1:9) **Prayer:** the gospel stirred Paul to pray without ceasing. Paul was a man of intercessory prayer, a man who always prayed *for others*. Note two points.

1. Paul called upon God to bear witness that he prayed. He did not...

- just talk about praying.
- just tell people he was praying for them as a courtesy.
- just pretend to pray.
- just spend a few minutes in a *religious exercise* of prayer.

Paul really prayed; he took time to ask God to strengthen and help others. (See outline and notes—Eph.3:14-21 for the specifics of what Paul prayed. Also see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.6:9-13 for what Christ tells us to pray daily. These two passages taken together tell us what we should be praying every day, both for ourselves and for others.)

**“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up” (Ps.5:3).**

**“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” (Ps.55:17).**

**“I prevented [preceded] the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hope in thy word” (Ps.119:147; cp. Lk.2:36; Acts 10:2; 1 Th.3:10; 1 Tim.5:5).**

2. Paul even prayed for believers and churches whom he did not know. Remember he knew only a few of the believers in the Roman church; he had never met most of them. They were totally unfamiliar and unknown to him, yet he prayed for the church.

**Thought 1.** Scripture is strong in its charge to us. We are to pray constantly and we are to pray for all believers throughout the world. Our prayers are not to be limited to a few minutes each day nor to our loved ones and close friends.

**“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk.18:1).**

**“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).**

**“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).**

**“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:6-7).**

**“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ” (Col.4:2-3).**

**“Pray without ceasing” (1 Th.5:17).**

**“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (1 Tim.2:8).**

**“Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually” (1 Chron.16:11).**

**4** (1:10-13) **Gospel—Witnessing—Evangelism—Ministry:** the gospel stirred Paul to seek people personally. He did not leave the ministry and the sharing of the gospel up to others. He became personally involved, so much so that he begged God to give him opportunity after opportunity—even to the point of letting him travel to the capital of the world itself to share Christ with its citizens. Note how deeply he was stirred: he made a request—if by any means, now at last—that he might be allowed to preach the gospel at Rome.

The point is forceful: Paul was stirred to seek people, for he longed to reach people for Christ.

1. Paul wished to *impart some spiritual gift* to the believers. Why? So that they might be more deeply established in the faith. The term spiritual gift (charisma) means a gift of grace. The term often refers to specific gifts given by the Holy Spirit (Ro.12:6-8), but here it means *the truths* of the grace of God, of His spiritual blessings to man revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Very simply, Paul longed to share the truths of the gospel with the believers at Rome. God’s spiritual blessings were overflowing in his heart, and he was aching to share the gift of God’s blessings.

**Thought 1.** What an indictment against us! How many of us are so full of the gospel that we are aching to share it? How many of us even know the gospel that well, know God's gifts and blessings well enough to be overflowing with them?

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph.1:3).**

**“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim.2:24-25).**

**“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pt.5:2-3).**

Note that God's spiritual gift establishes the believer. The word “established” means to fix, set, make fast, and strengthen. Note the descriptive picture behind each word.

2. Paul wished to be *encouraged together* with other believers. The word “comforted” (sumparakaleo) means to be strengthened and consoled together. Paul expected to be taught and strengthened by the believers as well as to teach and to strengthen them. There was to be a mutual sharing among all. Paul expected all believers to be actively sharing the gospel. He even expected them to share with him so that he might grow and be more firmly rooted in the faith.

**Thought 1.** How many believers are actively grounded enough in the faith to share with Paul? What an indictment! Yet the *expectation* is that we are to be deeply rooted, ever studying the Word and learning. How much we need to awaken and arise from our slumber.

**“Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Col.2:7).**

**“[God] comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work” (2 Th.2:17).**

3. Paul wished to bear fruit among them (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Bearing Fruit*—Jn.15:1-8 for discussion). Paul wished to bear the fruit of...

- converts (Ro.1:13).
- righteousness (Ro.6:21-23).
- Christian character, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23).

Note Paul's world-wide vision. He wished to bear fruit among the citizens of Rome as well as “among other Gentiles.”

**Thought 1.** How desperately God needs men, women, boys and girls with a world-wide vision!

**“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (Jn.4:35).**

**“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Mt.9:37).**

**“Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest” (Lk.10:2).**

**“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal.6:9).**

**5** (1:14-15) **Gospel—Preaching—Witnessing—Ministers—Dedication:** the gospel stirred Paul with a deep sense of indebtedness and a readiness to reach all men. Note two points.

1. The word “debtor” (opheiletes) means to owe, to be obligated, to be bound by duty. The Greek is impossible to translate into English, for two ideas are being expressed by Paul. He was a “debtor”...

- because Christ had done so much for him (saved him).
- because Christ had called him to preach (given him a task to do).

The *indebtedness* was deeply felt by Paul. The idea is that it was intense, unwavering, unrelentless, powerful. The sense of debt just would not let Paul go. He was compelled to preach the gospel; therefore, he could do nothing else. He was obligated and duty-bound to preach it. He actually felt that he owed the gospel to the world; therefore, if he kept quiet, it would be worse than knowing the cure for the most terrible disease of history and refusing to share it.

Note how Paul declared his indebtedness to the whole world. He made a contrast between the Greeks and the Barbarians. He meant that he owed the gospel to all nationalities and cultures, to all the peoples of the earth whether civilized or uncivilized, industrialized or primitive, rich or poor. (The Greeks considered everyone a barbarian who did not speak the Greek language and adopt Greek culture.) He made a contrast between the wise and the unwise. He meant that he owed the gospel to the educated and the uneducated, the learned and the unlearned, the motivated and the unmotivated, the seeking and the complacent.

**Thought 1.** Paul sensed a *deep indebtedness* to share the glorious news of salvation with the world. The *answer* to eternal life is now known and must be proclaimed to the whole world. To keep the message to oneself is the most inexcusable and criminal act in all of human history. The glorious news that death has been conquered and that man can now live eternally must be proclaimed. We who know the wonderful news are *indebted* to get the news out to the world.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also” (Ro.1:14-15).**

2. The word “ready” means an *urgent willingness*. Paul experienced both a willingness and an urgency to preach the gospel. Note the words, “as much as in me is.” Paul wanted to take all that was in him and pour it into people—all the energy and effort, all the truth and knowledge of the gospel. There was nothing that could keep him from sharing the gospel, not if he had a chance to share it. He *allowed* no hindrance to enter his life that would affect his message. He was possessed and obsessed with a readiness to preach the glorious message of the living Lord.

**“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).**

**“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.10:7).**

**“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetop” (Mt.10:27).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God” (Lk.9:60).**

**“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).**

**“His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer.20:9).**

**“The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?” (Amos 3:8).**

(1:14-16) **Another Outline:** Paul’s Three “I Am’s.”

1. I am a debtor (v.14).
2. I am ready (v.15).
3. I am not ashamed (v.16).

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|--|---|---|---|
| <p>1 It is the "good news" from God Himself<br/>2 It is the power of God to save<sup>DS1</sup></p> | <p>C. Paul's Boldness for Christ: Unashamedness of the Gospel, 1:16-17<br/><br/>16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one</p> | <p>that believeth; to the Jews first, and also to the Greek.<br/>17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.</p> | <p>a. All who believe<br/>b. All nationalities, both Jew &amp; Greek<br/>3 It is the revelation of God's righteousness<sup>DS2</sup><br/>a. The problem: man's unrighteousness<br/>b. The answer: Faith</p> |
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DIVISION I

GREETING AND THEME: THE GOSPEL AND GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, 1:1-17

C. Paul's Boldness for Christ: Unashamedness of the Gospel, 1:16-17

(1:16-17) **Introduction:** these two verses contain one of the greatest summaries of the gospel ever written. It is a clear declaration of God's power to save all who believe, no matter their nationality or condition. It is a clear explanation of why Paul was never ashamed of the gospel.

1. It is the *good news* from God Himself (v.16).
2. It is the power of God to save (v.16).
3. It is the revelation of God's righteousness (v.17).

(1:16-18) **Another Outline:** The Power or Urgency of the Gospel.

1. It saves (v.16).
2. It reveals the righteousness of God (v.17).
3. It makes possible a life of faith (v.17).
4. It delivers from the wrath of God (v.18).

(1:16-18) **Another Outline:** Paul's Four "For's."

1. For I am not ashamed (v.16).
2. For the Gospel is the power of God (v.16).
3. For the righteousness of God is revealed (v.17).
4. For the wrath of God is revealed (v.18).

**1** (1:16) **Gospel—Ashamed:** Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, because it was the *good news* from God Himself; that is, the gospel is the news that God has given to the world and wants proclaimed to the world. The fact that the gospel had been given by God Himself made Paul unashamed of the gospel. No man should ever be ashamed of anything concerning the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. (See note—Ro.1:1-4 for discussion.) However, Paul had every reason to be ashamed.

1. Paul's day was a day of moral degeneracy, the hideous days of Nero. Rome was a moral sewer, a cesspool of detestable and inconceivable wickedness. Such a day stood diametrically opposed to the moral righteousness of the gospel.

2. Paul was by nationality a Jew, a race that was thought by many of that day to be a despicable sub-human race, worthy only to be cursed, ill-used, and enslaved. Naturally, Paul would be apprehensive among non-Jews. In the flesh he would be tempted to shy away from them.

3. The gospel Paul preached was almost unbelievable. A male member of the despicable Jewish race was said to be the Savior of the world, and not only was He said to be a Jew, He was said to be a mere man like all other men. But not only that, His death was said to be different from the death of other men. He was said to have died "for all other men," that is, in their place, as a substitute for them. And then to top it all, He was said to have risen from the dead. His resurrection was said to be the proof that He was the very Son of God. Such unbelievable claims made the gospel a contemptible thing in the minds of many. A natural man would shrink from making such phenomenal claims.

4. Paul was often rejected, not by just a few persons, but by whole communities. The authorities imprisoned him in Philippi (Acts 16:19-23). The religionists ran him out of Thessalonica and threatened his life in Berea (Acts 17:5-15). The intellectuals laughed him out of Athens (Acts 17:32; cp. 16-32). His message was considered foolishness to the intellectuals (the Greeks) and a stumbling block to his own people (the Jews). There were several times in Paul's life when he could have given up in shame and fled to some part of the earth to begin life all over again.

**Thought 1.** Many are ashamed of the gospel. They are ashamed because they fear ridicule, rejection, and loss of recognition, position, and livelihood. They fear two things in particular.

- 1) There is the fear of intellectual shame. This is the fear that the gospel does not measure up intellectually. It is judged not to be for the scholar or philosopher. Note: this feeling is common to those who do not understand the philosophy of the gospel. No greater philosophy exists; no greater reasoning has ever been worked through. (See all outlines and notes—Romans. As an example, see outlines and notes—Ro.5:1-21; 8:1-39.) A man holds either to the philosophy and thought of the world, or to the philosophy and thought of God's Son, the gospel of Jesus Christ and His redemption. There is no question which philosophy and intellectual thought is greater.

**"The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor.1:25; cp. Ro.1:18-31).**

“Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor.1:30).

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” (Ro.11:33-34).

“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain” (1 Cor.3:18-20).

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (Jas.3:17).

“Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed” (1 Sam.2:3).

“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding” (Is.40:28).

“He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him” (Dan.2:22).

- 2) There is the fear of social shame. Many fear if they accept and proclaim the gospel, they will be...
- ridiculed and mocked
  - rejected and ignored
  - passed over and cut off
  - left without job and livelihood
  - left without family and friends
  - abused and killed

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim.1:7-9).

“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (1 Pt.4:14).

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe” (Pr.29:25).

“I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass” (Is.51:12).

**2** (1:16) **Gospel—God, Power of—Salvation:** Paul is not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God to save.

Note four significant facts.

1. The word “power” (*dunamis*) means the might, energy, force, and strength that is *within* God. The power is “of God,” of His very nature. As God, He is the embodiment of power; He possesses all power, that is, omnipotent power, within His Being. He can do and act as He chooses.

The point is this: God has chosen to use His power in a loving way by sending men the “good news,” the gospel of salvation. Being all powerful, God could wipe men off the face of the earth, but instead He has chosen to give men the good news of salvation. This tells us a critical truth: God’s nature is love. He is full of compassion and grace. He is the God of salvation; therefore, He sent the “gospel of Christ” to the world that men might be saved.

2. The word “salvation” must be understood and grasped by every person upon earth. The hope of the world is God’s salvation (see note—Ro.1:16 for discussion).

3. God saves all who believe. Belief is the one condition for salvation, *but* we must always remember that a person who really believes *commits himself* to what he believes. If a man does not commit himself he does not believe. True belief is commitment. Therefore, God saves the person who believes, that is, who really commits his life to the gospel of Christ (see notes, *Believe*—Ro.10:16-17; DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.2:24 for discussion).

4. God saves all nationalities, both Jew and Greek. Note the word “first.” This does not mean favoritism, but *first in time*. God does not have favorites, favoring the Jew over the Gentile. It simply means the gospel was to be carried to the Jew first. They had been the channel through whom God had sent His Word and His prophets and eventually His Son into the world. Therefore, they were to be reached first; then the gospel was to be carried to the Greeks, that is, to all nationalities. The point is twofold.

- a. The gospel is God’s power, and it can reach any nationality and any person, no matter who they are.
- b. Therefore, no one is to be exempt from the gospel.
  - ⇒ No messenger is to *exempt anyone* from the gospel.
  - ⇒ No person is to *exempt himself* from the gospel. The gospel is for everyone, no matter his race, color, condition, circumstance, or depravity.

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Jn.7:37).

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ro.10:12-13).

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:4).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(1:16) **Salvation** (soteria): means deliverance, made whole, preservation. From what does man need to be saved and delivered and preserved? Scripture paints five descriptive pictures of salvation, showing man’s great need. (See DEEPER STUDY # 6, *Salvation*—Mt.1:21 for more discussion.)

1. Salvation means deliverance from being lost. Man is pictured as wandering about in the forest of life trying to go someplace, but unable to find his way. He is lost, and if he continues to stumble about through the forest of life, the underbrush and thorns of the forest will sap his strength and prick him to the point that he lies down and dies. His only hope is for someone to notice that he is lost and to begin seeking for him. This is where the glorious gospel of salvation comes in. God sees that man is lost and He sends His Son to seek and to save man.

Salvation means that Christ...

- seeks and saves man from his lost condition.
- sets man on the right road that leads him to eternal life.

“For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?” (Mt.18:11-12; cp. Lk.15:4).

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).

“Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (Jn.5:14).

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (Jn.10:9).

2. Salvation means deliverance from sin. It means deliverance from mistakes, from corrupt ideas and thoughts, from moral impurity, and from a crooked and perverse generation. Sin is like...

- an infection, a disease for which man has no cure.
- a master that enslaves and will not let go.
- a crooked and perverse world that man cannot straighten out.

Man’s only hope is for someone to discover a cure, someone with the intelligence and power to do it. This is where God steps in with His glorious salvation. God knows all about man’s infection and enslavement by sin, all about his crooked and perverse world; so He sends His Son to save man, to cure him, to liberate him, and to straighten out his world. Salvation means that Christ saves man from the terrible tyranny of sin, from...

- the infection of sin.
- the enslavement of sin.
- the crooked and perverse world of sin.

Salvation also does something else. It frees man from the pricking and burden of guilt and shame, and it plants within man’s soul a deep sense of health and peace with God.

“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Mt.1:21).

“And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” (Lk.7:50).

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (Jn.3:17).

“These things I say, that ye might be saved....And ye will not come to me that ye might have life” (Jn.5:34, 40).

“I came not to judge the world, but to save the world” (Jn.12:47).

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).

“They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Th.2:10).

“God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:9-10).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:5).

3. Salvation means deliverance in the future from all evil and corruption: from aging and wasting away, deterioration and decay, death and hell. It is the complete redemption of man's spirit and body at the end of the world. It is salvation from the wrath of God—salvation that saves a man from being separated from God eternally. It is the life and exaltation which believers will receive at the final triumph of Jesus Christ. It is the salvation that will keep a man safe and preserve him both in time and eternity.

Man and his world are pictured as having a *seed of corruption* within their very nature, a seed of corruption that eats away causing them to...

- age and waste away.
- deteriorate and decay.
- suffer destruction and die.

Again, man is hopeless. He cannot stop himself and his world from death and destruction, but God can. God can save both man and his world; God can deliver them from the terrible fate of death and destruction. This is the message of salvation. God loves man and his world and wants to save them, so He sent His Son into the world to save them. Salvation is...

- the complete redemption of man's body and soul in the future: a redemption that saves man from the process of aging and wasting away, deteriorating and decaying, dying and being condemned to hell.
- the perfect deliverance from the wrath of God: a salvation that saves man from being separated from God eternally.
- the gift of life and exaltation: a salvation that will be given to believers at the final triumph of Jesus Christ.
- the presence of perfect assurance: a salvation of security and preservation both in time and eternity.

**"We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope" (Ro.8:23-24).**

**"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him" (1 Th.5:9-10).**

**"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me [save me, deliver me] unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Tim.4:18).**

**"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pt.1:3-5).**

**"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Pt.1:9).**

4. Salvation means deliverance from enemies and dangers. Man is pictured as walking in a world lurking with enemy after enemy and danger after danger. Man has to confront all kinds of enemies and dangers that attack both his body and soul, his mind and spirit. He faces all kinds of problems and difficulties, trials and temptations. No matter how much he may long for peace and security, he is forced to combat...

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| • a hostile environment      | • a lust for more and more (possessions, fame, wealth, power) |
| • a savage world of nature   | • an evil pride and ego                                       |
| • an unknown universe        | • greed and covetousness                                      |
| • an uncertain future        | • unpreventable accidents                                     |
| • unregulated urges          | • dreadful diseases   |
| • inevitable aging and dying |   |

Man is seen as helpless in overcoming all the enemies and dangers that lurk in the shadows of this world. But God is not helpless—God can *save* man; He can gloriously deliver man as he journeys along the road of life. This is exactly what salvation means. God delivers man from the enemies and dangers that war against him. But note the next paragraph, a crucial point.

Salvation does not mean that God delivers man *from* experiencing difficulty and danger, not in this present world. God does not give a life free from the nature and circumstances of this world. What salvation does is deliver one *through* the difficulties and dangers of life.

Salvation means that...

- God gives *security and peace* of soul, no matter what happens.
- God gives *safety* independent of circumstances and environment.
- God gives *inward strength and courage* to bear the onslaught and attacks of danger.

**"And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" (Mt.8:25-27).**

**"When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Mt.14:30-31).**

“[God] hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David....That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us” (Lk.1:69, 71).

“Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health [salvation]: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you” (Acts 27:34).

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb.11:7).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation” (2 Pt.3:10-15).

5. Salvation means to make well, to heal, to restore to health, to make whole both physically and mentally. Man is pictured as a suffering creature, a creature who...

- gets sick
- becomes diseased
- has accidents
- wears out from aging
- suffers infirmities
- struggles against deformities

Salvation declares that Christ is concerned with man's suffering. Christ saves and delivers man, rescues and restores man in body as well as in spirit. He takes a man who suffers and makes him whole.

“And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour” (Mt.9:20-22).

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way” (Mk.10:51-52).

“If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole” (Acts 4:9-10).

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (Jas.5:15).

**3** (1:17) **Righteousness:** Paul is not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the revelation of God's righteousness. Note two points.

1. Man has a serious problem—that of thinking he is righteous. The problem is easily seen by picturing the following:

- ⇒ Man thinks that he is good enough and that he does enough good to be acceptable to God.
- ⇒ Man thinks he is righteous and that he walks righteously enough to be acceptable to God.

However, there is one problem with man's thinking: man is not perfect. But God is perfect, and He is perfectly righteous. Therefore, He cannot allow an unrighteous and imperfect being to live in His presence, not even man. Man just cannot live with God, not in his imperfect and unrighteous condition. He would pollute the perfect world of God, the very ground, atmosphere, and nature of heaven, the entire spiritual world and dimension.

The only way man can live with God is to be made righteous, perfectly righteous. How can man be made perfectly righteous? The gospel gives the answer. The gospel is the revelation of God's righteousness and reveals how man can be made righteous and reconciled to God. (See notes, *Righteousness*—Ro.3:21-22; 4:1-3; DEEPER STUDY # 2—4:22; note—5:1; note 5 and DEEPER STUDY # 5—Mt.5:6 for discussion. These notes should be read for a clear understanding of what the Scripture means by “righteousness” and justification.)

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:20).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

2. The answer to man's problem is faith. When a person believes the gospel—really believes that Christ saves him—God takes that person's faith and counts it for righteousness. The person is not righteous; he is still imperfect, still corruptible, and still short of God's glory as a sinful human being. But he does believe that Jesus Christ saves him. Such be-

lief honors God's Son, and because of that, God accepts and counts that person's faith as righteousness. Therefore, he becomes acceptable to God. This is *justification*; this is what is meant by being justified before God.

But note a most critical point: a person must *continue* to believe. A person must continue to live by faith from the very first moment of belief to the last moment of life on this earth, for it is his faith that God takes and counts as righteousness.

What is meant by the two statements...

- "from faith to faith,"
- and, "the just shall live by faith"?

Very simply, the whole life of the believer is to be a life of faith, from beginning faith to ending faith, from faith to faith. Therefore, the righteousness of God is revealed *continuously* through all of life, from the beginning of a person's faith to the ending of a person's faith. As Scripture says:

**"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen.15:6).**

**"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).**

**"The just shall live by faith" (Ro.1:17).**

**"A man is justified by faith" (Ro.3:28).**

**"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Ro.4:3).**

**"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that righteousness was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Ro.4:23-24).**

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ro.5:1).**

**"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor.6:11).**

**"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal.3:24).**

**"But he that shall endure [believe] unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Mt.24:13).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

**(1:17) Faith—Justified:** see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Gal.3:11.

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|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 The subjects of God's wrath<sup>PSI</sup></b><br/> a. Men of ungodliness &amp; unrighteousness<br/> b. Men who suppress the truth</p> <p><b>2 Men reject that "within" them: Conscience &amp; thoughts</b></p> <p><b>3 Men reject that "with-</b></p> | <p><b>II. SIN AND CONDEMNATION: THE WORLD'S NEED TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD, 1:18-3:20</b></p> <p><b>A. God's Case Against All Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men: Why God Shows Wrath, 1:18-23</b></p> <p>18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;<br/> 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them.<br/> 20 For the invisible things</p> | <p>of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:<br/> 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.<br/> 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,<br/> 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.</p> | <p><b>out" them: The signs of creation</b><br/> a. God's eternal power &amp; nature are clearly seen in creation<br/> b. Men are without excuse</p> <p><b>4 Men do not honor God nor give thanks</b><br/> a. Result 1: Their imaginations become vain (empty)<br/> b. Result 2: Their hearts are darkened</p> <p><b>5 Men become prideful &amp; turn away from God</b><br/> a. They imagine &amp; create their own ideas of God<br/> b. They exchange the incorruptible God for corruptible idols</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**SIN AND CONDEMNATION: THE WORLD'S NEED TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD, 1:18-3:20**

**A. God's Case Against All Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men: Why God Shows Wrath, 1:18-23**

(1:18-3:20) **DIVISION OVERVIEW:** the teaching of this whole passage can be summarized into three points.

1. Men who sin bring upon themselves the judgment of God. They need God's righteousness (Ro.1:18-2:16).
2. Men without the law, the heathen, are taught by nature and conscience. However, they have sinned by falling short of the standard of righteousness given to them (Ro.1:18-32). Similarly, the moralist and self-righteous who have the law have sinned by falling short of their standard of righteousness: the law (Ro.2:1-3:8).
3. Therefore, all the world becomes guilty before God (Ro.3:19) and needs God's righteousness (Ro.3:9-20).

(1:18-23) **Introduction:** the message of this passage is perfectly clear: why God reveals and executes wrath upon men.

1. The subjects of God's wrath (v.18).
2. Men reject that "within" them—conscience and thoughts (v.19).
3. Men reject that "without" them—the signs of creation (v.20).
4. Men do not honor God nor give thanks (v.21).
5. Men become prideful and turn away from God (v.22-23).

**I** (1:18) **God's Wrath—Ungodly—Unrighteous:** the subjects of God's wrath. Note three points.

1. The wrath of God is a reality (see *DEEPER STUDY # 1, God's Wrath—Ro.1:18* for discussion).
2. God's wrath is revealed from heaven. God reveals and shows wrath in four ways. (See note, *God's Wrath—Ro.1:24-32* for discussion.)

3. The subjects of God's wrath are twofold. God shows His wrath and becomes angry with two classes of men:
  - a. Men who are ungodly and unrighteous.
    - ⇒ The ungodly (asebeia) fail to love and obey God. They are those who do not live as God lives. They are not like God, not holy and righteous and pure. They do not work at developing a godly nature, do not honor God by word or deed, do not worship and obey God as the only living and true God, do not reverence Him by doing what He says. On the contrary, the ungodly are those who do what they want when they want, who may give lip-service to God, but who ignore Him in their day-today lives.
    - ⇒ The unrighteous (adikia) fail to love others. They are those who do not live with men as they should. They act against men: cheating, stealing, lying, abusing, enslaving, destroying and taking advantage of them.

The point is clear: God is angry with such men—men who are ungodly and unrighteous—men who...

- do not love and obey God.
  - do not love and treat others as they should.
- b. Men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. The word "hold" (katechonton) means to hold down, suppress, repress, stifle, hinder. Men know the truth from three sources:
    - ⇒ from nature (cp. Ro.1:20).
    - ⇒ from reason and conscience (cp. Ro.1:18; 2:15).
    - ⇒ from Scripture (Jn.5:39; 2 Tim.3:16).

Yet despite having access to the truth, they ignore, neglect, and even push the truth aside, doing all they can to avoid and get rid of it. Why? Because they want to live as *they* wish and not as God says. They want to live unrighteous lives, to taste and feel and see and have all the stimulating things they want.

But note what Scripture says: they “hold the truth in unrighteousness”; that is, they know the truth while they go about living in unrighteousness. They are without excuse.

**“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Th.2:10).**

Again the point is clear: God is angry with men...

- who are ungodly, who do not love and obey God.
- who are unrighteous, who do not love and treat others as they should.
- who hold the truth while they live ungodly and unrighteous lives.

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good words” (Tit.2:11-14).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:18) **God’s Wrath** (orge): anger, not an agitated outburst of violence. It is not the anger that quickly blazes up and just as quickly fades away, not the anger that arises solely from emotion. Rather, it is decisive anger. It is an anger that has arisen from a thoughtful decision, an anger that arises from the mind much more than from the emotions. When used of God, it is always an anger that is *righteous and just and good*. It is an anger that stands against the sin and evil, violence and slaughter, immorality and injustices of men. It is an anger that abhors and hates sin and evil, that dispenses a just re-venge and equal justice. However, it is an anger that is *deeply felt*; in fact, it must be felt, for evil and corruption must be opposed and erased from the face of the earth if there is to be a “new heavens and a new earth.” And God has promised a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness and perfection dwell forever.

1. There is God’s anger in judgment.

**“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (Mt.3:7).**

**“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Ro.1:18).**

**“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Ro.2:5).**

**“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile” (Ro.2:8-9).**

**“But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?” (Ro.3:5-6).**

**“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:9).**

**“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph.2:3).**

**“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph.5:6; cp. Col.3:6).**

**“For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Th.1:9-10).**

**“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th.5:9).**

**“Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him” (Ps.2:12).**

2. There is God’s anger with those who disobey the Lord Jesus.

**“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).**

3. There was God’s anger with Israel in the wilderness.

**“So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest” (Heb.3:11).**

4. There was the anger of the Lord Jesus at man’s hardness of heart.

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

**2** (1:19) **God, Proof of—Mind—Conscience:** God—the only living and true God—shows wrath because men reject that *within them*; that is, they reject their consciences and thoughts and reasonings about God. (Cp. Ro.2:15.) Note three clearly stated facts.

- ⇒ God can be known. There are *some things* that “can be known about God.”
- ⇒ These things are manifest (evident, made clear and plain) “*in*” men. Men know about God; they know some things about God *within* their hearts, minds, and consciences.
- ⇒ How? “God has shown [made evident, clear and plain]” these things to men.

Now note.

1. There is a great deal *about* God that men cannot know (Job 11:7), but there is a great deal that men can know. Men can know enough to be led to God. This is the whole point of this passage: men know about God, but they do not worship Him as God. They have a sense of God, but they suppress the sense, trying to get rid of it.

2. Man’s inner sense, or *innate awareness*, and *instinctive knowledge* of God are strong. Man is a very capable creature. He has enormous power and mental capacity. Man can reason and grasp that “God is [exists] and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him” (Heb.11:6). Man can “know God” (v.19), even the “invisible things” of God (v.20); he can know to such a degree that he is “without excuse” (v.20). (See note—Ro.2:11-15 for more discussion.)

However, man chooses not to know God. He even chooses to take the truth that is *within* him and suppress it. Man rejects the knowledge of God that is *within* him. This is the first reason why God reveals and shows His wrath.

**3** (1:20) **God, Proof of—Creation—Man, Depravity:** God—the only living and true God—shows wrath because men reject that *without* them—the signs of creation. Creation reveals God. The whole universe, its presence and its nature, declares God.

However, note something often overlooked. Men can look at nature and see *more* than the simple fact that God is the great Creator. Men can see *more* than a Supreme Being behind the creation of the universe. They can see “the invisible things” of God. This means at least two things.

1. Man can see the “*eternal power*,” the Supreme Intelligence and Force (or Energy), of God. Man can look at the creation of the earth and outer space, of plants and animals, of man and woman; he can look and clearly see their...

- bodies and structure.
- variety and beauty.
- arrangement and order.
- purpose and laws.

When man looks at such things and reasons with an *honest spirit*, he sees clearly that the world was made by a Creator. But, as stated above, he sees much more. He sees that the Creator is a God of supreme...

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| • Life & Being                       | • beauty & majesty                                      |
| • Intelligence & Knowledge           | • glory & honor   |
| • Energy & Power (the Supreme Force) | • value & worth (morality)                              |
| • purpose & meaning                  | • mystery (things not understood; secrets undiscovered) |
| • design & order (law)               |   |

2. Man can see the “*Godhead*,” that is, the deity of God. When he looks at nature and reasons with an *honest spirit*, he sees clearly that the Creator is a God who...

- cares and provides for what He has created.
- gives life and has interest in life.
- regenerates, replenishes, and carries things on.
- deserves worship and obedience (being the Creator of life and purpose, and being the Supreme Person of law and order demands that all his subjects serve and obey Him).

Note what Scripture says: man is without excuse. The point is shocking. Man has every evidence imaginable within creation directing him toward God, yet man rejects the knowledge of God within creation. This is the second reason why God reveals and shows His wrath. Man is without excuse. Man has no defense, no answer, no reason that can justify his rejection of God.

**“Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17).**

**“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Ro.1:20).**

**“The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork” (Ps.19:1).**

**“The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory” (Ps.97:6).**

**4** (1:21) **God, Sins Against—Unthankful—Dishonor, of God—Man, Depravity:** God—the only living and true God—shows wrath because men do not honor God nor give Him thanks. Note that Paul shifted to the past tense in this verse. He was speaking of what men had done in the past; and, of course, men still do the same today. Two serious charges are made against men. Men can clearly know God both...

- within themselves: in their own thoughts, reasonings, consciences.
- without themselves: in creation and nature, in the earth and outer space.

They can know that God gives them life and cares and provides for them, and that God runs everything in an orderly and lawful way, giving purpose and meaning to life. Men can see that God is great and good; therefore, God deserves to be glorified and given thanks. But men...

- did not glorify Him: did not worship, obey, or serve Him as God.
- did not give thanks to Him: did not praise, magnify, or express appreciation to Him.

What happens when men reject God is tragic. Two tragic things happen when they push God out of their minds.

1. Man's imaginations become vain.
  - ⇒ The word "imaginations" means thoughts, reasonings, deliberations, conclusions, speculations.
  - ⇒ The word vain means, empty, futile, unsuccessful, senseless, worthless.

**Thought 1.** When men push God out of their minds, their minds are void and empty of God. God is not in their thoughts. (Cp. Ps.10:4.) Their minds are ready to be *filled* with some other *god* or *supremacy*.

**"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen.6:5).**

**"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts" (Ps.10:4).**

**"The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity" (Ps.94:11).**

**"These six things doth the LORD hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Pr.6:16-19).**

**"The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD" (Pr.15:26).**

**"Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth" (Ezk.8:12).**

2. Man's "foolish heart is darkened."
  - ⇒ The word "foolish" means senseless, without understanding, unintelligent.
  - ⇒ The word "darkened" means blinded, unable to see.

**"They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course" (Ps.82:5).**

**"Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness" (Pr.2:13).**

**"The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble" (Pr.4:19).**

**"For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Acts 28:27).**

**"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor.4:4).**

**"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph.4:18).**

**"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim.3:7).**

Note a critical point. Men suffer empty imaginations and darkened hearts because they...

- do not glorify God.
- do not offer thanks to God.

This is the third reason why God reveals and shows wrath toward men.

**"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Mt.7:26-27).**

**"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas.4:17).**

**5** (1:22-23) **Man, Depravity—Pride—God, Rejection of:** God—the only living and true God—shows wrath because men become prideful and turn away from God. This scene is one of the greatest tragedies in all of human history, and it is repeated every time a man turns away from God. The scene is man rejecting God and claiming that he is...

- too wise to believe in God.
- too intelligent to depend upon the *fables* of the Bible.
- too capable not to look to self.
- too resourceful not to create his own world and future.
- too masterful not to trust his own *humanistic* ideas.
- too reasonable and rational not to create his own standards and laws to control life.

But note what Scripture says: in denying God, men make two gross mistakes.

1. Men profess themselves to be wise, but in so doing they become fools. Why? For one simple reason.
  - ⇒ God does exist, and He has clearly revealed Himself both within men's thoughts and through creation. Therefore, when men's hearts and minds are emptied of God, men have to fill their hearts and thoughts with something else. They have to have some other god, some other *guiding light* or *principle* to give purpose and meaning and direction to their lives. They have to replace God with something else. They have to have something—some standard, some law, some rule, some person, some god—by which they can guide their lives.

Therefore, when men dethrone and erase God from their lives, they imagine and create their own *god* within their minds. Men reason and speculate about the ultimate source of life, and whatever they come up with is that to which they give their lives.

“Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid” (Is.29:14).

“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge” (Jer.4:22).

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Ro.1:22).

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent” (1 Cor.1:18-19).

“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory” (1 Cor.2:6-7).

“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain” (1 Cor.3:19-20).

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ...Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh” (Col.2:8, 23).

2. Men exchange the incorruptible God for some corruptible idol. Note four facts.
  - a. God is said to be “incorruptible” (*aphartos*), which means non-decaying, imperishable, unchanging, and unaging. Incorruptible means that God is not subject to passing away; He is eternal. God *always has been*, and *always will be*: *God will always exist*.
  - b. Men swap and exchange God for “*corruptible man*,” that is, for the image, the idea, and the thought that man is his own god. Men swap God for *humanism*. They make themselves and mankind...
    - the god of life.
    - the master of the world.
    - the makers of their own destiny.
    - the law-givers of their own laws.
    - the determiners of their own morality.
    - the standard by which their lives are to be governed.

Note that *humanism* makes an idol out of man and worships man as the “god” of his own destiny. This is usually the sin of *scientific and industrialized societies*—societies where a healthy and strong man, both mentally and physically, is essential—societies where good self-images and healthy bodies are necessary for the advancement of society.

- c. Men swap God for *corruptible creatures*. This is usually the worship followed by non-industrialized and non-scientific societies—societies where grotesque images of men and animals are actually constructed out of wood, stone, or metal.

Now note: men create their own humanistic gods, whether mental images and thoughts or some grotesque image, because of pride and conceit. Men want to control their own lives, to do as they wish, to be recognized and honored, and to receive the credit and acknowledgment themselves. Therefore, they turn from God and make their own gods...

- in their own image.
- as they conceive and wish their god to be.

This is the fourth reason why God—the only living and true God—reveals and shows his wrath toward men.

“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device [thought]” (Acts 17:29).

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 Jn.5:21).

“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known” (Dt.11:26-28).

“I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Is.42:8).

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| <p><b>1 God gave men up to do as they willed</b></p> <p><b>2 God gave men up to uncleanness</b><br/> a. Reason: The lusts in their hearts<br/> b. Result: Gross idolatry</p> <p><b>3 God gave men up to vile, unnatural affections</b><br/> a. Reason: They gave in to unnatural passion &amp; homosexuality<br/> b. Result: A burning, passionate bondage<br/> 1) Women with women<br/> 2) Men with men</p> | <p><b>B. God's Case Against All Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men: How God Shows Wrath, 1:24-32</b></p> <p>24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:</p> <p>25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.</p> <p>26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:</p> <p>27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in</p> | <p>themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.</p> <p>28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;</p> <p>29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,</p> <p>30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,</p> <p>31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:</p> <p>32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.</p> | <p><b>4 God gave men up to reprobate, depraved minds</b><br/> a. Reason: They rejected God<br/> b. Result: Depraved, unsuitable behavior<sup>DS1-23</sup></p> <p><b>5 God assures final judgment: Death</b><br/> a. Because men do such things<br/> b. Because men approve such things</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**SIN AND CONDEMNATION: THE WORLD'S NEED TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD, 1:18-3:20**

**B. God's Case Against All Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men: How God Shows Wrath, 1:24-32**

(1:24-32) **Introduction—God's Wrath—Judgment:** Scripture says "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven" (Ro.1:18). This particular passage discusses the four ways that God reveals and shows His wrath. Note three things.

1. All four ways concern judgments that come upon man. That is, the wrath of God is exercised and falls upon man because of his ungodliness and unrighteousness.
2. All four ways have to do with history, with human experience, with a moral universe. That is, God's wrath is revealed from heaven day by day...
  - throughout history.
  - in man's experience.
  - within a moral universe.
3. Three of the judgments are present judgments; they take place today in the lives of men (v.24-31). The fourth judgment is future and is to be the final judgment upon men (v.32).

How does God reveal and execute His wrath upon man?

1. God gave men up to do as they willed (v.24).
2. God gave men up to uncleanness (v.24-25).
3. God gave men up to vile, unnatural affections (v.26-27).
4. God gave men up to reprobate, depraved minds (v.28-31).
5. God assures final judgment: death (v.32).

**1** (1:24) **Judgment—Man, Abandoned by God:** God—the only living and true God—gave men up to do as they willed. (See notes—Mt.13:13-15; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.12:39-41 for more discussion.) This is said three times in this passage, and each time was due to a serious sin of man (v.24, 26, 28). Man's sin forced God to give man up and to abandon him. The scene was terrible and frightening, for to be abandoned and left without God in this world leads to the worst possible life imaginable.

There are two strong reasons why God gives man up, and each issues a loud warning to man.

1. Man chooses sin over God, and when he does, two things happen.
  - a. Man becomes enslaved to sin. Sin actually stirs more and more sin. The more a man sins the easier it is for him to sin again. At first he may ponder the wisdom of committing the sin; but later on, after committing the sin over and over, he seldom if ever gives the sin a second thought. Sin looks good, tastes good, and feels good. It is attractive and it satisfies the human flesh and urges of man. It satisfies so much that man is naturally attracted to it. By sinning, he steadily makes himself a slave to sin. He becomes addicted. Sin

becomes the terrible master and subjects man to its cruel habits and enticements that are almost impossible to break.

- b. Sin *always* lies. This needs to be remembered. Sin entices, claiming to bring pleasure and stimulation and happiness, but in reality it destroys a person's...
- |           |              |          |
|-----------|--------------|----------|
| • body    | • profession | • values |
| • family  | • mind       | • future |
| • friends | • will       | • life   |
| • soul    | • hope       |          |

A terrible tragedy that is so often forgotten is this: we are not islands unto ourselves. Our sin involves others; therefore, our sin destroys others—both their lives and their souls. Sin may look, taste, and feel good to us; but it always involves and influences others. It hurts and dooms our children, spouses, friends, and society.

2. Man abandons God, actually turns away from God and gives God up. This may be called *spiritual abandonment*: man *spiritually* abandons God. God has given man a free will, and if a man wills to turn away from God, he can. God cannot interfere with that choice. To do so would be to take away man's freedom. So God appeals to man spiritually, through mercy and love and grace, but He does not violate man's choice. He cannot. To do so would be to have a coerced and mechanical universe. Man would become nothing but a robot, coerced to do this and that and to do it exactly as God wills. The result would be tragic: man would never experience love, goodness, care, concern, or feelings. Love is not love if it is coerced. It is mechanical and meaningless. The expression of any affection or virtue is meaningless unless it is freely given. Therefore, when man turns away from God, he himself makes the choice to do so, and God *cannot* interfere. The choice is man's, and man is abandoned—left all alone to himself to do exactly as he has chosen (Hos.4:17; Eph.4:19). Therefore, God has no choice. He must...

- give man up.
- let man go his own way.
- spiritually abandon man.
- leave man to live for that which he has chosen.

**“So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels” (Ps.81:12).**

**“Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven” (Acts 7:42).**

**2** (1:24-25) **Sin—Body—Judgment:** God—the only living and true God—shows wrath by giving men up to uncleanness. The word “uncleanness” (akatharsian) means impurity, filthiness, immorality, defilement, dirt, pollution, contamination, infection. When men turn from God—abandon God to live unclean and immoral lives—God leaves men. He abandons them to their choice. God lets men wallow around in their filthiness. Men are judged and condemned to uncleanness.

1. The *reason* men are condemned to “uncleanness” is because of the *lusts* “in their hearts.” Their hearts are filled with “lusts” (epithumiais), that is, passionate cravings, desires, and urges. They long after things that displease God and that dishonor their bodies. God cares deeply about the human body, and he judges any person who abuses the body. (See outlines and DEEPER STUDY # 6—Mt.6:11; notes—1 Cor.3:16; 3:17; DEEPER STUDY # 1—6:18; notes—6:19; 6:20; cp. 1 Th.4:3-5 for more discussion.)

In the Greek the lusts are said to be “*in [en] their own hearts.*” Sin takes place in the heart *before* it takes place by act.

**“And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mk.7:20-23).**

2. The result of living an unclean life is idolatry. Men “changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.” When men live in uncleanness, they begin to serve and to give their lives to one of two things.

- a. They serve themselves, giving their time and energy to their own desires, pursuits, and lusts.
- b. They serve other “gods,” gods that allow them to go ahead and live as they wish. They *imagine* what god is like and they worship him either in their mind or in some graven image moulded by their hands. They conceive of a *god* that is...
 

|                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| • a god of some religion       | • a god of men      |
| • a god of Christianity        | • a god of creation |
| • a god of some part of nature | • a god of goodness |

The point is this. Man abandons the only true and living God and lusts after uncleanness. He lusts and craves so much...

- that he creates a god in his own mind who allows him to satisfy his lust.
- that he rationalizes and thinks that his god understands his situation and need, and that his god will not judge him for his uncleanness and immorality.
- that he conceives of a god that will allow him to do what he wants.
- that he matches his god to fit his morals, letting his morals determine the kind of god he is going to worship.
- that he twists god to fit what he wants.
- that he allows his morals (uncleanness) to control his thoughts about God.

Man serves and gives his time and energy to the god he imagines in his mind and to the idols he creates within his imagination and thoughts. He abandons God so that he can live the unclean life he craves. Therefore, God judges man and abandons man to live in his uncleanness.

“[The carnal] have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Pt.2:15).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jn.2:15-17).

“And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods and worshipped the works of their own hands” (Jer.1:16).

“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (Jer.2:13).

“Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee; I am weary with repenting” (Jer.15:6).

“And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see” (2 Chron.30:7).

**3** (1:26-27) **Sin—Body—Judgment:** God—the only living and true God—shows wrath by giving men up to vile, *unnatural* affections. The term “vile affections” (pathe atimias) means passions, dishonor, disgrace, infamy, shame, and degradation. It means passions that cannot be controlled or governed, that run loose and wild, no matter how much a person tries to control them.

1. The reason God gives men up to vile affections is because of their unnatural passion. Men lust and lust, craving the illegitimate and unlawful. They burn in their lust one for another. And note what Scripture is talking about: *unnatural* affection, that is, homosexuality.

⇒ Women burn and lust and exchange the “natural use into that which is *against nature*.” And note, it is *against nature*.

⇒ Men burn in their “lust one toward another; men with men doing that which is shameful.”

Note again that the sin takes place in the heart. Men *burn within*, crave the sin before they commit the act. It is their burning, their lusting, their craving that sets them aflame to pursue the shameful act. Their hearts burn after other men, not after God. Therefore, they stand condemned, and God is forced to judge them.

2. The result of *unnatural* affection is a totally depraved nature. When men choose a life of “vile affections,” God gives them up to it. It is man’s choice, and since it is man’s choice, God can do nothing about it. God has to give man up to what he chooses. He does not override man’s will.

Note a crucial fact: Scripture says men receive “in themselves that recompense [pay back, punishment] of their error.” The judgment for homosexuality is *within*, not *without* man. If a person burns after *unnatural* affection, he is given over to his burning; he is given over to burn and crave more and more. He is judged and condemned to live in his *unnatural* passion and to feel the shame of it. He is enslaved and held in bondage to it, psychologically and physically. The judgment is “meet,” that is, fit, just, exactly what it should be. If men lust and burn after *unnatural* affection, it is only fit that they be given what they so passionately crave. Therefore, God judges men by giving men up to live in their vile affections.

**“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God” (1 Th.4:4-5).**

**“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb.13:4).**

**4** (1:28-31) **God, Wrath of—Judgment—Sin:** God—the only living and true God—shows wrath by giving men up to reprobate, depraved minds. The term “reprobate mind” (adokimon noun) means a mind that is rejected, disapproved, degraded, depraved; a mind that cannot stand the test of judgment.

1. The reason God gives men up to reprobate minds is because men reject God. They know God, but they do not “like to retain God in their knowledge.” They...

- do not like to approve God.
- do not like to recognize God.
- do not like to acknowledge God.

They simply do not want God to have anything to do with their lives; therefore, they push Him out of their minds. They ignore and refuse to accept God’s presence.

2. The result is forcibly stated. God gives men over to reprobate minds, minds that are totally depraved. Men are allowed to do exactly as *they choose*; they are enslaved more and more in their depravity and unsuitable behavior. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1-23—Ro.1:29-31 for the meaning of the terrible sins listed.)

**“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal.6:7-8).**

**“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Ro.2:5).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:29) **Unrighteousness** (adikia): injustice, wrongdoing, evildoing, every kind of evil. It is the opposite of righteousness; therefore, it is...

- mistreating God and man, acting unjustly toward both.
- failing to treat God and man as a person should treat them.

Note the word “*all* unrighteousness.” It is being *filled* with unjust treatment. It is focusing on oneself to the point of making oneself the center of the universe...

- grasping after everything, all the attention and possessions one can secure.
- ignoring and abusing others to get all one can.

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(1:29) **Fornication** (porneiai): a broad word including all forms and kinds of immoral and sexual acts. It is premarital sex, adultery, and abnormal sex—all kinds of sexual vice.

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(1:29) **Wickedness** (poneria): to be depraved, to be actively evil, to do mischief, to trouble others and cause harm, to be malicious, to be dangerous and destructive. It is malice, hatred, and ill-will. It is an active wickedness, a desire within the heart to do harm and to corrupt people. It is a person who actually pursues others to seduce or to injure them.

**DEEPER STUDY #4**

(1:29) **Covetousness** (pleonexia): a lust for more and more, an appetite for something, a love of possessing, a cry of “give, give” (2 Pt.2:14). It is a grasping, a craving after and for possessions, pleasure, power, and fame. Covetousness lacks restraint. It lacks the ability to discriminate. It wants to have in order to spend in pleasure and luxury. Covetousness is an insatiable lust and craving of the flesh that cannot be satisfied. It is a lust and craving so deep that a person finds his happiness in things and pleasure instead of God. It is idolatry (Eph.5:5). It is an intense appetite for gain, a passion for the pleasure that things can bring. It is an active, aggressive, grasping covetousness.

**DEEPER STUDY # 5**

(1:29) **Maliciousness** (kakia): malice, viciousness, ill-will, spite, a grudge. It means that a man has turned his heart completely over to evil.

- ⇒ He no longer has any good within—none whatsoever.
- ⇒ He is full of viciousness and malice.
- ⇒ He is actively pursuing evil with a vengeance.

**DEEPER STUDY # 6**

(1:29) **Envy** (phthonos): the word goes beyond jealousy. It is the spirit...

- that wants not only the things that another person has, but begrudges the fact that the person has them.
- that wants not only the things to be taken away from the person, but wants him to suffer through the loss of them.

Every thought expresses grief that another person has something, whether honor, recognition, or position.

**DEEPER STUDY #7**

(1:29) **Murder** (phonos): to kill, to take the life of another. Murder is a sin against the sixth commandment.

**DEEPER STUDY # 8**

(1:29) **Debate** (eridos): strife, discord, contention, fighting, struggling, quarreling, dissension, wrangling. It means that a man fights against another person in order to get something: position, promotion, property, honor, recognition. He fights in a dishonest and evil way.

**DEEPER STUDY # 9**

(1:29) **Deceit** (dolos): to bait, snare, mislead, beguile; to be crafty and deceitful; to mislead or to give a false impression by word, act, or influence. It is a man who connives and twists the truth to get his own way. He plots and deceives, doing whatever has to be done to get what he is after.

**DEEPER STUDY # 10**

(1:29) **Malignity** (kakoetheia): evil disposition, evil in nature. It is a spirit full of evil and malice and injury, a character that is as evil as it can be. It is a person who always looks for the worst in other people and always passes on the worst about them. It is the person who so often ruins other people both in reputation and body and in mind and spirit. It is a person so full of evil that he is always ruining others either by word or violence.

**DEEPER STUDY # 11**

(1:29) **Whisperers** (psithuristes): secret gossipers, secret slanderers, backbiters, murmurers. It is a person...

- who whispers behind another person's back, chewing and tearing him up.
- who passes on tales about others, whether true or not.
- who destroys the reputation of others.

**DEEPER STUDY # 12**

(1:30) **Backbiters** (katalalos): slanderers. The word differs from the quiet, secret slanderer. It is a loud, open slanderer, a person who broadcasts the tale. Again, whether the tale is true or not does not matter. The backbiting slanderer burns within to tell the gossip to everyone.

**DEEPER STUDY # 13**

(1:30) **Haters of God** (theostugeis): hating and being hateful to God. It is a person...

- who dislikes the commandments and restraints of God.
- who wants nothing to do with God and His restrictions and laws.
- who wants the license to do exactly as he wishes.
- who wants to be the god of his own life, doing his own thing as he wishes, determining both what he should and should not do.

**DEEPER STUDY # 14**

(1:30) **Despiteful** (hubristes): insolent, insulting, and defying. It is a spirit of spite, of attack and assault, verbally or physically. It is despising and attacking, inflicting injury either by word or act. It is a man who...

- lives his own life as he wishes, ignoring both God and men.
- lives as though his rights and affairs are the only rights and affairs which matter.
- stands toe to toe with both God and men, acting as though he needs neither.
- acts so independent in life that he dares God or men to get in his way.
- does what he wants when he wants, even if it hurts or destroys others.

The sin of despise, of being insolent and insulting, is the spirit that hurts and harms others in order to do what one wants.

**DEEPER STUDY # 15**

(1:30) **Proud**: (huperephanos): self-exaltation, conceit, arrogance; being haughty; putting oneself above others and looking down upon others; scorn, contempt. It means to show oneself, to lift one's head above another, to hold contempt for another, to compare oneself with others. Pride can be hidden in the heart as well as openly displayed. God resists the proud (Jas.4:6; 1 Pt.5:5; Pr.3:24).

**DEEPER STUDY # 16**

(1:30) **Boasters** (alazon): braggarts, pretenders, vaunters, swaggers, boasters. It is a person who...

- boasts in what he has.
- boasts in what he can do.
- pretends to have what he does not have or pretends to have done what he has not done.

Bragging may involve a job, a deal, a possession, an achievement—anything that may impress others. It is a person who feels the need to push himself above others even if it involves *pretension, deception, make believe, or lies*.

**DEEPER STUDY # 17**

(1:30) **Inventors of evil things** (epheuretes kakon): inventors of new sins, of more sensational forms of excitement and vice. It is a person who is tired of the old forms of sin and who feels the need to seek out new ways and forms of vice.

**DEEPER STUDY # 18**

(1:30) **Disobedient to parents** (goneusin apeitheis) refusing to do what one's parents say; rebelling against one's parents; showing disrespect to parents; rejecting parental instruction; dishonoring parental example. A child who disobeys his parents is wide open to all forms of evil.

**DEEPER STUDY # 19**

(1:31) **Without understanding** (asunetos): senseless, foolish, without conscience. It is a person who...

- ignores experience.
- will not learn no matter who the teacher is.
- refuses to heed the truth.
- closes his mind and eyes to the truth.
- rejects conscience.

**DEEPER STUDY # 20**

(1:31) **Covenantbreakers** (asunthetos): breakers of promises or agreements, untrustworthy, faithless, treacherous, untruthful. It is a man who tragically does not keep his word or promise. He is simply untrustworthy and undependable.

**DEEPER STUDY # 21**

(1:31) **Without natural affection** (astorgos): abnormal affection and love, heartless, without human emotion or love, a lack of feeling for others, abuse of normal affection and love. Others become little more than pawns for a man's own use and benefit, pleasure and purposes, excitement and stimulation. Abnormal affection, sex and perversion prevail.

**DEEPER STUDY # 22**

(1:31) **Implacable** (aspondous): incapable of giving in, of being appeased or pacified. A person is just unwilling to make peace or come to an agreement.

**DEEPER STUDY # 23**

(1:31) **Unmerciful** (aneleemon): without pity; unwilling to show mercy. It is a person...

- craving to have and to possess others regardless of their welfare.
- craving to use others as one wills regardless of hurt and shame.
- craving to satisfy one's own pleasure even if it means the hurt or death of others.

It is an absence of consideration or feelings for others. What matters is one's own pleasure and rights, not the pleasure and rights of others.

**5** (1:32) **Judgment:** God—the only living and true God—assures final judgment which is death, that is, eternal separation from God. There are two reasons why men will be judged and condemned to death.

1. Men will be judged because they sin and take pleasure in others who sin by doing the same things (v.29-31). Men have appetites, desires, and lusts, and they spend their lives seeking to fulfill them. The great tragedy is that they not only *take pleasure* in their own sins, but they *take pleasure* in the sins of others. They *approve and talk about* their selfishness and exploits and that of their friends. They focus their lives upon...

- extravagant living
- stylish dress
- wealth
- power
- position
- fame
- material possessions
- sexual affairs

As a result of such selfishness, the sins listed in the Scripture tear at the world and destroy human life (v.29-31); therefore, the judgment of God is assured. Those who commit such things and *take pleasure* in the sins of others shall die, that is, be separated from God eternally.

**“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Ro.1:32).**

**“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Is.5:20).**

**“Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life” (Ezk.13:22).**

**“Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or Where is the god of judgment?” (Mal.2:17).**

2. Men will be judged because they are without excuse: they know through an inner sense that the judgment of God is coming upon the world. Men sense that some higher power (God) is going to straighten out the mess in the world: that injustices and inequities will be brought to judgment, condemned and punished. (See outline and notes—Ro.2:1-16 for more discussion.)

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).**

**“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb.9:27).**

**“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:15).**

**“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).**

**“As righteousness tendeth to life; so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death” (Pr.11:19).**

**“The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezk.18:4).**

| CHAPTER 2   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 The moralist</b></p> <p>a. He judges others</p> <p>b. He is inexcusable: He condemns himself because he is guilty of the same things</p> <p><b>2 The judgment of God is according to truth: Perfect justice</b></p> <p>a. The moralist thinks he will escape</p> <p>b. The moralist thinks God is too good to punish</p> <p>c. The moralist thinks man is basically good</p> <p>d. The moralist hardens his heart against the judgment of God</p> <p>1) Refuses to repent</p> <p>2) Result: Stores up wrath against himself</p> <p><b>3 The judgment of God is according to deeds: Eternal reward or punishment</b></p> <p>a. The well-doer's reward<sup>DS1,2,3</sup></p> <p>b. The evil-doer's severe</p> | <p><b>C. God's Case Against the Moralist: Judgment, 2:1-16</b></p> <p>Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.</p> <p>2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.</p> <p>3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?</p> <p>4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?</p> <p>5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;</p> <p>6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:</p> <p>7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:</p> <p>8 But unto them that are</p> | <p>contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,</p> <p>9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;</p> <p>10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:</p> <p>11 For there is no respect of persons with God.</p> <p>12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;</p> <p>13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.</p> <p>14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:</p> <p>15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)</p> <p>16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.</p> <p>judgment<sup>DS4-7</sup></p> <p>c. Every evil-doer is to be judged<sup>DS8,9</sup></p> <p>d. Every well-doer is to be rewarded</p> <p><b>4 The judgment of God is without respect of persons: Absolute impartiality</b></p> <p>a. The man who sins without law &amp; the man who sins in the law will both be judged</p> <p>b. The doers, not the hearers, of the law will be justified</p> <p>c. The heathen have a threefold witness</p> <p>1) Their nature: An instinctive knowledge of right &amp; wrong</p> <p>2) Their conscience: Bears witness to what is right &amp; wrong</p> <p>3) Their thoughts: Accuse or defend their behavior</p> <p><b>5 The judgment of God is to be executed by Jesus Christ &amp; His gospel</b></p> |

## DIVISION II

### SIN AND CONDEMNATION: THE WORLD'S NEED TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD, 1:18-3:20

#### C. God's Case Against the Moralist: Judgment, 2:1-16

(2:1-16) **Introduction:** this is one of the passages that covers several subjects and can be studied from the viewpoint of any one of them. It is an excellent study on judging, criticizing others, the judgment of God, self-righteousness, the moralist, and the legalist. It also deals with the judgment of the heathen, and answers the question so often asked: "What will happen to the heathen, to the person who never hears about Jesus Christ?" (v.11-15). The present study is entitled: "God's Case Against the Moralist."

1. The moralist (v.1).
2. The judgment of God is according to truth: perfect justice (v.2-5).
3. The judgment of God is according to deeds: eternal reward or punishment (v.6-10).
4. The judgment of God is without respect of persons: absolute impartiality (v.11-15).
5. The judgment of God is to be executed by Jesus Christ and His gospel (v.16).

**1** (2:1) **Moralist—Judging Others—Criticism:** the moralist. In the eyes of Scripture a moralist is a person who lives a moral and clean life, but he judges others because they do not live as *he thinks* they should. He is moral, upright, just, good, decent, and honorable. The moralist has strong values, standards, and principles. He is well disciplined and able to control his life. He lives just as everyone thinks he should. He knows right from wrong and he lives it. He knows how to behave and he does it. In the eyes of society he is just what a person should be. He is a good neighbor, an excellent worker and provider, and an ideal citizen. But note three things.

1. The moralist judges others. The word "judge" (krino) means to criticize, to find fault, to condemn. This is the terrible flaw of the moralist. Note: any person becomes a moralist when he sets himself up as a judge of others. Any time

we judge another person, we are declaring that we...

- are living by some rule that another person is not living by.
- are more moral than someone else.
- are better than someone else.
- are superior to someone else.
- are more righteous than someone else.
- are more acceptable to God than someone else.

Judging others says, "I am right, and he is not; I succeed, but he fails." Therefore...

- "Look at me, but ignore him."
- "Draw near to me, but shun him."
- "Esteem me, but put him down."
- "Approve me, but condemn him."
- "Be my friend, but withdraw from him."

Very simply, judging others raises self and lowers others, exalts self and debases others; and in the eyes of God this is wrong. It is sin. It is being full of self-righteousness, pride, and arrogance. It sets self up as a moralist, and it makes a person judgmental and critical.

**"Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Mt.7:1).**

**"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Ro.14:4).**

**"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Ro.14:13).**

**"There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (Jas.4:12).**

2. The moralist is inexcusable, and he condemns himself because he does the very same things. He fails just as the man whom he judges fails. Scripture says...

**"Thou that judgest doest the same things" (Ro.2:1).**

**"[All] temptation is common to man" (1 Cor.10:13).**

**"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Mt.5:21-22).**

**"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Mt.5:27-28).**

In God's eyes, sin is a matter of the heart and mind, not just an act. The thought and desire makes a person just as guilty as the act itself. God knows that many would carry out their thoughts *if they had the courage or opportunity*. God knows the heart, the mind, and the thoughts. Sin, whether thoughts in the mind or acts in public, comes short of God's glory. All stand guilty before God; therefore, the moralist, the person who judges, is as guilty as the one judged. It is for this reason that we are not to judge, criticize, and find fault with others.

**"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Mt.7:3).**

**"Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" (Ro.2:21-22).**

**"But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal.2:14).**

**"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Tit.1:16).**

**Thought 1.** This point does not mean that judicial systems of the state are wrong nor that discipline is not to be exercised within families, organizations, and the church. Scripture teaches that both justice and discipline are to be exercised by men. What Scripture means is this: we are not to go around criticizing and finding fault with each other and putting each other down when one of us fails. Instead we are to reach out and try to redeem and help each other. Imagine what a different world this would be if all tongues were stopped! If all criticism and fault-finding ceased! If everyone actually reached out and tried to redeem and save those who failed!

**"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal.6:1-2).**

**"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations [to criticize and judge]" (Ro.14:1).**

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor.9:22).

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” (Jas.2:15-16).

“Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (Jas.3:10).

**2** (2:2-5) **Judgment—God, Misconceptions of—Man:** the judgment of God—of the only living and true God—is according to truth. God’s judgment will be executed in perfect justice. The word “truth” (aletheian) means true as opposed to false. It means what really is; what actually exists; what exactly takes place. God’s judgment is *perfectly* just, exactly what it should be, nothing more and nothing less. His judgment is based upon...

- what really happens.
- what the facts are.
- what actually takes place.
- what a person really is within his heart and what the person actually did.

“The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Sam.16:7).

God knows the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; therefore, He will judge according to truth. His judgment will be perfect, conforming exactly to our deeds. It will match our deeds perfectly.

Note four points.

1. The moralist thinks he will escape. His offense is much greater, for he is like all other men: sinful and short of God’s glory. Yet he criticizes and judges those whose failures are discovered and exposed, and he thinks he will escape. He forgets that God sees the *inner recesses* of the human heart, and that God will judge men not only for their deeds but for their thoughts...

- for the lust of the flesh.
- for the lust of the eyes.
- for the pride of life (1 Jn.2:15-16).

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mt.23:33).

“For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known” (Lk.12:2).

“And [Jesus] needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man” (Jn.2:25).

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor.4:5).

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Th.5:3).

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (Heb.2:3).

“But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out” (Num.32:23).

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl.12:14).

2. The moralist thinks God is too good to punish. When he thinks of God, he thinks of the riches...

- of God’s goodness (chrestotes): His kindness and grace and love.
- of God’s forbearance (anoche): His refraining, holding back, abstaining, and controlling His justice.
- of God’s longsuffering: His suffering a long time, being patient and slow in judging sin.

God, of course, is all this and much more. What the moralist fails to see is that God’s goodness...

- is not a blank check for sin.
- does not give license to sin.
- does not condone sin.
- does not indulge sin.
- does not overlook sin.

God’s goodness is to lead men to repentance, not to sin. The fact that God *will* forgive sin should stir men to seek forgiveness and to please God. If a man goes out and sins, thinking that God will just overlook and forgive his sin, he is despising God’s goodness. He is taking God’s goodness and making it a sham, a mockery, a joke, a thing of indulgence. The man who *despises* God’s goodness—who sins thinking God will just overlook and forgive his sin—is wrong. He is mis-

taken. God does not just overlook and forgive his sin; He does not condone, indulge, nor give license to his sin. God will judge him and the judgment will be according to the truth.

**“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:9-11).**

**“Be not deceived: evil communications [company] corrupt good manners [morals]. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor.15:33-34).**

**“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal.6:7).**

**“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph.5:6).**

**“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn.3:7-8).**

3. The moralist thinks man is basically good. He thinks that man can be good enough for God to accept. He thinks God looks for the good in man and that within each man is *enough good* for God to accept. The moralist thinks that God’s goodness accepts man’s...

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| • good works    | • good feelings   |
| • good thoughts | • good nature     |
| • good behavior | • good tendencies |

God, of course, is pleased with whatever good is in man. But what the moralist fails to see is that *God’s goodness is perfect*. It cannot accept...

- |                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| • any imperfect work | • any ugly feelings      |
| • any foul thoughts  | • any corruptible nature |
| • any evil behavior  | • any sinful urges       |

God can only accept perfection. No man is perfect: not in nature, thought, or behavior. Therefore, all men are unacceptable to God. No man is good enough to be acceptable to God, no matter how good he is. The goodness of God is to lead men to repentance: to turn men to God for righteousness, *not to declare man’s self-righteousness*. The fact that God allows men to repent should stir men...

- to confess their imperfection and self-righteousness.
- to seek God’s righteousness which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. (See notes—Ro.4:1-3; DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—4:22; 5:1 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** Most people think that God will accept them, that in the final analysis they are good enough for God to accept them. They never dream that God will reject them, not when everything is said and done. What they fail to see is that God’s judgment is based upon truth—the truth of what a person’s thoughts and motives are, of what is really within a person’s mind and heart. God’s judgment is based upon the truth of a person’s *imperfect nature and behavior*.

**“When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Ro.1:21-22).**

**“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Cor.10:12).**

**“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal.6:3).**

**“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).**

**“Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him” (Pr.26:12).**

**“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered” (Pr.28:26).**

**“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).**

**“For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me” (Is.47:10).**

**“The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD” (Obad.3-4).**

4. The moralist hardens his heart against the judgment of God. He refuses to repent. He just cannot accept the fact...

- that he is not good enough for God to accept.
- that God's goodness and love would ever condemn him.

But note the term "righteous judgment" (*dikaiokrisias*), which means just, fair, impartial, correct, exact. God's judgment is a judgment that should be, that should and will take place. In fact, God must judge, for God is love. As love, He must straighten out all the injustices on earth. He must right the wrongs and correct all the injustices of men. He must judge men with a perfect and "righteous judgment."

Note also the term "treasure up" (*thesaurizo*), which means to store up, to heap up, to lay up. The man who hardens his heart and refuses to repent stores up more and more wrath against himself in the day of judgment. The fact is clearly seen. Just think how terrible it is for a man to rebel against God's goodness. He has the glorious privilege of knowing God's goodness. He hears God's goodness proclaimed day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year. Yet he despises God's goodness, refusing to repent and rejecting God's goodness time and time again. His rejection is bound to store up wrath against himself. His judgment is bound to be greater than the judgment upon a person who has *never* had the privilege of hearing about the goodness of God.

**"I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" (Lk.12:49).**

**"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn.3:36).**

**"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Ro.1:18).**

**"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph.5:3-6).**

**"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to the punished" (2 Pt.2:9).**

**"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pt.3:7).**

**"He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Pr.29:1).**

**3** (2:6-10) **Judgment:** the judgment of God—of the only living and true God—is according to deeds (Prov.24:12; 2 Tim.4:14; cp. Mt.16:27; Rev.22:12), and it will be universal. Every one will be either eternally rewarded or eternally punished. No one shall be exempt; no one will escape.

Now note: judgment is to be based upon a man's "deeds" (*ergon*) or works. This does not mean that *faith* is not necessary. Contrariwise, there is no such thing as...

- faith without works.
- righteous and acceptable works without faith.

God's works—the works that are truly of and for God, that truly please God—are the result of faith. Men believe in and serve and work for many different things in the world. Some believe and work...

- for religion
- for social clubs
- for service organizations
- for humanity

What God demands is that men first believe and work for Him, reaching out to a world lost and gripped in desperate need. When a man truly believes God, he works for God. (Cp. Jas.2:17f.) God is going to either reward or punish every man according to his works, according to what he has done *with and for God*.

1. There shall be the well-doer's wonderful reward. Note three things about the well-doer.
  - a. Note what he seeks for: glory, honor, and immortality (see DEEPER STUDY # 1-3 on each subject—Ro.2:7).
  - b. Note how the well-doer seeks: "by patient continuance" (*hupomone*). The word means to be steadfast and constant; to endure, persevere, stick to, and continue. The well-doer is faithful in doing good works.
    - ⇒ He does not just start, he finishes.
    - ⇒ He does not live an inconsistent, up and down life. He continues and keeps on doing good deeds.
    - ⇒ He does not give in to hardships, difficulties, or opposition. He endures and perseveres, always doing good.

**"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal.6:9).**

**"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim.3:14).**

**"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb.12:1).**

**"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt.1:13).**

**"Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev.3:11).**

- c. Note the wonderful reward of the well-doer: eternal life. Eternal life is said to be the inheritance of a world of glory, honor, and peace (v.10; cp. Ro.4:13). (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Eternal Life*—Jn.1:4; DEEPER STUDY # 1—10:10; DEEPER STUDY # 1—17:2-3; DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Tim.4:18; also see notes, *Peace*—Ro.5:1; Jn.14:27 for discussion.)
2. There shall be the evil-doer's terrible and severe judgment. The evil-doer is to be judged for three reasons.
  - a. He is contentious against God (see DEEPER STUDY # 4—Ro.2:8). The evil-doer does not like what God says; therefore, he strives against it. He wrangles and wrestles, struggles and fights against God. He refuses to buckle under and surrender to God's will. When dealing with God, the evil-doer is contentious.
  - b. He does not obey the truth. He sees and hears and knows the truth. He even knows the truth is to be done, but he refuses to do it. He refuses to be persuaded and refuses to believe. He rejects both Christ, the Living Truth, and the Word of God, the written truth. He simply goes about his own life, running and controlling it as he wills. He rejects and refuses to believe and to do the truth.
  - c. He does unrighteousness (see DEEPER STUDY # 5—Ro.2:8 for discussion).
3. Every evil-doer is to be judged, both Jew and Gentile. No evil-doer shall escape. "Every soul of man that doeth evil" shall suffer, and the judgment will be severe and terrible. His judgment will involve indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish (see DEEPER STUDY # 6,7—Ro.2:8; DEEPER STUDY # 8,9—2:9 for discussion).

**"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Mt.25:46).**

**"He will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable" (Lk.3:17).**

**"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Lk.12:47).**

**"But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Ro.2:8).**

**"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Th.1:7-9).**

**"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb.10:29).**

**"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pt.2:9).**

**"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev.20:15).**

**"Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" (Ps.11:6).**

**"And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible" (Is.13:11).**

**"For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Is.26:21).**

**"According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense" (Is.59:18).**

**"But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it" (Jer.21:14).**

**"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal.4:1).**

4. Every well-doer is to be rewarded, both Jew and Gentile. No well-doer shall be exempt or overlooked. "Every man that worketh good" shall receive...

- immortality (v.7).
- eternal life (v.7).
- glory (v.7, 10).
- honor (v.7, 10).
- peace (v.10).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(2:7) **Glory** (doxa): means to possess and to be full of perfect light; to dwell in perfect light, brilliance, splendor, brightness, luster, and magnificence with God.

**"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Mt.13:43).**

**"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Ro.8:17).**

**"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Ph.3:21).**

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev.7:9).

“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps.73:24).

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Ro.8:18).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:17).

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim.2:10).

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Pt.5:1).

### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(2:7) **Honor** (time): means to be acknowledged, recognized, approved, accepted, esteemed, and exalted by God. It means to be privileged and exalted to a position of responsibility and service for God.

“And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities” (Lk.19:17).

“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour” (Jn.12:26).

“But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile” (Ro.2:10).

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge [govern, rule] angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Cor.6:2-3).

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev.3:21).

“Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name” (Ps.91:14).

“He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour” (Pr.21:21).

“By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life” (Pr.22:4).

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan.12:3).

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(2:7) **Immortality** (aphtharsia): means living forever with God; to be incorruptible, perfected, and made permanent and eternal. It means to be free from pain and tears, from being tired and weary, from trials and sin, from defilement, weakness, frailty, sickness, suffering, and death. It means to be free from an imperfect world and to be placed into a perfect world with God—a world that lasts forever and ever.

“Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Lk.20:36).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (Jn.8:51).

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:26).

“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life” (Ro.2:7).

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor.15:53).

“For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor.5:1).

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th.4:17).

“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).

“This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die” (Jn.6:50).

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor.15:53-54).

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev.21:4).

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it” (Is.25:8).

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes” (Hos.13:14).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 4

(2:8) **Stubborn—Contentious** (eris): means to strive, struggle, fight, quarrel, wrangle, argue, debate; to be divisive, factious, contentious, argumentative, and belligerent.

“And [the Lord] sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come” (Mt.22:3).

“And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (Jn.5:40).

“But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Ro.10:21).

“Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee” (Ps.32:9).

“And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God” (Ps.78:8).

“But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me” (Ps.81:11).

“Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof” (Pr.1:24-25).

“Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness” (Is.46:12).

“I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass” (Is.48:4).

“My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations” (Hos.9:17).

“If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart” (Mal.2:2).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 5

(2:8) **Unrighteousness** (adikia): means wickedness, iniquity, injustice, wrong-doing, sin, evil, lawlessness, a violation of law.

#### DEEPER STUDY # 6

(2:8) **Indignation** (orge): means God’s anger against sin (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *God’s Wrath*—Ro.1:18 for discussion).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 7

(2:8) **Wrath** (thumos): means God’s wrath against sin. *Thumos* is an anger that is felt more deeply than the *orge* anger of God; therefore, it arises more quickly. *Thumos* anger is the anger that arises out of deep hurt; therefore, it bursts forth with terrifying judgment. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *God’s Wrath*—Ro.1:18 for verses.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 8

(2:9) **Tribulation** (thlipsis): means distress, oppression, suffering, affliction, pressure; it means being pressed, put in some strait.

#### DEEPER STUDY # 9

(2:9) **Anguish** (stenochoria): means to be put into a narrow place; to be compressed together; to experience extreme pain, sorrow, distress, affliction, and calamity.

**4** (2:11-15) **Judgment—Obedience—Doers—Hearers**: the judgment of God—of the only living and true God—is without respect of persons. God’s judgment will be executed with absolute impartiality, showing no favoritism whatsoever.

God has no favorites. God does not show partiality; He does not favor the...

- moralist
- wealthy
- outstanding
- religionist
- benevolent
- honorable
- educated
- famous

God favors no one. All men stand on an equal footing before God's judgment. *God loves and cares for all*, but He has no favorites and shows no partiality. Therefore, in the great day of judgment, all will be judged by the same rule and by the same principle.

1. The man who sins without the law and the man who sins in the law will both be judged. Again, sin is the basis of judgment. Men will be judged *for sin*.

- a. The man who sins "without law" (anomos) will also perish without law. The word for law is a general word. It refers to the law of God in both the Scriptures and nature. Therefore, the man who does not have the law of Scripture *does have* the law of nature to guide him. If he sins against the law of nature, he will still be judged and perish. He had the opportunity to know through nature itself (see outline and notes—Ro.1:19; 1:20 for more discussion).
- b. The man who sins "in the law" will be judged by the law. His judgment, of course, will be greater, for he had every privilege and opportunity imaginable.

**"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).**

**"And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9).**

**"For there is no respect of persons with God" (Ro.2:11).**

**"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Ro.10:12).**

2. The doers and not the hearers of the law will be justified. It is not enough to have the law or the Word of God; it is not enough...

- to hear and see it
- to possess and profess it
- to understand and know it
- to proclaim and teach it

A person must be a doer of the law; he must obey and live the law. The law was not given just to sit on a bookshelf or on a table, not given just to be heard and to secure verbal agreement. The law was given to be obeyed and lived out, to govern and control life so that life could be lived to the fullest. Therefore, those who only hear the law will not be justified before God, but the doers of the law will be justified.

**Thought 1.** Possessing, having, hearing, and even proclaiming the law (the Word of God) is not enough to save a person. A person must keep the law; he must live and do the will of God.

**"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mt.7:21).**

**"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mt.12:50).**

**"Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great" (Lk.6:47-49).**

**"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (Jn.13:17).**

**"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Ro.2:13).**

**"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (Jas.1:22).**

**"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge" (Jas.4:11).**

**"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 Jn.2:17).**

**"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev.22:14).**

3. The heathen have a threefold witness, a witness that is strong enough to lead them to God.

- a. Men have their nature—the nature of man that speaks loudly and clearly—that points toward God. Note exactly what the verse says.
  - ⇒ Men may not have the law (the Scriptures)...
  - ⇒ But they can do the law *by nature*.
  - ⇒ They can become "a law unto themselves."

There is that within man, within his nature (physei), that can stir him to do the law. Man has within him an instinctive knowledge of right and wrong. His very nature gives him the opportunity to do what is right.

Something else is meant here as well. Man can look at nature (creation) and see that he is part of it. He can instinctively see by nature the great eternal power and deity of God. (See note—Ro.1:20 for a list of the things nature reveals about God.)

**“Because that which may be known of God is manifest *in them* [within them, in their consciences, in an inner moral sense]; for God hath showed it unto them” (Ro.1:19).**

**“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Ro.1:20).**

- b. Men have their consciences that bear witness to what is right and wrong. When they do right, they sense approval; when they do wrong, they sense reproach. Man’s conscience gives him the opportunity to live righteously and to do good.

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

**“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb.10:22).**

**“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake” (Ro.13:5).**

- c. Men have their thoughts, their reasoning ability which can approve or disapprove, excuse or accuse them and others. Men’s thoughts bear witness to how they should and should not live, whether their behavior is excused (acceptable) or accused (condemned). Now note two critical points.

First, men can learn a great deal about God and about right and wrong through their nature, conscience, and thoughts. Men can look at themselves and creation and learn that they are to live...

- by order, law, and rules.
- in obedience, respect, and peace.
- giving recognition, honor, and esteem.
- being clean, pure, and moral.
- showing care, concern, and love.
- without stealing, lying, and cheating.

(See note—Ro.1:19; 1:20 for more discussion.)

Second, men cannot be saved apart from Jesus Christ. No matter how morally they may live—whether they live by law or by nature—they do not live a sinless and perfect life. They sin and come short of God’s glory. Therefore, no matter how morally men live, they have to be *perfected* in the “righteousness of God” which is in Christ Jesus Himself (see note, *Justification*—Ro.4:1-3; DEEPER STUDY # 2—4:22; note—5:1 for discussion. Also see note, pt.3—Ro.2:2-5.)

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

**“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).**

**“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:5).**

**“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 Jn.2:1).**

**“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 Jn.4:14).**

**5** (2:16) **Judgment:** the judgment of God—of the only living and true God—is to be executed by Jesus Christ and His gospel. Note these facts.

1. A specific day of judgment is coming. It is fixed.

**“When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt.25:31-32).**

**“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb.9:27).**

**“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).**

**“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Pt.3:7).**

**“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world” (1 Jn.4:17).**

**“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14-15).**

2. In that day “the secrets of men” will be judged. All secrets will be exposed, the secret thoughts and deeds done...
- in the dark
  - behind closed doors
  - off to the side
  - silently
  - alone
  - quietly

“For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known” (Lk.12:2).

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor.4:5).

“Behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out” (Num.32:23).

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl.12:14).

3. Jesus Christ is the One who will do the judging. He is the One who...
- has earned the right to judge by obeying God perfectly. He is the One who has lived a sinless life and died for men.
  - has experienced life on earth in the flesh and can understand and sympathize with men in their infirmities(Heb.2:15-18; 4:15-16).

“And before him [Christ] shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt.25:32).

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (Jn.5:22).

“And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick [living] and dead” (Acts 10:42).

“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Ro.2:16).

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Ro.14:10).

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [the living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim.4:1).

“Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot [partying], speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him [Christ] that is ready to judge the quick and the dead” (1 Pt.4:4-5).

4. The standard or rule by which men shall be judged is the gospel.

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn.12:48).

“He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me” (Jn.14:24).

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:1-4).

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth” (1 Tim.6:3-5).

“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 Jn.3:23).

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| <p><b>1 The religionist professes religion</b><br/> a. Rests in the Word<br/> b. Professes God<br/> c. Knows God's will<br/> d. Approves better things<br/> e. Is taught God's law</p> <p>f. Is sure he is a guide of the blind<br/> g. Is sure he is a light to those in darkness<br/> h. Is sure he is an instructor of the foolish<br/> i. Is sure he is a teacher of the immature<br/> j. Has the law, the embodiment of truth</p> <p><b>2 The religionist fails to live what he professes</b><br/> a. The fact: His life does not match what he says</p> | <p><b>D. God's Case Against the Religionist (Jew),<sup>DS1</sup> 2:17-29</b></p> <p>17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,<br/> 18 And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;<br/> 19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,<br/> 20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.<br/> 21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?<br/> 22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?<br/> 23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through</p> | <p>breaking the law dishonourest thou God?<br/> 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.<br/> 25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.<br/> 26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?<br/> 27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?<br/> 28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:<br/> 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.</p> | <p>b. Result: His hypocrisy causes others to abuse God's name</p> <p><b>3 The religionist believes that a ritual (circumcision) is the way to secure God's approval</b><br/> a. But circ. counts only if a man keeps the law<br/> b. The uncircumcised man who keeps the law is counted as circumcised (ritually accepted)<br/> c. The uncircumcised man who keeps the law shall judge the religionist who breaks the law</p> <p><b>4 The religionist misses the whole point: A true rel. is a man who is righteous inwardly</b><br/> a. Not an outward thing<br/> b. An inward thing—of the heart, in the spirit<br/> c. Its praise is not of men (not physical, of the flesh), but of God</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**SIN AND CONDEMNATION: THE WORLD'S NEED TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD, 1:18-3:20**

**D. God's Case Against the Religionist (Jew), 2:17-29**

(2:17-29) **Introduction—Religionist—Jew:** this passage is an excellent study of the Christian religionist or church member as well as of the Jew. (See notes, *Religionists*—Lk.15:25-32; 18:9-12 for more discussion.) God's case against the Christian religionist includes four points.

1. The religionist professes religion (v.17-20).
2. The religionist fails to live what he professes (v.21-24).
3. The religionist believes that a ritual (circumcision) is the way to secure God's approval (v.25-27).
4. The religionist misses the whole point: a true religionist is a man who is righteous inwardly (v.28-29).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(2:17-29) **Religionists:** a religionist is a person who is interested in religion and professes religion. It was because of the Jews' extreme interest in religion that they were looked upon as the epitomy of religionists. However, most people are considered religious and profess some religion regardless of nationality. Therefore, most people can be called religionists. There are two classes of religionists.

1. There are those who feel they are *good enough* for God as they are. They feel that they are doing enough good for God to accept them. They cannot believe that God would reject them when they stand face to face with Him. True, they do wrong, but not that much wrong, not enough for God to reject and condemn them for eternity. These persons go about living as they wish, worshipping God only enough to satisfy their consciences. The vast, vast majority of people are in this class of self-righteousness. Few men believe they will be rejected by God and refused entrance into heaven. They feel they have *enough goodness* to make them acceptable to God.

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:5).**

**“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).**

**“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).**

2. There are those who have a sensitive conscience and feel the need to give themselves to *good works* as much as is humanly possible. They work and do good in order to secure the favor of God. They believe that good works is what it takes to make them righteous and to build them up in the eyes of God. Therefore, they labor all their lives trying to build up virtue and merit before God. They try their best to make themselves acceptable to God.

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

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

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

Note that a genuine believer is not being classified as a religionist. The reason is pointed: the true believer does not follow a religion; he follows Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is alive; He is living in another world—the spiritual world, the spiritual dimension of being. The believer is in touch with Him daily, communicating through the Holy Spirit and prayer. What the believer does is follow Christ; he lives the life of Jesus Christ, not the rules of a religion. Therefore, the genuine believer is a disciple of Christ, not of religion.

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**“In whom [Christ] ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph.2:22; cp. 1 Cor.3:16; 6:19).**

**“For to me to live is Christ” (Ph.1:21).**

**“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col.1:27).**

**“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1 Jn.3:24).**

**“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).**

**1** (2:17-20) **Religionists:** the religionist (Jew) professes religion. He accepts the name of his religion whatever it may be, whether Jew, Moslem, or Buddhist; and he shows enough interest in his religion to give him security. Jewish and Christian religionists make ten mistakes.

1. The religionist “rests in the law,” that is, in the Word of God (v.17). He possesses the Scriptures (Bible); he...
  - has it in his home.
  - sometimes reads it.
  - carries it with him to church.
  - honors it as the Word of God.

Because of this, he feels that he pleases God. He rests upon the fact that he possesses God’s Word. By having God’s Word, he feels he has God’s approval and acceptance. But this is the very mistake of the religionist: God does not accept a person because he happens to have God’s Word in his possession. God approves and accepts the person who *does* the Word of God, who lives and obeys the law of God.

**“What advantage then hath the Jew [Christian]? or what profit is there of circumcision [baptism]? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Ro.3:1-2).**

2. The religionist professes God. To “profess” (kauchasai) means to boast, to glory, to feel proud about one’s profession of God and religion. The idea is that one *openly* professes that he believes in God. He is not ashamed of his belief and religious affiliation. He believes in God and he feels safe and secure in his belief. He confesses God and he feels that God accepts him because of his profession.

However, this is *the mistake* of the religionist. God is not interested in a man’s profession but in a man’s life. God wants a man living for Him, not just professing and talking about Him.

**“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:2-4).**

3. The religionist knows God’s will (v.18). He is familiar with the law and the commandments of God. He knows what God wants done; he knows right from wrong. Therefore, he feels he has God’s approval.

However, the religionist fails to see something: knowing God’s will is not enough—a man must do God’s will.

**“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one**

**that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not” (Ezk.33:31-32).**

4. The religionist approves the excellent or better things in life (v.18). He not only knows God’s will, right from wrong; but he...

- is able to discern the more excellent, the better things to do.
- approves, expresses, and proclaims pleasure in the right things.

Because he supports and pushes and approves the better things in life, the religionist feels he pleases God. But this is his mistake. God is not interested in man’s approval of the better things in life. Most men do approve and talk about the better things of life. God wants man living out the better things, living on the level of the more excellent.

**“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn.3:18).**

5. The religionist is taught God’s law and Word (v.18). He is instructed by family, teacher, preacher, friend. The religionist learns God’s Word from someone, and because he knows God’s Word he feels he has a right relationship with God. Again, God’s concern is not in what a person knows, but in what a person does. God expects a person to take what he has learned and put it into practice. God expects a person to live as he has been taught.

**“And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive [practice] instruction” (Jer.32:33).**

**“But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation [behavior] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph.4:20-22).**

6. The religionist is sure he is a guide to the blind (v.19). The word “confident” (pepoithas) means persuaded and sure. The religionist is convinced that religion is true, that religion is the way men should live. He believes that a man who does not believe in God and live a religious life is blind and needs to be guided to the truth. By living a religious life, he feels...

- he is an example to men.
- he is a guide to help men find God.
- he can cure men of their blindness to God and religion.

However, being “confident” that one is a guide of the blind does not mean that one is a true guide. A person must be sure that he himself is following the truth, Jesus Christ (Jn.14:6). There are many guides in the world who are leading people down the wrong road. They are blind guides, the blind leading the blind (Mt.15:14).

**“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (Lk.18:9).**

**“Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way” (Hos.10:13).**

7. The religionist is sure he is an instructor of the foolish (v.20). The word “foolish” means thoughtless, senseless, undirected. It refers to people who walk through life giving no thought to life’s purpose, as to...

- where they have come from.
- why they are here.
- where they are going.

The religionist is persuaded that religion answers all these questions, the basic questions of life. Therefore, he can help the foolish discover meaning and purpose and significance in life. The critical point for the instructor or the religionist is to make sure that his instruction is true. What he instructs must be the truth or else it is all for naught.

**“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor.10:12).**

**“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered” (Pr.28:26).**

8. The religionist is sure he is a light to those in darkness (v.20). The word “darkness” (skotei) here pertains to those who stumble about searching for the light, but are unable to find it. The religionist feels he has found the light; therefore, he is a light to those who are searching for it. However, the religionist makes a serious mistake. Religion is not the light of the world—Jesus Christ is. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.8:12.)

**“Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth” (Jn.9:41).**

**“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev.3:17).**

9. The religionist is sure he is a teacher of the immature (v.20). The word “babes” (nepion) means the infant, the immature, the novice, the proselyte, the new church member. The point is the same: a religionist is not mature in God just because he...

- has been baptized and has been a church member for a long time.
- thinks he is mature.
- serves as a teacher.

What makes a person mature and capable of teaching the immature of the world is experience with Christ, having walked and served with Christ for a long time.

**“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).**

**“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men” (Is.29:13).**

10. The religionist has the law of God, the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth (v.20). The religionist has the Scriptures, the Word of God, at his disposal. He has every opportunity in the world to know the truth. But again, having and knowing and thinking that one can instruct and teach another is not enough. God accepts and uses only those who live the Word, who keep the laws and commandments of God. This is the mistake of the religionist, of the person who professes and does not live the Word.

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Mt.23:23).**

**“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27).**

**“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim.3:5).**

**2** (2:21-24) **Religionists—Hypocrisy—False Profession:** the religionist (Jew) fails to live what he professes. This is seen in five pointed questions.

1. “You who teach others, do you not teach yourself?” The question is not only for teachers, but for everyone, because we all teach others. Throughout life we all claim to know some truths about morality and about how people should live and behave. We often share those truths with our children, friends, fellow workers, and others. When we share and teach, do we not listen to the truth? Do we not teach ourselves? What right do we have to tell others how to live if we do not live that way? This is the sin of hypocrisy, a sin committed by so many religionists.

**“Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Mt.23:28).**

**“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Lk.6:46).**

**“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn.3:18).**

2. “You who say that a person should not steal, do you steal?” Do you take from others; do you...

- steal money?
- steal from your job?
- steal from your neighbor?
- steal from your family?
- steal while shopping?
- steal while taking tests in school?

If you steal, what right do you have to say that others should not steal—that everyone else should not have the right to take what they want from whom they want? If enough people began to take what they wanted when they wanted, then the world would exist in utter chaos. If you say that men should not steal, why do you steal? This is the sin of too many religionists.

Stealing is a sin that leads to utter chaos. Because of its devastating effect, it is one of the ten commandments, and note: it is so important a commandment, it is repeated time and again.

**“Thou shalt not steal” (Ex.20:15; Lev.19:11; Dt.5:19; Mt.19:18; Ro.13:9).**

**“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).**

3. “You who say that a person should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?” You who want pure *brides*, spouses, husbands, wives, sons, and *daughters*, do you live purely? What are you looking at, watching, reading, and hearing? Do you...

- look a second time?
- read pornographic books, magazines, and novels?
- have lustful thoughts?
- harbor sexual thoughts?
- dress in a manner exposing your body?
- watch and support television films that have or suggest scenes of immorality?

Regardless of man’s denial, we do what we think; and our thoughts come from what we see, watch, read, and hear. Therefore, if we look, watch, read, and listen to sexual suggestions, our thoughts center upon fleshly desires. This is the

reason for the breakdown of morals in society. If you say a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? Do you commit it in your mind? This is a major sin among some religionists. Christ knew this; therefore, He said...

**“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:27-28).**

4. “You who abhor idols, do you commit sacrilege?” The word “sacrilege” (hierosuleo) means to violate one’s commitment to God and to rob from God. It means to consider something more important than God, something so important that it *requires*...

- the commitment that you owe God.
- the tithes and offerings that you owe God.

You say that you worship God and abhor idols; yet you take what belongs to God—your commitment, your time, your energy, your tithes—and you give it to something else. You make something else more important than God; you make it an idol. This is one of the major sins of the religionists.

**“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them” (Dt.11:16).**

**“I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Is.42:8).**

**“Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 Jn.5:21).**

5. “You who boast and take pride in the law [the Bible], through breaking the law do you not dishonor God?” The answer is clear.

- ⇒ We do dishonor God when we talk about His Word yet break His commandments.
- ⇒ We do dishonor God before men, causing His name to be blasphemed.

When we boast in God’s Word yet break His commandments, we give great occasion for the world and its people to take the name of God and...

- |             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| • blaspheme | • mock    |
| • curse     | • deny    |
| • reproach  | • insult  |
| • ridicule  | • profane |

Many a person is doomed because of the hypocrisy of religionists. This is one of the terrible sins of religionists.

**“This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).**

**“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).**

**“Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (Jas.3:10).**

**3** (2:25-27) **Religionists:** the religionist believes that *a ritual* is the way to secure God’s praise or approval (for example, circumcision, baptism, and church membership). Just take the word circumcision and substitute whatever ritual a church says is essential for salvation and the meaning of the passage becomes clear. For example, take the ritual of *church membership*.

“Church membership profits a man if he keeps the law: but if he breaks the law, his church membership is made or counted as *unchurch membership*.”

If a religionist does not keep (prasso, practice) God’s law and Word, then his ritual does not count. The man becomes...

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| • unbaptized | • uncircumcised |
| • unchurched | • unwhatever    |

The point is obedience, not ritual. A person is acceptable to God because he lives for God and obeys Him, not because he has undergone some ritual. The next two verses make this pointedly clear (v.26-27).

⇒ “The uncircumcised man who *keeps* the righteousness of the law is counted as circumcised [that is, acceptable to God]” (v.26). A man is not acceptable to God because he has been baptized or joined some church. He becomes acceptable to God because he obeys God, and God’s basic commandment is clear, unquestionably so:

**“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 Jn.3:23).**

⇒ The uncircumcised man who keeps the law actually judges the man who has been circumcised and breaks the law (v.27). The basis of judgment is not to be a ritual, whether baptism or church membership; it is to be obedience. No ritual will ever save a man if he transgresses the law, and no ritual will ever cause a man to be lost if he keeps the law. (See outline and notes—Ro.2:11-15 for more discussion.)

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).**

**“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Mt.12:50).**

**“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (Jn.13:17).**

**“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jas.1:22).**

**“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jn.2:17).**

**4** (2:28-29) **Religionists:** the religionist misses the whole point—a true religionist is a man who is righteous inwardly. This fact is so critical that every one needs to give heed and do something about it. The point is that every man breaks or transgresses the law. Paul has just said:

**“If thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision or baptism is made uncircumcision or unbaptism.”**

Paul will say very shortly:

**“There is none righteous, no, not one” (Ro.3:10).**

**“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Ro.3:23).**

No law and no ritual, whether circumcision or baptism (or any other ritual), is able to make man acceptable to God. Being acceptable to God is not an outward thing. It is...

- not the keeping of any ritual or law (Ro.2:21-27).
- not nationality or heritage.
- not being born of any particular race or family, whether Jewish or Christian (Ro.3:1-20; 9:6-13).

True religion—being acceptable to God—is inward. It is of the heart, of the spirit. It is of God. It is being born again of God’s Spirit (Jn.3:3-8). It is not of man; therefore, God is to be praised, not man (Ro.2:28-29).

**“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh” (Ezk.36:26).**

**“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (Jn.1:13).**

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn.3:3).**

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:5).**

**“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pt.1:23).**

**“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn.5:1).**

God’s true people are the people who have been circumcised spiritually—in the heart. The real Jews, God’s true people, are those who have had the skin of disease (sin) cut out of their heart. They are the people who have been spiritually converted.

**“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision [operation, cutting] of Christ” (Col.2:11).**

**“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Col.3:11).**

**“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Ph.3:3).**

**“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Dt.30:6).**

**“Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart” (Jer.4:4).**

**“To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it” (Jer.6:10).**

**“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean” (Is.52:1).**

Moses confessed that he was a man of “uncircumcised lips” (Ex.6:12, 30). Man’s “uncircumcised heart” must be humbled if he wishes God to remember His covenant and give man the promised land of heaven (Lev.26:41-42).

| CHAPTER 3  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1 What profit is there in being a Jew, a religionist—in being circumcised or baptized?</b></p> <p>a. He is privileged<br/>b. He is entrusted with &amp; made responsible for God's Word</p> <p><b>2 Does unbelief void God's promises—make God a liar?<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p>a. Perish the idea<br/>b. God's Word stands even if every man is a liar<br/>c. God will prove His Word</p> | <p><b>E. The Arguments of the Religionist (Jew) Against a Heart Religion, 3:1-8</b><br/>(Cp. Ro.2:23-29)</p> <p>What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?<br/>2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.<br/>3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?<br/>4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in</p> | <p>thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.<br/>5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteous of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)<br/>6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?<br/>7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?<br/>8 And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.</p> | <p>d. God will overcome those who judge Him &amp; His Word<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p><b>3 Is God unjust if He takes vengeance?</b></p> <p>a. God forbid<br/>b. God is moral: He must judge the world<br/>c. The contradiction of such an argument</p> <p>d. The damnation of persons who argue such is just</p> |

## DIVISION II

### SIN AND CONDEMNATION: THE WORLD'S NEED TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD, 1:18-3:20

#### E. The Arguments of the Religionist (Jew) Against a Heart Religion, 3:1-8

(3:1-8) **Introduction:** Paul has said there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, between a religionist and other men (chapters 1-3). All men stand before God guilty of sin and condemned. Now at this point Paul imagines the religionist seeing exactly what he is saying. The religionist also sees the tremendous weight of Paul's argument; therefore, he strains to counter Paul with three arguments, arguments often made by Christian religionists and church members who profess Christ and attend church only enough to salve their consciences. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Religionists*—Ro.2:17-29; 2:17-20 for a discussion of who the religionist is.)

1. What profit is there in being a religionist—in being circumcised or baptized (v.1-2)?
2. Does unbelief void God's promises—make God a liar (v.3-4)?
3. Is God unjust if He takes vengeance (v.5-8)?

**1** (3:1-2) **Religionists—Word of God—Jew:** the question is, "What profit is there in being a Jew or a religionist—in being circumcised or baptized or a church member? What do you do with the Jew who is Abraham's seed? The promise of God to Abraham was that his seed (the Jewish nation) would be the children of God (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22; cp. Gen.12:1-4). If a man is born a Jew (born into a Jewish family) and he professes to be a Jew, a follower of God, is he not acceptable to God (Ro.2:17-29; cp. v.1-29)? If not, then what profit is there in being a professing Jew, a follower of God? You are saying there is no advantage in being a Jew or a child of Abraham."

The application of this passage concerns every man. If a man is born a Jew or a Christian (the right nationality), if a man is born into a Jewish or Christian family (the right heritage), or if a man claims to be a Jew or a Christian religionist, and he is *still* not acceptable to God, what profit is there in being a religionist?

Paul's answer is simple: the advantages are great. The Jew and Christian are highly privileged, especially in that God has committed His Word to them (Ro.3:2; 9:4-5). They have the privilege...

- of possessing God's Word.
- of reading, hearing, seeing, obeying, and living God's Word.
- of living within a society that has been affected by God's Word.

These are enormous privileges. A man born within a nation and a family that has God's Word has every advantage in coming to God and in living for God. In fact, such a man could have no greater privilege. His privileges are so great that he is left without excuse if he fails to live for God.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (Jn.5:24).

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (Jn.6:63).

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (Jn.6:68).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death" (Jn.8:51).

“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (Jn.15:3).

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph.5:26).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 Jn.5:13).

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Ps.119:9).

“For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Pr.6:23).

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pr.14:34).

**2** (3:3-4) **Unbelief—Religionist—Salvation:** the question is, “If you say some Jews do not believe and are condemned, doesn’t that void God’s promises and make God a liar?” Or to say it another way, “What if some disbelieve and reject God’s Word, will their unbelief cause God to void His Word and promises? God promised the Jews a special place and special privileges through Abraham and his seed (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22). If some Jews do not believe God’s promises and God condemns them, isn’t He breaking His promise to Abraham and his seed? Isn’t He voiding His Word and Covenant and making Himself a liar? God’s Word could not be based on heart religion and on moral character alone. There has to be something else, something outward—a rite (circumcision, baptism, church membership)—that shows we are religious (Jews). If we go through the rite or ritual, then God is bound to accept us. He has promised to so accept us. He is not going to break His Word.”

The application of this question concerns every religionist. The thinking religionist poses the same objection and question: “If you say some religionists do not believe and are condemned, doesn’t that void God’s Word and make God a liar? God’s Word promises the religious person special privileges and the hope of eternal life. His Word tells us to believe Christ and to possess His Word, be baptized and join the fellowship of the church. If we do that and God still condemns us, is He not voiding His Word and becoming a liar?”

- ⇒ God forbid.
- ⇒ God will be faithful. His Word and promise of salvation will stand even if *every* man lies about believing and lies about giving his heart to serve Jesus.
- ⇒ God will prove His Word: He will be justified and proven faithful in what He has said. He will still save *any person* who gives his heart to Jesus and obeys Jesus.
- ⇒ In fact, God will overcome; He will prove His Word another way. He will judge all who make a false profession and who judge Him and His Word, who accuse Him of being unfaithful and voiding His Word. David himself said that God would judge the unfaithful or disobedient man (Ps.51:4). David had sinned greatly, not keeping the commandments of God, so God judged David and charged him with sin. David did the right thing: he confessed his sin and repented, beginning to live righteously. David also did something else: he declared that God’s charge and judgment against him were *just*, that God was perfectly justified. And God was, for God is always just, and He is always justified in what He says and does.

The point is twofold.

1. God is not unfaithful. God never breaks or voids His Word when He rejects the religionist. The religionist who possesses God’s Word and belongs to a church but does not obey God’s Word is not acceptable to God. It is righteousness God is after, not religion. God is not after an outward religion, but an *inward righteousness*. God wants a heart that will not only possess the Bible, but will keep His commandments. God is after a spiritual rebirth, a new creation, a man who has been truly born again. God wants a heart and life that are focused upon Christ and that keep the commandments of Christ. The only man who is acceptable to God is the man who has given his heart and life to Christ and who lives righteously, trusting God to accept His faith in Christ. (Cp. Ro.2:28-29.)

2. God never voids His Word or promises; He never has and never will be a liar. God has promised salvation and eternal life to men. Even if there should never be a single person who believed God’s promise, His promise would still stand. He would still save any person who did what He said.

The problem is in doing what God says, in coming to God as He dictates. God demands that men give their hearts and lives to His Son, Jesus Christ. God demands that men live for Christ, worship and obey Him. But this is too hard for men. They want an *easier* salvation. They want to be able to do something, get it over with, and then be free to live as they wish, giving God some attention here and there. Therefore, men prefer to be saved by being religious: being baptized, joining a church, buying a Bible, and then being free to go about their own lives. But this is *not enough* for God; it is *not doing everything* that God says; it is not giving one’s heart and life to live for Jesus Christ by obeying, worshipping, and serving Him. Therefore, God...

- charges the religionist with sin.
- judges and condemns the religionist.

Now note another fact. God fulfills His Word by judging the religionists. God has told men how to live and what would happen if they failed. Therefore, He is “justified in His sayings” by following through and by judging the religionists.

- ⇒ God will not void and break His Word. He will fulfill it all.
- ⇒ God is justified in fulfilling His Word by doing exactly what He said, that is, in accepting men *only* as He said and in judging men if they do not come to Him as He commands.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(3:3) **Unbelief—Man, Errors:** this is one of two common but gross deceptions of men—that unbelief makes a thing ineffective and voids it. A man argues: “If I deny something, ignore it, refuse to accept it, and push it out of my mind, it will not be, nor will it come to pass.” Some even think of God’s Word in this way. They think they can deny and reject some part of it and it will not be so. They accept the Scriptures that stress the love of God and allow them to live as they wish, but they reject the Scriptures that stress the supernatural and miraculous power of God and the desperate need of man to be saved from sin, death, and an eternal hell. They reject the Scriptures that demand that man live responsibly.

**“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Mt.5:18).**

**“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away” (Lk.21:33).**

**“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself” (2 Tim.2:13).**

**“The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure” (Ps.111:7).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(3:4) **Judging—Judgment:** men judge God. They judge Him to be true or false. They judge whether He exists or does not exist. They judge His Word. But in the final hour, God will end up judging men. He will overcome all those who judged Him to be less than He is and less than what He said.

**“But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things” (Ro.2:2).**

**“For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezk.12:25).**

**3** (3:5-8) **Love—Justice:** the question is, “Is God unjust if He takes vengeance? If my unbelief and sin give God a chance to overcome (v.4) and to show His justice, then my sin brings greater glory to Him. It gives Him a chance to fulfill His Word. How can He punish me for that? Is He not unjust in inflicting punishment?” The answer is fourfold.

1. God forbid (me genoito): away with such a thought! No! Never!
2. God is moral; therefore, He must judge the world. He would not be moral and just if He did not judge the world.
3. Such an argument is contradictory. Think about it. “If my sin and disobedience give God a chance to demonstrate His righteousness, why then am I called a sinner for that? My sin is really a good thing. It gives God a chance to show how good He is. I may sin, yes, but only good has come out of it. When God accepts me as I am, a sinner, God has a chance to show how gloriously merciful He is. You can’t condemn me for giving God a chance to show His mercy.”
4. The damnation of persons who argue this point is *just*; it is not unjust. Such arguments are common among every generation of men, but the arguments are gross deceptions. A man exclaims: “A God of love cannot take vengeance. He is too good and loving. He will be denying His very nature of love if He judges me.”

What this argument fails to see is that *genuine love is just*. Love expressed unjustly is not love; it is license and indulgence. God’s love is perfect, absolutely unbiased, and impartial. It is shed upon all (Jn.3:16; 1 Jn.2:2). It is not license and indulgence; neither can it be, not in its perfection. Neither can it allow license and indulgence. God’s love is completely and perfectly just. It demands justice. In no respect can it be unjust by failing to judge. Neither can God be accused of being unloving when He executes justice (Ro.2:2-16). God’s love is just; God’s justice is the demonstration of perfect love. The cross was where God exacted His perfect justice upon His Son, and it is the perfect example of the glorious truth. The cross is the perfect demonstration of both the love and the justice of God.

**Thought 1.** The cross is the perfect demonstration of God’s love and justice.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).**

**“Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

**Thought 2.** Men shall be judged and condemned if they have rejected the love and salvation of God provided in His Son, Jesus Christ.

**“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Mt.16:27).**

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt.25:31-32).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10).

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Pt.3:7).

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14-15).

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev.20:12).

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev.22:12).

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 The charge: All men are under sin</b></p>   | <p><b>F. God's Case Against All Men, 3:9-20</b></p> <p>9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;</p>  | <p>lips:<br/>14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:<br/>15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:</p>   | <p>d. Cursing &amp; bitter</p>   |
| <p><b>2 The case of a sinful nature</b><br/>a. Unrighteous<br/>b. Ignorant<br/>c. Indifferent—selfish<br/><br/>d. Crooked<br/><br/>e. Useless<br/>f. Evil</p> | <p>10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:<br/>11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.<br/>12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.</p> | <p>16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:<br/>17 And the way of peace have they not known:<br/>18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.<br/>19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.</p> | <p><b>4 The case of sinful acts</b><br/>a. Murderous<br/>b. Oppressive, causing misery<br/>c. Restless, disturbed, warring<br/>d. Godless, irreverent, disrespectful</p>   |
| <p><b>3 The case of a sinful tongue</b><br/>a. Foul &amp; corrupt<br/>b. Deceitful<br/>c. Piercing &amp; poisonous</p>  | <p>13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their</p>   | <p>20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.</p>   | <p><b>5 The case of the law</b><br/><br/>a. It speaks to all who are under the law<br/>b. It stops all boasting<br/>c. It makes all the world guilty<br/>d. It justifies no flesh<br/><br/>e. It shows man that he is sinful</p> |

**DIVISION II**

**SIN AND CONDEMNATION: THE WORLD'S NEED TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD, 1:18-3:20**

**F. God's Case Against All Men, 3:9-20**

(3:9-20) **Man, Depravity—Salvation:** in looking at such passages as this, a person must keep in mind the whole point of the passage. The point is not to charge man with sin, nor to berate man; it is not to look upon man with cynical contempt. The point is not to call man to hopelessness and despair, leaving him with a hanged head and low self-esteem. The point is to give man hope: to challenge man to seek a right relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Man must *never minimize* his sin, lest he ignore or neglect the right way to God. But neither must he minimize the redeeming power of Jesus Christ, lest he hang his head in hopelessness, or wallow in self-pity, or roam the world in despair.

1. The charge: all men are under sin (v.9).
2. The case of a sinful nature (v.10-12).
3. The case of a sinful tongue (v.13-14).
4. The case of sinful acts (v.15-18).
5. The case of the law (v.19-20).

**1** (3:9) **Sin—Man, Nature:** all men are under sin. The words “under sin” (hupo hamartian) mean to be subject to the power of or under the authority of. A man outside of Jesus Christ is under the power of sin and he is helpless to escape from it (cp. Gal.3:10, 25; 4:2, 21; 5:18; 1 Tim.6:1).

The religionist (Jew) is “under sin” just as much as other men are “under sin.” The Scripture has just declared that being religious does not make men acceptable to God (cp. Ro.2:17-28). Religionists are shocked: “What then! Are we not better—do we not have any advantage over other men? Are we not better if we...

- have the Bible?”
- profess God?”
- know God's will?”
- approve the best things?”
- study the Word of God?”
- guide and teach others?”
- know the truth?”

The answer is a strong exclamation: “No! Not at all! Not in any way are you better than other people. Both Jews and Gentiles, both religionists and non-religionists—you are all under sin.”

Now note. This has been the point of all that has been said in Romans...

- God has a case against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Ro.1:18-32).
- God has a case against the moralist (Ro.2:1-16).
- God has a case against the religionist (Jew) (Ro.2:17-3:8).

Scripture shows that God has a case against all men. All men are “under sin.” And the fact is clearly seen by any person who will honestly look at man and his world.

**“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Ro.3:23).**

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Ro.5:12).

“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal.3:22).

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn.1:8).

“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 Jn.5:19).

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen.6:5).

“There is no man that sinneth not” (1 Ki.8:46).

“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” (Ps.130:3).

“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Pr.20:9).

“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Eccl.7:20).

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is.53:6).

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind, have taken us away” (Is.64:6).

**2** (3:10-12) **Man, Nature—Sin:** there is the case of a sinful nature.

1. A sinful nature is unrighteous (v.10; cp. Ps.14:1): “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Not a single person is righteous, that is, perfect and sinless—not by nature nor by act. No man has ever lived a perfect life, not perfect...

- in every thought
- in every word
- in every act

“There is none righteous [perfect, sinless] no, not one.” By nature, man is sinful.

“The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil” (Jn.7:7).

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19-21).

2. A sinful nature is ignorant (v.11; cp. Ps.14:2): “There is none that understands [sunion].” Not a single person grasps, comprehends, or perceives. The word literally means *to put things together*. It means to look at things and to intelligently discern and comprehend the truth. No man looks at the world and thinks and puts the truth of things together—not perfectly—not about...

- |             |                      |
|-------------|----------------------|
| • God       | • the origin of all  |
| • man       | • the purpose of all |
| • the world | • the destiny of all |

No one looks at the world and intelligently discerns the truth of things, not in grasping the truth...

- of where they have come from
- of why they are here
- of where they are going

“There is none that understands.”

“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27).

“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim.3:7).

“They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course” (Ps.82:5).

“But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel” (Mic.4:12).

3. A sinful nature is indifferent and selfish (v.11; cp. Ps.14:2): “There is none that seeks after God.” The word “seek after” (ekzeteo) means to seek out and search for. The idea is that of a diligent, careful, determined seeking and searching. No one searches and seeks after God, not after the only living and true God, not with so careful and determined a spirit. Why? Because men are indifferent and selfish. Men want gods that allow them to do their own thing.

- ⇒ Some want gods that allow them to glory in self by demonstrating their extreme self-discipline and sacrifice.
- ⇒ Others want gods who demand less and who allow them to live as they wish, in the pleasures and greed and possessions of this world.

Men do not want a God who is true and living. If He is true and living, it means He is Supreme, the only One who is to be glorified and honored and obeyed. Therefore, in dealing with the only living and true God, men are indifferent and selfish. “There is none that seeketh after God.” By nature men are sinful, indifferent, and selfish.

“...without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph.2:12).

“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Tim.1:9-10).

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” (1 Jn.2:22).

“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts” (Ps.10:4).

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good” (Ps.14:1).

“Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?” (Mal.3:14).

4. A sinful nature is crooked (v.12; cp. Ps.14:3): “They are all gone out of the way.” The Greek means that men lean out, turn away, and turn aside...

- from God.
- from the way that leads to God.
- to another way.

Men are crooked; they are not straight with God. They do not follow God nor pursue the right way to God. They take another path, another road, another way.

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling” (1 Tim.1:5-6).

“For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Pt.2:25).

“Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Pt.2:15).

“[The ungodly are] raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 13).

“The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead” (Pr.21:16).

“As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place” (Pr.27:8).

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is.53:6).

5. A sinful nature is useless (v.12; cp. Ps.14:3): “They are together become unprofitable” (achreioo). The word means to become worthless, useless, sour, bad. (Cp. sour milk.) All men without Christ are worthless, useless, sour, bad.

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Mt.5:13).

“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt.25:30).

“For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?” (Lk.9:25).

“Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Lk.14:34-35).

6. A sinful nature is evil (v.12; cp. Ps.14:3): “There is none that doeth good, no, not one.” The word “good” (chrestotes) means moral goodness, kindness, graciousness, gentleness, justice. All men fail in being good toward God and their neighbor, in being...

- |            |          |
|------------|----------|
| • kind     | • gentle |
| • gracious | • just   |

Men come short—too often, too much. “There is none that doeth good [not always, not perfectly], no, not one.”

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (Mt.23:27).

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mk.7:21-23).

**3** (3:13-14) **Tongue—Man, Nature:** there is the case of a sinful tongue.

1. A sinful tongue is foul and corrupt (v.13; cp. Ps.5:9): “Their throat is an open sepulchre [grave].” An open grave is foul, and it is a symbol of corruption. So is a man with a sinful mouth. His mouth is...

- |           |              |                |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| • foul    | • polluted   | • profane      |
| • dirty   | • filthy     | • dishonorable |
| • obscene | • detestable | • offensive    |

The obscene mouth may range from off-colored humor to dirty jokes, from immoral suggestions to outright propositions. But no matter, a man with a foul mouth stinks just like an open grave; his filthiness causes corruption, the decay of character. The filth from his mouth eats and eats away at his character and at the character of his listeners so much that he becomes as offensive as that of a decayed corpse. The foul, filthy mouth kills character, its attractiveness, trust, faithfulness, morality, honor, and godliness.

**“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Mt.12:34).**

**“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell” (Jas.3:6).**

**“For their heart studieth destruction, and the lips talk of mischief” (Pr.24:2).**

2. A sinful tongue is deceitful (v.13; cp. Ps.5:9): “They have used deceit.” The Hebrew says, “They *make* smooth their tongue.” A deceitful person has...

- |                     |                        |                           |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| • a false tongue    | • a misleading tongue  | • a deluding tongue       |
| • a lying tongue    | • a treacherous tongue | • a flattering tongue     |
| • a cheating tongue | • a beguiling tongue   | • a smooth talking tongue |

The word “deceit” (edoliousan) is continuous action: “They kept on deceiving.” Man is not only guilty of deceiving, but of constantly deceiving. He is *constantly* hiding and camouflaging his true thoughts and feelings and behavior, seeking to protect himself or to get whatever he is after.

**“His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity” (Ps.10:7).**

**“The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good” (Ps.36:3).**

**“The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords” (Ps.55:21).**

**“I said in my haste, All men are liars” (Ps.116:11).**

**“And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity” (Jer.9:5).**

**“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer.17:9).**

**“For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth” (Mic.6:12).**

**“Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not” (Nah.3:1).**

3. A sinful tongue is piercing and poisonous (v.13; cp. Ps.140:3): “The poison of asps is under their lips.” The asp (aspidon) is the cobra, a deadly snake. God charges men with having tongues that are just as piercing and poisonous as the tongue of the deadly cobra. The idea is that the tongues of some people have a diabolical nature; they are filled with so much malice that they set out to inflict punishment. A poisonous tongue...

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • talks and gossips about          | • desires to cause suffering |
| • strikes out against              | • lies in wait to strike     |
| • inserts and spreads venom        | • seeks to hurt and destroy  |
| • poisons character and reputation |                              |

**“But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth” (Col.3:8).**

**“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings” (1 Pt.2:1).**

**“There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword” (Pr.12:18).**

**“They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders’ poison is under their lips” (Ps.140:3).**

4. A sinful tongue is full of cursing and bitterness (v.14; cp. Ps.10:7): “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” Cursing is sin; a cursing tongue is a sinful tongue. (See outline, note, and DEEPER STUDY # 1,2,3,4—Mt.5:33-37; note and DEEPER STUDY # 5—23:16-22 for more discussion.) Jesus Christ says:

**“Swear not at all....but let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Mt.5:34, 37).**

a. Men use profanity; in fact, their mouth is full of cursing and swearing. They curse both God and men. Their cursing may range from what society considers to be a mild word of slang to using God’s name in vain.

No matter how mild or how acceptable to society, it is sin. God's case against man is that his mouth is full of cursing (cp. Jas.3:8-10).

**"But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne" (Mt.5:34).**

**"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (Jas.3:8-10).**

**"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation" (Jas.5:12).**

**"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex.20:7).**

**"And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD" (Lev.19:12).**

**"For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride; and for cursing and lying which they speak" (Ps.59:12).**

**"For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others" (Eccl.7:22).**

Note a man's cursing shall fall upon him.

**"As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones" (Ps.109:17-18.)**

- b. Man's mouth is also full of bitterness. His tongue is often...
- sharp
  - cold
  - intense
  - distasteful
  - resentful
  - harsh
  - relentless
  - unpleasant
  - cynical
  - stressful

Any expression involving any of these is sin to God. God desires men to be filled with love and joy and peace and to express such. Anything less than the expression of these is sin. This is God's case against men: a tongue full of cursing and bitterness.

**"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Eph.4:31).**

**"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb.12:15).**

**"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" (Jas.3:14).**

**4 (3:15-18) Man, Nature:** there is the case of sinful acts.

1. Sinful acts are murderous acts (v.15; cp. Is.59:7): "Their feet are swift to shed blood." Note the word "swift." Men jump to kill; they are ready to spill and pour out blood...

- out of hurt and shame.
- to have their own way.
- to get what they want.

Men are cruel; they have natures that are prideful, selfish, and greedy. They seek and seek to possess, even if it means turning against others and inflicting...

- pain and suffering
- grief and injury
- teasing and tormenting
- killing and slaughtering
- mutilating and mangling

God's case against man is that he is a murderer. His feet are "swift to shed blood."

**"Thou shalt not kill" (Ex.20:13).**

**"Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder" (Mt.19:18).**

**"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters" (1 Pt.4:15).**

**"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 Jn.3:15).**

**"For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood" (Pr.1:16).**

2. Sinful acts are oppressive acts that destroy and cause misery (v.16; cp. Is.59:7): “Destruction and misery are in their ways.” Man is oppressive; he destroys and causes misery wherever he goes. Because of his pride, selfishness, and greed, man destroys...

- the land (pollution)
- the cities
- the nations
- the country
- the government
- the people
- the shops
- the houses
- the property

He destroys and causes misery wherever he goes, even within his own family, neighborhood, and city. Whether by simple argument within his own family or by war, he is so destructive and full of misery that he brings destruction and misery wherever he goes.

3. Sinful acts are restless, disturbing, and warring acts (v.17; cp. Is.59:8): “And the way of peace have they not known.” The idea is that men do not experience peace. They do not possess peace within themselves nor among others. They do not know peaceful ways, do not know...

- how to secure peace.
- how to keep peace.

Men are not peaceful within; they are restless. Their own soul is a civil war that experiences constant conflict. Therefore, men fail to secure peace not only within themselves, but among others. Wherever men are, they disturb and bring faction and war to others. This is God’s case against men.

**“In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see” (Dt.28:67).**

**“For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity” (Eccl.2:22-23).**

**“There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked” (Is.48:22).**

**“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt” (Is.57:20).**

**“The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace” (Is.59:8).**

**“Our necks are under persecution: we labour, and have no rest” (Lam.5:5).**

**“Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none” (Ezk.7:25).**

4. Sinful acts are godless, irreverent, disrespectful acts (v.18; cp. Ps.36:1): “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Their eyes and their attention are focused upon other things. They ignore and neglect God, living as though there is no God. They sense little if any responsibility toward God. They do not fear God; they do not fear His anger or wrath or judgment against them. They sense little desire or need to worship God or to study His Word and will. They seldom if ever praise and honor Him or do as He commands. The fear of God is not before their eyes; therefore, this is God’s case against men.

**“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Ro.1:28).**

**“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves” (Ro.2:14).**

**“For he [the ungodly] hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God” (Job 34:9).**

**“But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night” (Job 35:10).**

**“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts” (Ps.10:4).**

**“The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes” (Ps.36:1).**

**“They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof” (Pr.1:30).**

**5** (3:19-20) **Law:** there is the case of the law or Scripture. Note five points.

1. The law or Scripture speaks to all. Note the words “we know.” Paul means that this is an obvious truth, a clear truth that cannot be missed. All that has just been said has been quoted from Scripture (v.9-18), and Scripture speaks and is intended for everyone. Therefore, all are guilty before God, both Jew and Gentile. Scripture charges everyone with sin, declaring that “all are under sin”—all are subject to its power and authority. No one escapes the charge of God’s law. The case of God’s law is against everyone, both religionist and heathen.

2. The law or Scripture stops all boasting, every mouth that acts self-sufficient and declares the goodness of men. In light of man’s sinful nature, tongue, and behavior, who can boast? Who can declare man’s goodness and righteousness and capabilities? Who can say anything against God’s case against men? Scripture declares that no man is good, leaving only One who could be good, and that is God. God alone is good; God alone deserves praise, honor, and glory. Man can boast in God and in God alone. Man is silenced; he has no reason and no right to boast in himself. The law, God’s case against man, stops his mouth.

**“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Ro.3:21).**

**“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Ro.5:20).**

**“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Ro.7:7).**

**“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Ro.10:3).**

**“[The law] was added because of transgressions” (Gal.3:19).**

(See outline and notes—Ro.7:7-13 for more discussion.)

3. The law or Scripture makes all the world guilty before God. God’s law declares:

**“There is none righteous, no, not one” (Ro.3:10).**

**“There is none that doeth good [not perfectly], no, not one” (Ro.3:12).**

**“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal.3:10).**

**“The whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 Jn.5:19).**

No one escapes. All the world stands face to face before God—stands imperfect, stands short of His glory, stands guilty of sin.

4. The law justifies no flesh. Note carefully what is being said.

⇒ No law and no deed of the law will ever justify a man (make him acceptable to God).

⇒ Man cannot be justified by keeping any law or work.

⇒ Man cannot be justified by any righteousness or good deed of his own.

⇒ No flesh, no man, will be justified in God’s sight, not by the law.

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

**“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them” (Gal.3:11-12).**

**“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Tim.1:9-10).**

5. The law shows man that he is sinful. The purpose of the law is not to justify, but to point out sin, to tell a man that he is a sinner. The law was given to make a man aware of his sin. Why? So that man would know he is sinful and that he needs to seek God for forgiveness and salvation.

**“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:21-24).**

**“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:3; cp. Heb.7:19).**

**“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal.2:16; cp. Gal.3:24-27).**

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).**

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| <p><b>1 Righteousness is now revealed</b><br/> a. The rgt. without law<br/> b. The rgt. foretold</p> <p>c. The rgt. by Christ</p> <p><b>2 Rgt. is for everyone</b><br/> a. All who believe<br/> b. All who need: "There is</p> | <p><b>III. FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21</b></p> <p><b>A. Righteousness: The Way to Be Right with God, 3:21-26</b></p> <p>21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;<br/> 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for</p> | <p>there is no difference:<br/> 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;<br/> 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:<br/> 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;<br/> 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.</p> | <p>no difference"<br/> 1) All have sinned<br/> 2) All come short of God's glory<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p><b>3 Rgt. is only possible through justification</b><br/> a. Is free—by grace<br/> b. Is through redemption<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p><b>4 Rgt. is by an act of God alone: By propitiation</b></p> <p><b>5 Rgt. has one great purpose: To proclaim God's personal righteousness</b><br/> a. That He forgives sin<br/> b. That He is forbearing<br/> c. That He is just<br/> d. That He is the justifier of believers</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21**

**A. Righteousness: The Way to be Right With God, 3:21-26**

(3:21-26) **Introduction—Righteousness:** the "righteousness of God" is used in three ways in Scripture.

1. Righteousness refers to God's character. It means the righteousness, justice, and perfection which God Himself possesses and shows.
2. Righteousness reveals man's lack of godly character. It means the sinful, depraved, unrighteous, unjust, and imperfect nature and behavior of man.
3. Righteousness means the perfection which God provides for man in Christ Jesus. When a man allows the Lord Jesus Christ to take his sins, he is given the righteousness of God. Christ robes the man in the righteousness of God Himself—by faith (2 Cor.5:21; Ph.3:9).

The context is usually clear as to which meaning is meant. (See DEEPER STUDY # 5, *Righteousness*—Mt.5:6 for more discussion.)

1. Righteousness is now revealed (v.21-22).
2. Righteousness is for everyone (v.22-23).
3. Righteousness is only possible through justification (v.24).
4. Righteousness is by an act of God alone: by propitiation (v.25).
5. Righteousness has one purpose: to proclaim God's personal righteousness (v.25-26).

**1** (3:21-22) **Righteousness—Law:** righteousness is now revealed. God has "now" revealed *how* man is to get right with Him. The word "now" is a cataclysmic breaking point in the message of Romans. It points to a pivotal point in human history. It is saying two things.

- ⇒ Before, back then, hundreds and hundreds of years ago, God had patience in that He put up with man's attempts at self-righteousness through the law. *But now* the period of God's righteousness has come—the righteousness that is found in God's very own Son.
- ⇒ Before, back then, man sinned and sinned, learning the impossibility of putting away his own sin. Man's period of time under law showed him the impossibility of securing righteousness on his own. *But now* the period of God's righteousness has come—the righteousness that is found in God's very own Son.

1. God's righteousness for man is "without law." Righteousness has to be without law, for the law fails in two critical areas.

- a. The law does not allow disobedience; it requires obedience. Anyone who disobeys the law becomes a lawbreaker, a transgressor. He is guilty and to be condemned.
- b. The law does not have the power to make a person obedient. It does not have the power to prevent a person from disobeying. It only shows a person's disobedience and inadequate strength to be obedient. It only reveals a person's inability to secure any righteousness whatsoever by self-effort. Therefore, if God was to have men living in His presence, He had to provide a righteousness "without law." There had to be a righteousness that had nothing to do with law.

2. God's righteousness for man was foretold by the Old Testament (prophets and law). This is clearly seen in the next chapter in the lives of Abraham and David (Ro.4:1f). (Cp. Jn.5:39, 46; 1 Pt.1:10-11.)

3. God's righteousness is revealed in Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ came to earth, He came to *reveal* the perfect righteousness of God. Jesus Christ came to live...

- the Sinless life
- the Perfect life
- the Ideal life
- the Representative life
- the Pattern life

Jesus Christ is the perfect embodiment of God's righteousness. In fact, Jesus Christ is God's righteousness; or to say it another way, the righteousness of God is Jesus Christ. God's righteousness is now revealed in and through Jesus Christ Himself. (See note—Ro.5:1 for more discussion.)

**“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:4).**

**“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness” (1 Cor.1:30).**

**“[That I may] be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).**

**2** (3:22-23) **Righteousness—Sin:** righteousness is for everyone. Scripture is clear in its declaration.

1. Righteousness is for all who believe. Note that righteousness is both *given* “to” the believer and *laid* “upon” the believer.

a. Righteousness is given “to” the believer as a *possession*.

**“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature [righteousness], having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).**

**“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).**

b. Righteousness is laid “upon” the believer as a *covering* or clothing.

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).**

**“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God....And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:3, 10).**

2. Righteousness is needed by all. There is no difference and no distinction between men. There are two reasons.

a. All men are sinners. The word “sinned” (harmartano) is in the Greek aorist tense; that is, it is a once-for-all happening. It looks back to the historical entrance of sin into the world. This means that all men...

- inherited the nature of their sinful fathers and mothers.
- have sinned and are sinners.
- cannot keep from sinning and will sin.

**“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Ro.3:23).**

**“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal.3:22).**

**“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn.1:8).**

**“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 Jn.5:19).**

**“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen.6:5).**

**“There is no man that sinneth not” (1 Ki.8:46).**

**“Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Ps.53:3; cp. Ps.14:3).**

**“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Pr.20:9).**

**“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Eccl.7:20).**

**“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is.53:6).**

**“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Is.64:6).**

**“The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net” (Mic.7:2).**

b. All men “come short of God's glory.” The tense is present: all men are *coming short*, that is, *continually coming short* of God's glory. Men are in a state or condition of being short of God's glory (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Glory*—Ro.3:23 for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(3:23) **Glory—God, Glory of:** the “glory of God” is God’s standard for man. It means His *moral glory*. It means His excellence, splendor, brilliance, brightness, magnificence, preeminence, dignity, majesty, and grace. It means the absolute perfection of God, the perfection of His person. It is this “glory of God” which demands that man correspond perfectly with God—if man wishes to be at peace with God and to live in His presence.

1. Glory is *light*, perfect light. It is the very highest degree of light: the perfection of splendor, brightness, brilliance, resplendence. This is seen in many passages.

- ⇒ John saw how bright the glory of God is when he had the vision of the new Jerusalem. (The new Jerusalem
- ⇒ will be the center or capital of world government in the new heavens and earth.)

“The holy Jerusalem...having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone, most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev.21:10-11).

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev.21:23).

- ⇒ Jesus experienced the light of God’s glory.

“And [Jesus] was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light” (Mt.17:2).

- ⇒ Paul experienced the light of God’s glory.

“There shone a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground....And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus” (Acts 22:6, 11; cp. 9:3-9).

- ⇒ Moses experienced the light of God’s glory.

“Moses wist [knew] not that the skin of his face shone while he [God] talked with him...the skin of his face shone; and they [the people] were afraid to come nigh him” (Ex.34:29-30; cp. 29-35).

2. Glory is purity, perfect purity. It is the very highest degree of virtue and goodness, of quality and morality. It is the highest excellence of character and the perfection of being.

“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 Jn.1:5).

“There is none good but One, that is, God” (Mt.19:17).

“Your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Mt.5:48).

“Thou only art holy” (Rev.15:4).

3. Glory is majesty, perfect majesty. It is the very highest degree of preeminence and magnificence, of dignity and honor, of meriting worship and praise.

“I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up....And one cried unto another, and said, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory” (Is.6:1, 3).

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place” (Is.57:15).

“The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty” (Ps.93:1; cp. 97:1).

4. Glory is being, perfect being. It is the very highest degree of worth, quality and merit, preciousness and value. (See note—Jn.17:2-3.)

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev.4:11).

“I am He: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Is.43:10).

“There is none good but One, that is, God” (Mt.19:17).

**3** (3:24) **Righteousness—Justification:** righteousness is possible only through justification (see notes, *Justification—Ro.1:17*; DEEPER STUDY # 1—4:22; 5:1 for discussion). Note two significant facts.

1. Justification is a free gift of God. Man in no way earns it. Man is justified by God’s grace and by God’s grace alone. (See notes, *Grace—Ro.4:16*; Tit.2:15 for more discussion.)

2. Justification is only through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Redemption—Ro.3:24* for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(3:24) **Redemption** (apolutroseos): to redeem, to deliver by paying a price. (See note, *Redemption*—Eph.1:7 for more discussion.) The word is used three ways in the New Testament.

1. It means to redeem (agorazo): to deliver; to set free from the slave market of sin, death, and hell.

**“For ye are bought [redeemed] with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“Ye are bought [redeemed] with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (1 Cor.7:23).**

**“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily [deceptively] shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought [redeemed] them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).**

2. It means to redeem *out of* (exagorazo): to deliver *out of* the enslavement to sin, death, and hell. It means to be delivered *out of* and never returned.

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).**

**“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal.4:5).**

3. It means to redeem (lutroo): to deliver by paying a price; to buy.

**“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).**

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers” (1 Pt.1:18).**

Redemption is “in Christ Jesus” (en Christou lesou), wrought through His death and sufferings. Of this there can be no doubt; the fact is critical to a person’s destiny. Redemption is *not* brought about...

- by the life of Christ.
- by the power of Christ.
- by the example of Christ.

Scripture is abundantly clear about this. His cross and His sacrifice in death are what brought about redemption. Redemption is...

- |                |             |             |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| • accomplished | • effected  | • a reality |
| • wrought      | • fulfilled | • a truth   |
| • produced     | • a fact    |             |

...because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, God’s very own Son.

**“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev.17:11).**

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).**

**“For ye are bought [redeemed] with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“Ye are bought [redeemed] with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (1 Cor.7:23).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col.1:14).**

**“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:5-6).**

**“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb.9:15).**

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).**

**“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought [redeemed] them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).**

**“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev.5:9).**

**“And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb withersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Rev.14:3-4).**

**4** (3:25) **Propitiation—Jesus Christ, Blood:** righteousness is by an act of God alone, the act of propitiation. (See note, *Propitiation*—1 Jn.2:1-2; DEEPER STUDY # 1—2:2 for more discussion.) Propitiation (*hilasterion*) means to be a sacrifice, a covering, a satisfaction, a payment, an appeasement for sin. Note two very significant points.

1. God is the One who “set forth” (proetheto) Christ to be the propitiation for man’s sins.
  - a. God *purposed* to “set forth” Christ: God determined, resolved, ordained Christ to be the propitiation or the sacrifice for man’s sins.
  - b. God set Christ “before” (pro) the world as the propitiation for the world’s sins. The *pro* in the Greek word *proetheto* (set forth) indicates this fact.
    - ⇒ God set Christ *before Himself*, purposed that He be the propitiation or the sacrifice for man’s sin.
    - ⇒ God set Christ publicly *before the world*, showing that He is definitely the propitiation for the world’s sins.
2. It is Christ Himself who is the propitiation for man’s sins. But note: it is not His teachings, power, example, or life that make Christ the propitiation. It is His blood—His sacrifice, His death, His sufferings, His cross—that causes God to accept Jesus as the propitiation. It is the blood of Christ that God accepts as...
  - the *sacrifice* for our sins.
  - the *covering* for our sins.
  - the *satisfaction* for our sins.
  - the *payment* for the penalty of our sins.
  - the *appeasement* of His wrath against sin.

What does the Bible mean by “the blood of Christ”? It means *the willingness* of Christ to die (shed His blood) for man. It means *the supreme sacrifice* Christ paid for man’s sins. It means *the terrible sufferings* Christ underwent for man’s sins. (See note—Mt.20:19.) It means *the voluntary laying down of His life* for man’s sins (Jn.10:17-18).

**“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation [propitiation] for the sins of the people” (Heb.2:17).**

**“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:1-2).**

**“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn.4:10).**

**“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful [propitious] to me a sinner” (Lk.18:13).**

**5** (3:25-26) **Righteousness—Justification:** righteousness has one great purpose—to declare God’s personal righteousness and justice. God is righteous and just; therefore, He always does what is right, and He always acts justly toward all persons. This is the reason He has provided a perfect righteousness for man. It was the thing to do: the right thing and the just thing. He is righteous by nature; therefore, he provided righteousness for man. God’s righteousness is seen in four glorious facts.

1. God’s righteousness is seen in that He forgives sin. Christ died for our sins, and God accepts His death as the propitiation or the sacrifice for our sins. Now note: God did not betray Christ or man; He did not reject Christ’s death. He did not act unjustly and unrighteously. On the contrary, God did what was right. He acted righteously and justly. He accepted the death of Christ as the sacrifice for our sins; therefore, His forgiveness of sins declares that He is righteous.

**“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mt.26:28).**

**“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb.9:22).**

**“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb.9:28).**

2. God’s righteousness is seen in His forbearance, that is, in His patience and longsuffering with man’s sin. Note a most glorious fact: God did not punish man for His sin by destroying all flesh from off the earth; God waited until Christ came before condemning sin *in the flesh*. Remember God is perfect righteousness; therefore, He has to provide a perfect righteousness for man “in the flesh.”

⇒ There was no man who could embody perfect righteousness.

⇒ Only God’s Son could and did embody perfect righteousness.

The fact that God waited until Christ came, that God was forbearing in holding back the punishment of sin, shows that God is righteous. God’s righteousness and His justice are declared by His forbearance.

**“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:3).**

**“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:4-6).**

3. God's righteousness is seen in His justice. He accepted the death of Christ as the substitute for our sins; He exacted the punishment for sin upon Christ. He did the right and just thing. His righteousness is declared by His justice.

**"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Is.53:4-6).**

**"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pt.2:24).**

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pt.3:18).**

4. God's righteousness is seen in His being the justifier of all who believe. God takes our faith and counts it as righteousness. He takes our faith and judges us acceptable to Him. Now every thinking man knows he is not righteous: not pure, not holy, not sinless. The fact that God accepts the death of Christ as the sacrifice for our sins and justifies us shows a marvelous truth: it shows that God is righteous and just. The fact that God is our Justifier declares His righteousness.

**"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).**

**"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Ro.3:28).**

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ro.5:1).**

**"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor.6:11).**

**"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal.3:24).**

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| <p><b>1 Faith excludes boasting</b><br/> a. Works cause boasting in oneself<br/> <b>2 Faith justifies a man without the works of the law</b></p> | <p><b>B. Faith:<sup>DS1</sup> The Way that Puts an End to Human Boasting &amp; Pride, to Self-Righteousness &amp; Works, 3:27-31</b></p> <p>27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.<br/> 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith</p> | <p>without the deeds of the law.<br/> 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:<br/> 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.<br/> 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.</p> | <p><b>3 Faith reveals only one God who deals with all equally</b><br/> a. He created all: He is the God of all<br/> b. He is the only God: All are justified in the same way—by faith<br/> <b>4 Faith upholds &amp; establishes the law</b></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21**

**B. Faith: The Way that Puts an End to Human Boasting and Pride, to Self-Righteousness and Works, 3:27-31**

(3:27-31) **Introduction:** one of the most powerful forces in all the world is faith. This passage discusses the power of faith, revealing four things that faith does.

1. Faith excludes boasting (v.27).
2. Faith justifies a man without the works of the law (v.28).
3. Faith reveals only one God, who deals with all equally (v.29-30).
4. Faith upholds and establishes the law (v.31).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(3:27-31) **Faith:** see notes—Jn.2:24; Ro.10:16-17; Heb.10:38.

**1** (3:27) **Faith—Boasting—Self-righteousness:** faith excludes boasting among men. Boasting is now excluded, eliminated, banished, and made impossible. No man can boast in himself before God. No man can boast in his own righteousness, goodness, merit, or virtue.

What is it that keeps man from boasting and glorying in himself? This is puzzling. Think about it, all the advancements of man...

- the scientific and technological advancements.
- the medical and health advancements.
- the commercial and farming advancements.
- the comfort and recreational advancements.

When man is considered, the power of his mind and all that he is able to produce, it is very difficult for some to understand why man cannot boast in himself. What is it, then, that forbids man to boast in himself? What kind of law would prohibit man from glorying in his ability and achievements?

1. It is not the *law of works*. The law of works does not exclude boasting; it promotes boasting. When a man looks at what he has done, at the works of his hands, he is led to boast and to glory in himself. A law of works does not discourage boasting, it encourages it. A law of works encourages a man to be selfish, self-centered, prideful, and self-righteous. It causes a man to stand before God and other men and declare that he...

- is more acceptable than others.
- is more deserving than others.
- has achieved more than others.
- is more sufficient than others.
- is more adequate than others.
- has no need beyond himself and this world.

A law of works causes men to be focused upon self. It causes men to center the world around themselves: to look upon themselves as the power that creates and sustains the world, as the power that gives purpose, meaning, and significance to life. A law of works encourages boasting; it does not exclude it.

**“Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Ro.12:16).**

**“But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil” (Jas.4:16).**

**“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev.3:17).**

**“For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth” (Ps.10:3).**

**“They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (Ps.49:6-7).**

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” (Pr.3:7).

“Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain” (Pr.25:14).

“Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him” (Pr.26:12).

“Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Pr.27:1).

“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Is.5:21).

2. It is the *law of faith*. The law of faith excludes boasting. Man has to boast in God when man believes what Scripture has just declared (Ro.1:18-3:26)...

- that *God is* (does exist),
- that God is the creator of the universe and can be known by man,
- that man is short of God’s glory and righteousness,
- that God has provided righteousness for man *through faith*.

It is God who has created and given man his ability and who has provided righteousness for man. God has provided the way for man to be saved from sin, death, and hell. Therefore, man has to boast in God and not in self, for God is the One who has given man all that he has, both his natural ability and his eternal salvation. It is the law of faith, not the law of works that eliminates boasting.

“That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Cor.1:31; cp. 2 Cor.10:17).

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).

“That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th.1:12).

“Ye that fear the LORD, praise him” (Ps.22:23).

“In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever” (Ps.44:8).

“In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory” (Is.45:25).

“But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jer.9:24).

**2** (3:28) **Faith—Justification:** faith justifies a man without the works of the law. This is of extreme importance. A man is justified by faith and not by the deeds of the law. Boasting shows this. Who is to be praised and set up as the subject of glory? Is man the one in whom to boast? Is man the one who is to be glorified? If man had created himself and saved himself from sin and death by his own works and deeds, then he would be the one to be glorified. But what man can do these things? Man did not make himself nor can man save himself. When we consider that man is corruptible, and that man can do nothing beyond this life, then boasting is excluded. Therefore, man is not justified before God by the deeds of the law; he is justified by faith—by believing in God and His righteousness. (See note, *Justification—Ro.4:1-3*; DEEPER STUDY # 2—4:22; 5:1 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** Despite the great ability and all the marvelous achievements of man, man is still unable to control things morally, unable to live in love, joy, and peace with others. He is unable to control the shame and devastation of selfishness and greed, disease and accident, sin and death. Man’s only hope is to come before God...

- not boasting and glorying in self, but bowing in all humility.
- believing in the law of faith: that God saves and justifies man by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

“And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6).

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Ro.3:28).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).

**3** (3:29-30) **God, Nature—Universal Father—Impartial:** faith reveals only one God who deals with all equally. (See note, *God, Nature—Mk.12:29-31* for more discussion.)

1. God created everyone; therefore, He is the God of all. There is not one god of the Jew (religionist) and another god of the Gentile. There are not different gods of the races and nations of the world, not a different god of Africa and a different god of India, and a different god for arabs, and a different god for Americans and on and on. Imagine the foolishness of such an idea! Yet how common the idea is! There is only one God who created the universe and only one God who is the God of all mankind.

- a. There is only one God who created all things: “One God, the Father of whom are all things and we in Him” (1 Cor.8:6).

- b. There is only one God who has made all men alike: “Who made of one blood every nation of men” (Acts 17:26).
- c. There is only one God “in whom we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

**“And call no man your father [god] upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven” (Mt.23:9).**

**“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph.4:6).**

**“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and life?” (Heb.12:9).**

**“Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?” (Mal.2:10).**

2. God is the *only* God; therefore, all are justified in the *same* way—by faith. God does not play favorites and show partiality. God does not make it more difficult for some to be saved. God is God. He is perfectly just and equitable in all His dealings.

- a. There “is [only] one God, who shall justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith” (Ro.3:30).
- b. “There is [only] one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:5).

**“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).**

**“And [God] put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9).**

**“For there is no respect of persons with God” (Ro.2:11).**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12-13).**

The point is this. When a man trusts God to save him and to count him righteous in Christ, that man’s faith proves...

- that God is, that there is only one true and living God.
- that God treats all men equally; that he, the sinner, is saved just like all other believers.

**4** (3:31) **Faith—Law:** faith upholds and establishes the law. This means at least three things.

1. Jesus Christ established the law. Jesus was everything that God said a man should be. He was the ideal of all that God wants man to be. Therefore, Jesus fulfilled the law perfectly.

But there is something more. Jesus not only fulfilled the statutes of the law; He fulfilled the penalty of the law. He took the penalty and the punishment of man upon Himself and died for man. Man is thereby absolved from the penalty and punishment exacted by the law. Therefore, Jesus established the law by fulfilling both the statutes and penalty demanded by the law. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.5:17; DEEPER STUDY # 2—Ro.8:3.)

**“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mt.5:17).**

**“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:3).**

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).**

2. The believer establishes the law when he admits he is a law breaker or a sinner. In so doing, he admits that the law is good. The law is good because it points out his sin (Ro.3:19-20; 5:20; 7:7; Gal.3:19). It makes him guilty and it leads him to confess his need for help outside of himself. But the law is also good because it points man to Christ. It makes man cast himself upon Christ *for righteousness*. It forces him to believe in God and to honor God. Therefore, the believer’s faith establishes the law.

**“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal.3:19).**

**“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe....Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:22, 24).**

**“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth....That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:4, 9-10).**

3. The believer establishes the law (much more than a legalist) because in seeing what Christ has done for him, he is driven to please God. The believer sees Christ bearing the guilt and punishment for his crimes (sins), and then bows in

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love and adoration, and arises to work in appreciation for such amazing love. The believer tries to be good, not to earn or to win righteousness, but to serve God. He does not try to put God in debt for salvation, but he thanks God for righteousness, seeing that he owes God whatever service he can do. The genuine believer has come to know above all others that love is a much stronger force than fear.

**“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).**

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| <p><b>1 The logic of Abraham's justification</b></p> <p>a. He was not justified by works (works cannot qualify one to glory before God)</p> <p>b. He was justified by believing God</p> <p><b>2 The logic of the worker</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 4</b></p> <p><b>C. Logic: The Evidence that Faith Alone Justifies a Man,<sup>DS1</sup> 4:1-8</b></p> <p>What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?</p> <p>2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.</p> <p>3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.</p> <p>4 Now to him that worketh</p> | <p>is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt.</p> <p>5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.</p> <p>6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,</p> <p>7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.</p> <p>8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.</p> | <p><b>or laborer</b></p> <p>a. Works necessitate debt</p> <p>b. Believing in God results in righteousness</p> <p><b>3 The logic of David's blessed man</b></p> <p>a. The blessed man is the man who is counted righteous without works</p> <p>b. The blessed man is the man whose sins are forgiven &amp; covered</p> <p>c. The blessed man is the man whose sins are not counted</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21**

**C. Logic: The Evidence that Faith Alone Justifies a Man, 4:1-8**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(4:1-25) **Abraham—Jews, the Seed—Justification—Righteousness—New Creation:** Abraham held a unique position in the Jewish nation, for he was the founder of the nation. He was the man whom God had challenged to be a witness to the other nations of the world—a witness to the only living and true God. God had appeared to Abraham and challenged him to leave his home, his friends, his employment, and his country. God made two great promises if Abraham would follow God unquestionably: Abraham would become the father of a new nation, and all nations of the earth would be blessed by his seed (Gen.12:1-5; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; 22:15-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 35:9-12). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22.)

Scripture says Abraham did as God requested. He went out not knowing where he went (Heb.11:8). He completely and unquestionably trusted God and took God at His word.

Now note: it was not Abraham's keeping of the law that pleased God. In fact, the law had not yet been given (Gal.3:17). What pleased God and what caused God to justify Abraham was Abraham's doing as God had said. Abraham simply *believed* the promise of God that God would give him a new life—in a new nation—with a new people. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.3:8, 16; notes—Heb.11:8-10; 11:13-16; 11:17-19.)

Note several things.

1. Abraham and his "seed" were the only ones to whom God gave the promises. This is emphatically stated (Ro.4:13-25; Gal.3:6-16, 26, 29).

2. Only a promise was given to Abraham (Ro.4:13-21; Gal.3:14, 18-21, 29). No other information whatsoever was given. God did not identify the country nor tell Abraham where he was to go. Neither did God tell Abraham when his wife (Sarah) would bear the seed (the male child) from whom the promised nation would be born. God made a simple promise, and all Abraham had to go on was that simple promise: the sheer Word of God.

3. Only one condition was attached to the promise. Abraham had to believe God. No works whatsoever were involved.

4. Abraham did believe God (Gen.12:4-5; Ro.4:3, 11-22; Gal.3:6; Heb.11:8f).

5. Abraham was *counted righteous* because he believed God (Ro.4:3-5, 9-13, 19-22; Gal.3:6; cp. Gen.15:6). God did not count him righteous because of who he was or what he had done. He simply believed God. Therefore, God took his faith and *counted* his faith as righteousness (see note—Ro.4:1-3; DEEPER STUDY # 2—4:22; note—5:1).

6. The proof that Abraham really believed God was that he did what God had said. His faith *preceded* his obedience. He believed God and then he obeyed God. If he had not believed God, he would not have left his home or his employment. He would not have left his familiar surroundings and meaningful relationships and personal attachments. The fact that he did as God asked was evidence that he believed the promise of God.

7. The man who believes God is the man who receives the promises of God (Ro.4:5-12, 16-17, 23-25; Gal.3:7-9, 14, 22, 26, 29). Paul argues that neither heritage nor nationality, neither merit nor works, neither the law nor the rules of the law have anything to do with the promises of God (Gal.3:6-7). The true children of Abraham are those who believe God—any person of any nation. In fact, God's promise that a nation would be born to Abraham and "his seed" was the promise of an eternal nation. This eternal nation is to be of another world, of another dimension of being: the spiritual dimension, a dimension just as real as the physical dimension. But it is to have one distinction: every citizen is to be a believer—one who has believed God and His Word. This is exactly what this passage is saying: "They who believe are the children of Abraham, the children of God's promise. They are to be blessed along with faithful Abraham. They are to be the citizens of God's Kingdom, of 'the new heavens and the new earth.'" (Cp. Heb.11:8-18; 2 Pt.3:10-14.)

(4:1-8) **Introduction:** most people think they become acceptable to God by doing the best they can. Most actually believe they secure God's approval by being reasonably good: by being a respectable and upright citizen and by occasionally helping others who are less fortunate. But note a startling fact: a man is not justified by works, but by faith. Logic proves the fact.

1. The logic of Abraham's justification (v.1-3).
2. The logic of the worker or laborer (v.4-5).
3. The logic of David's "blessed man" (v.6-8).

**1** (4:1-3) **Abraham—Righteousness—Justification—Works vs. Faith:** the logic of Abraham's justification. A person can look at Abraham's life and logically see that a man is not justified by works but by faith.

1. Abraham was not justified by works, for works *cannot qualify* a person to glory before God. Now note this: if Abraham had been justified by works...

- he *would be* qualified to glory before men.
- but he *would not be* qualified to glory before God.

Think about it—the logic, the clarity of the matter. No man is ever qualified to glory before God. No act or work or combination of acts and works could ever elevate man to such a height that he could glory or become qualified before God.

2. Abraham was justified by believing God. What happened was this. Abraham believed God, and God took Abraham's belief and counted his belief as righteousness. It was not Abraham's works, but his faith that God took and counted as righteousness. It was all an act of God; therefore, all glory belonged to God, not to Abraham. Man is saved by faith; that is, God takes a man's faith and counts that man's faith as righteousness. Such has to be the case.

- ⇒ God is perfect; He is perfectly righteous. No man can achieve perfection; therefore, no man can live in the presence of God.
- ⇒ However, God is love. So what God does is take a person's faith (any person's faith who is truly sincere) and counts that faith as righteousness, as perfection. Therefore, a man is able to live in God's presence by faith or justification.

**"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Mt.7:22-23).**

**"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Ro.3:20).**

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

**"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph.2:8-9).**

**"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit.3:4-5).**

**Thought 1.** Why does God justify a man through faith? There are at least two reasons.

First, God loves everyone with a perfect love. God wants everyone to live with Him in a *perfect state of being* throughout all eternity. God is perfect; therefore, He alone can provide the only perfect way for man to live in His presence. Because God is love, He has reached out for man by providing that perfect way through Jesus Christ, His Son.

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (Jn.3:16-17).**

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (Jn.5:24).**

**"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro.5:8).**

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pt.3:18).**

Second, God loves His Son with a perfect love. Any person who honors God's Son by believing in Him is accepted by God. That is, God takes that person's belief and counts it as righteousness. The person receives the right to live in God's presence in a *perfect state of being*. "We have obtained an inheritance...*that we should be*" (a state of *being* that is to be eternally lived to the praise of God's glory—Eph.1:11-12).

**"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Mt.17:5).**

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again” (Jn.10:17).

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love” (Jn.15:9).

“For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God” (Jn.16:27).

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (Jn.17:23).

“And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (Jn.17:26).

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph.1:6).

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col.1:13).

**2** (4:4-5) **Works—Righteousness:** the logic of the worker or laborer. A person can look at the day to day laborer and logically see that a man is not justified by works but by faith.

1. Works necessitate *debt*. When a man works, someone owes him something. If a man could work for righteousness, that is, work so that God would owe him righteousness, then God would owe man. But God, being God, is completely self-sufficient; therefore, He cannot be put in debt to any man. He cannot *be made or forced* to do anything.

2. Believing in God results in righteousness. It is the “ungodly” who believe who are counted righteous (cp. Ro.5:6). This is because the man who admits he is ungodly is the man who rejects self, sensing his need for *godly help* in spiritual matters. He is ready to give himself up and honor and glorify God alone. Therefore, he centers and wraps his whole life around God, depending solely upon God for righteousness.

**Thought 1.** God can never turn away from a person who senses and confesses his ungodliness and who wishes to recognize and glorify God. God is love, and God’s love is bound to be moved by so humble an act and faith.

“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ro.4:3).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).

The converse teaching of Scripture needs to be remembered: the man who does not admit he is ungodly, who does not reject self and sense the need for godly help is the man declared to be self-sufficient and self-righteous. Therefore, he is pronounced unjustified, not so much because God rejects him as the fact that he has already rejected God.

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (Jn.3:18).

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb.3:12).

“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6; cp. Mt.7:21).

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).

**3** (4:6-8) **Forgiveness—Impute:** the logic of David’s *blessed man*. A person can look at prophecy, at the man described by David and see clearly that justification is not by works but by faith (cp. Ps.32:1-2). Note who the blessed man is.

1. The blessed man is the man who is *counted* righteous without works. Note the word “impute” (*logizomai*). It means to reckon, to count, to put to one’s account, to credit, to deposit. Just think for a moment. If God credits and counts a man righteous “without works,” then we know something: *Man is not justified by works, but by faith.* (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Reckon*—Ro.6:11 for more discussion.)

Pure logic tells us this. Therefore, the blessed man is the man who has righteousness *imputed, credited, counted* to him...

- not because of his works,
- but because he believes God, and God loves him so much that He takes the man’s belief and counts it as righteousness.

2. The blessed man is the man whose sins are forgiven and covered. Think for a moment. Lawlessness (sin) exists despite all the works and efforts of men to eliminate it. No matter how hard men try, lawlessness still exists. If lawlessness is to be handled, it has to be handled by God and God alone. He simply has to forgive man's lawlessness (sin).

Now note: logic tells us that if God loves that much, loves enough to simply forgive men for sin, then justification is not by law but by faith.

3. The blessed man is the man whose sins are not imputed or counted against him. (See this note, *Impute*—pt.1.) Note: it is not the acts of men, but the act of God that justifies men and does not count sin against them. A man cannot justify himself before God. No man can free himself from sin and force God to accept him—not by his own hand. Justification—complete deliverance from sin and condemnation—comes from God and from God alone, not from some act of man. Therefore, logic tells us that it is not works that justifies a man, but faith.

**“Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back” (Is.38:17).**

**“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Is.43:25).**

**“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee” (Is.44:22).**

**“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).**

**“But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath” (Ps.78:38).**

**“Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin” (Ps.85:2).**

**“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Ps.103:3).**

**“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us” (Ps.103:12).**

**“But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared” (Ps.130:4).**

**“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy” (Mic.7:18).**

**“For I delivered unto thee first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:3).**

**“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal.1:4).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn.1:9).**

**“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev.1:5).**

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| <p><b>1 Who receives the blessing of forgiveness?</b><br/> a. The religious only?<br/> b. The non-religious also?</p> <p><b>2 Abraham was counted righteous when he believed</b></p> <p><b>3 Abraham was counted righteous before the ritual, that is, before circumcision</b></p> | <p><b>D. Rituals, Rules, &amp; Ordinances: The Wrong Way for a Man to Seek Justification, 4:9-12</b></p> <p>9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.</p> <p>10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.</p> | <p>11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:</p> <p>12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.</p> | <p><b>4 Abraham received circumcision as a sign or symbol only</b></p> <p><b>5 Abraham was chosen by God for a twofold purpose</b><br/> a. To be the “father” of all believers: Regardless of ritual &amp; ordinance<br/> b. To be the “father” of the circumcised, the religious: Those who follow “in the steps of his faith”</p> |
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### DIVISION III

#### FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21

#### D. Rituals, Rules, and Ordinances: The Wrong Way for a Man to Seek Justification, 4:9-12

(4:9-12) **Introduction—Religionists:** most people are religious in the sense that they keep some religious ordinances, rituals, and rules. This is both good and bad: good in the sense that rituals cause a person to think about some higher being, and bad in the sense that rituals are usually thought to be the way a person becomes acceptable to God. The present passage is as clear as can be: ritual is the wrong way for a man to seek acceptance and justification with God.

1. Who receives the blessing of forgiveness (v.9)?
2. Abraham was counted righteous when he believed (v.9).
3. Abraham was counted righteous before circumcision, that is, before the ritual (v.10).
4. Abraham received circumcision as a sign or symbol only (v.11).
5. Abraham was chosen by God for a twofold purpose (v.11-12).

**1** (4:9) **Evangelism—Gospel—Forgiveness—Religion:** who receives the blessing of forgiveness? The word “blessedness” or “blessing” refers back to the *blessed man* just discussed (Ro.4:6-8). The blessed man is the man who is justified by faith...

- who is counted righteous without works.
- whose sins are forgiven and covered.
- whose sins are not counted against him.

Such a man is greatly blessed, blessed beyond imagination. But note a critical question. Is the blessing of forgiveness intended...

- for the circumcised only, or for the uncircumcised also?
- for the Jew only, or for the non-Jew (Gentile) also?
- for the religious only, or for the non-religious also?
- for the baptized only, or for the unbaptized also?
- for the saved only, or for the unsaved also?
- for the church member only, or for the unchurched also?
- for the interested only, or for the disinterested also?

Is the blessing of forgiveness—of being justified by faith alone—for only a few people or for all people everywhere? Abraham’s experience illustrates the truth for us.

**2** 4:9) **Reckoned—Abraham:** Abraham was counted righteous *when he believed*. His *faith* was “reckoned” for righteousness. The word “reckoned” (elogisthe) means to credit, to count, to deposit, to put to one’s account, to impute. Abraham’s faith was *counted* for righteousness or *credited* as righteousness (see notes, *Justification—Ro.4:1-3; 4:6-8; DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—4:22; 5:1* for more discussion).

Note that Abraham was justified or counted righteous *by faith*; he was not justified...

- by being religious.
- by performing good deeds.
- by doing some good work.
- by being good and virtuous.
- by submitting to a ritual.
- by joining some body of believers.

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).

“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ro.4:3).

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:4-5).

“God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?” (Heb.2:4).

**3** (4:10) **Ritual—Justification:** Abraham was counted righteous before the ritual, that is, before circumcision. This is a crucial point and it is clearly seen. Abraham made his decision to follow God at least fourteen years before he was circumcised. The story of Abraham believing the promises of God is a dramatic picture (cp. Gen.15:1-6, esp 5-6). Scripture clearly says, “He believed in the Lord, and the Lord counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6). But the story of his circumcision is two chapters and fourteen years later (Gen.17:9f). He was counted righteous long before he underwent any ritual. His righteousness—his being accepted by God—did not depend upon a ritual; it depended upon his faith and his faith alone. God did not count Abraham righteous because of circumcision, not because of...

- a ritual
- a ceremony
- an ordinance
- a good work
- a good deed
- a religious life
- a moral life

God accepted Abraham and counted him righteous because he believed God and His promises.

**4** (4:11) **Circumcision—Baptism—Ritual—Faith vs. Works:** Abraham received circumcision as a sign or symbol only. Circumcision was not the road into God’s presence; it was not what made Abraham acceptable to God. Circumcision *did not confer* righteousness on him; it only confirmed that he was righteous. Circumcision did not convey righteousness on him; it only bore testimony that he was righteous.

Note that circumcision was both a sign and a seal. (See note, *Circumcision—Ph.3:3* for more discussion.) Circumcision was...

- a sign of celebration: it was a picture of the joy that the believer experienced in being counted righteous by God.
- a sign of witness: the believer was testifying that he now believed and trusted God.
- a sign of a changed life and a separated life: the believer was proclaiming that he was going to live for God, to live a righteous and pure life that was wholly separated to God.
- a sign of identification: the believer was declaring that he was now joining and becoming one of God’s people.
- a sign pointing toward Christ’s baptism.

Circumcision was a seal in that it stamped God’s justification upon Abraham’s mind. Abraham had believed God, and God had counted his faith as righteousness. Circumcision was given as a seal or a stamp upon his body to remind him that God had counted him righteous through belief. Circumcision was a seal in that it...

- confirmed
- assured
- substantiated
- validated
- authenticated
- strengthened
- verified

...what God had done for Abraham. Now note. The Bible never says that rites, rituals, or ordinances bestow anything on anyone. They are merely signs of something that has already taken place. They are merely *shadows*, not the *substance* (Col.2:16-17).

This is not to take away from the importance of rites and rituals. They are extremely important, for they are the *signs and seals* of the Christian believer’s faith. To neglect or to reject a rite given by God is to be disobedient, and to be disobedient is a clear sign that one was never sincere in the first place. A person who believes, who truly trusts God, is ready to *obey* God, to follow Him even in the rites, rituals, and ordinances of the church. We must always remember that Abraham was not saved by the ritual of circumcision, for circumcision had not yet been given by God as a sign.

⇒ But Abraham was *immediately circumcised* after God established circumcision as the sign of “righteousness by faith.”

Very simply said, if circumcision had existed when Abraham first believed God, then Abraham would have been circumcised immediately. He would have obeyed God. How do we know this? Because Abraham truly believed God, and when a man believes God, he immediately begins to do what God says.

**Thought 1.** Circumcision and all other rituals are a matter of the heart, not a matter of being spiritually cleansed by physical and material substances.

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Ro.2:28-29).

“In whom [Christ] also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision [operation, cutting away] of Christ” (Col.2:11).

“Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked” (Dt.10:16).

“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Dt.30:6).

**Thought 2.** This is a strong message on baptism for New Testament believers. A true believer should be baptized immediately upon believing. Baptism should be the first step of obedience in the believer's new life in Christ. (See notes, *Baptism*—Lk.3:21; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:38 for more discussion.)

**“And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him” (Mt.3:15).**

**“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk.16:16).**

**“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).**

**“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Col.2:12).**

**5** (4:11-12) **Abraham—Ritual—Salvation—Faith vs. Works:** Abraham was chosen by God for a twofold purpose. Before looking at the purposes, note that Abraham is said to have a unique relationship to the world. He is seen not as a mere private individual, but as a public man, a representative man of the human race, a pivotal figure in human history. He is seen as the “father” of all who believe God, as the head of the household of faith. God chose Abraham for two specific purposes.

1. Abraham was chosen that he might be the “father” of all believers regardless of ritual and ordinance. Abraham was chosen by God to be the father of faith to all—all the ungodly and heathen of the world—who repent and believe Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior. No matter how uncircumcised, unbaptized, irreligious, immoral and unclean a person is, he has a father in the faith, a father to follow. Abraham is...

- the pattern
- the picture
- the example
- the standard
- the father

...of faith to all the lost of the world. A person...

- does not have to begin to go to church before God will save him.
- does not have to get religious before God will accept him.
- does not have to be baptized or *ritualized* before God will forgive his sins.

What he *has to do* is believe God and believe God's promises. When he bows in humble faith and believes, two things happen:

- ⇒ immediately God counts his faith as righteousness.
- ⇒ immediately he arises and is baptized and begins to keep all the commandments and rituals and ordinances of God.

**“And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Lk.5:31-32).**

**“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).**

**“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:23-24).**

2. Abraham was chosen that he might be the “father” of the circumcised, of the religious who “follow in the steps of Abraham's faith.” Note: it is not being...

- circumcised
- baptized
- moral
- ritualized
- religious
- good and virtuous

...that justifies a religious person. It is “walking in the steps” of Abraham's faith that causes God to accept the religious person.

The religionist cannot earn, merit, or work his way into God's presence and righteousness. He can only trust God for the righteousness of Jesus Christ (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 2—Ro.3:24; note—3:25; DEEPER STUDY # 2—4:22; 5:1 for more discussion).

**“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:22-23).**

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

**“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:2-4).**

**“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:10).**

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

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

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| <p><b>1 The unmistakable statement: The promise is not through the law, but through faith</b></p> <p><b>2 The argument against the law</b></p> | <p><b>E. Law: The Wrong Way for a Man to be Justified, 4:13-16</b></p> <p>13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.</p> <p>14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is</p> | <p>made void, and the promise made of none effect:</p> <p>15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.</p> <p>16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,</p> | <p>a. Law voids faith &amp; erases the hope of the promise</p> <p>b. Law works wrath</p> <p>c. Law means transgression</p> <p><b>3 The argument for faith</b></p> <p>a. Faith brings grace</p> <p>b. Faith makes the promise sure</p> <p>c. Faith assures the promise for everyone: It is available to all</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21**

**E. Law: The Wrong Way for a Man to be Justified, 4:13-16**

(4:13-16) **Introduction:** a man is not justified by the law and its works. The law is the wrong way for a man to seek acceptance and justification by God.

1. The unmistakable statement: the promise is not through the law, but through faith (v.13).
2. The argument against the law (v.14-15).
3. The argument for faith (v.16).

**1** (4:13) **Promise, The—Faith vs. Law—Righteousness—Reward:** the unmistakable statement—the promise of the inheritance is not through the law, but through faith. Note several things.

1. The promise involves inheriting the whole world. This is clear from several facts.
  - a. Canaan was the *promised land*, a type of heaven and a type of the new heavens and earth God is to recreate for Abraham and his seed (the believer). (See note, *Promised Land—Acts 7:2-8* for more discussion.)

“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect” (Ro.4:13-14).

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb.11:8-10).

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country....But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb.11:13-14, 16).

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels” (Heb.12:22).

“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb.13:14).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Rev.21:1).

- b. Abraham was promised that he would be the “father” of many nations. He is said to be the father of all believers from all nations of the earth (v.11-12). He and his seed (believers) are promised a new world when Christ returns.
- c. Christ is to inherit the world and be exalted as the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, ruling and reigning forever and ever.
  - ⇒ Abraham and his seed (believers) are said to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

## ROMANS 4:13-16

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).**

They shall all reign with Christ through all eternity. (See notes, *Reward*—Mt.19:28; Lk.16:10-12; Rev.14:13; 21:24-27.)

**“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Mt.16:27).**

**“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt.25:31-32).**

**“And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Lk.1:33).**

**“For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (1 Cor.15:25).**

**“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim.4:1).**

**“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Rev.21:1-7).**

**“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Is.9:7).**

**“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment” (Is.32:1).**

**“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth” (Jer.23:5).**

**“And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan.7:14).**

2. The “seed” of Abraham refers to *all believers*. This is clear from the promise that is said to be “sure to *all the seed*” (v.16). Every true believer is an heir of the promise. If a man believes, he receives the most glorious promise: he will inherit the world.

**“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Mt.5:5).**

**“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal.3:29).**

3. God does not give the promise through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

a. A man will not receive an inheritance in the *new world* because he...

- tried to keep the law.
- did some great works.
- lived by good deeds.
- was baptized and joined a church.
- was moral and very religious.

b. A man will receive an inheritance in the *new world* because he...

- believed God for righteousness, and God took his belief and *counted* it for righteousness.

The point is clearly seen, and it is unmistakable:

**“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ro.4:3).**

**“To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Ro.4:5).**

**“The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not...through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Ro.4:13).**

**2** (4:14-15) **Law—Faith vs. the Law:** the argument against the law. The promise of the inheritance does not come through the law. Three facts about the law show this.

1. Law voids faith; it erases any hope of ever receiving the promise. The reason can be simply stated: law demands perfection; law insists that it be obeyed. Law cries out, “violate and break me and you become guilty and condemned and are to be punished.”

No man can live perfectly righteous before God; no man can keep from coming short and breaking the law of God at some point. Therefore every man is a lawbreaker, imperfect and short of God’s glory, and is to be condemned and punished.

- a. If the promise of God’s inheritance is by law, then no man shall inherit the promise, for the promise is given only to the righteous; and no man is perfectly righteous. This, of course, means something. If the promise is by law, then no man has hope of ever receiving the promise, for he does not and cannot keep the law. The law erases the promise, makes it of no effect or value whatsoever.
- b. If the promise of God’s inheritance is by law, then faith is voided and has absolutely nothing to do with securing the promise. A man would have to keep his mind and eyes, and most tragic of all, his heart upon the law, for it would be the law that would determine whether or not the man received the promise. Faith would not be entering the picture; it would be voided, irrelevant, having nothing to do with receiving the promise.

**“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Ro.3:19).**

**“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:3).**

**“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God” (Gal.2:19).**

**“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Heb.7:19).**

- c. This point is often overlooked. If the promise of God’s inheritance comes by the law, then receiving the promise would have nothing to do with faith, nothing to do with...
  - trusting the love of God.
  - learning and knowing the love of God.
  - focusing one’s mind and thoughts upon God.
  - knowing God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If God accepted us and gave us the promise of inheritance because we kept the law, then we would have to focus our lives upon the law. Believing and loving God and knowing God’s Son would have nothing to do with our salvation. The law would force us to seek God by keeping the law. Faith would have nothing to do with the promise. The law would void faith and make useless and ineffective the love of God and the Son of God.

**“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).**

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Ph.4:8-9).**

2. Law works wrath in three terrible ways.

a. Law shouts out at a man, “Break me and you become guilty, condemned, and are to be punished.” Such is antagonistic and stirs and aggravates anger and wrath. When God is seen as a legalistic Person who hovers over us, watching every move we make, there is a tendency to view God as stringent, demanding, condemnatory, upset, angry, vengeful and full of wrath against us. Why? Because we fail and come short ever so often. Therefore if God is legalistic, then He is hovering over us, and not a single one of us is going to inherit the promise. We are guilty and to be judged, and we are not going to be rewarded with an inheritance. Therefore, law works wrath between God and man; it keeps a man from being acceptable to God and from ever receiving the promise of God.

b. Law works wrath in that it keeps a man tied up in knots, under pressure and tension, and in a strain. The man who works to do the law struggles to do the right thing and guards against doing the wrong thing. He fights to avoid all the evil he can, wondering and worrying if he is ever doing enough to be acceptable to God.

Such a life is not full of love, joy, and peace. There is no sense of purpose, meaning, and significance, no sense of completeness and fulfillment. Such a life is filled with uneasiness and turmoil, uncertainty and insecurity. Such a life of legalism works wrath: it keeps tension between God and man and establishes and builds a strained and uneasy relationship.

- c. Law works wrath in that it causes a man to focus his life upon the law and not upon God. His mind and attention and thoughts are...
  - upon keeping the rules, not upon trusting God.
  - upon watching where he steps, not upon drawing near God.
  - upon avoiding errors, not upon learning the truth of God.
  - upon observing certain rituals, not upon fellowshiping with God.
  - upon practicing religion, not upon worshipping God.

**“And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me” (Ro.7:10-11).**

**“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal.3:10).**

**“And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them” (Gal.3:12).**

**“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal.5:4).**

3. Law means transgression. There are three reasons for this.

- a. If no law exists, there is no law to break; therefore, there is no transgression. But if there is a law, then breaking the law begins to exist; transgression becomes a reality, a living fact. Where there is no law, there is no transgression; where there is law, there is transgression. The point is this: the man who seeks God’s acceptance by keeping the law lives in a world of transgression, of breaking the law and coming short of God’s glory. The law means transgression, that a man fails and comes short of God’s acceptance; therefore, it means that the legalist is guilty and condemned and is not to receive the promise of God.
- b. When a law exists, there is an urge within man to stretch it to its limits and to break it. This is one of the paradoxes of human nature. Man has that within himself, an *unregulated urge*...
  - not to be regulated
  - not to be ordered around
  - not to be restricted
  - not to be governed
  - not to be ruled
  - to seek his own desires
  - to do as he pleases
  - to fill his fleshly passions
  - to fulfill his urges
  - to see, have, hold, and get more

When a law exists, it *tells* a man he can go this far and no farther. He must not go beyond this limit or he becomes a lawbreaker, a transgressor (cp. a speed sign). The law actually pulls a man to go that far. It is within his nature to go to the limit, to do as much as he can. The urge within his nature even stirs him to stretch the law and to go beyond its limits.

- ⇒ The grass on the other side looks greener.
- ⇒ The melon on the other side of the fence is juicier.
- ⇒ The stolen fruits are sweeter.
- ⇒ The forbidden is more appealing.
- ⇒ The unknown is more exciting.

When the law exists, there is transgression. Every man becomes guilty and is to be condemned and punished, not rewarded with the promise.

**“For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” (Ro.7:5).**

**“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead” (Ro.7:8).**

- c. When a law exists, it becomes an accuser, an antagonist. It shouts, “Break me and you become a lawbreaker and are to be condemned and punished.” Now note: the law has no power to keep a person from transgressing; it can only shout: “Transgression!” The law is...
  - not a power to save, but a rule to control and condemn.
  - not a savior, but a judge.

This is the very problem with the law.

- ⇒ It can only accuse; it cannot deliver.
- ⇒ It can only point out sin; it cannot save from sin.
- ⇒ It can only show a man where he failed; it cannot show him how to keep from failing.
- ⇒ It can only condemn; it has no power to free.

The man who tries to live by law is left hopeless and helpless, for he transgresses and becomes a lawbreaker. He is to be condemned, never receiving the inheritance of God’s promise.

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

**“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Ro.5:20).**

**“I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Ro.7:7).**

**“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal.3:19).**

**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).**

**“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers” (1 Tim.1:9).**

**3** (4:16) **Faith—Promise—Grace:** the argument for faith. The promise of the inheritance comes through faith. Three facts about faith show this.

1. Faith brings grace. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Grace*—Tit.2:11-15 for more discussion.) Grace (charis) means a gift, a free gift, a gift given without expecting anything in return. It means favor, approval, acceptance, goodwill, assistance, help, kindness—all freely given and given without expecting anything in return.

Picture the scene of a man broken over his sin. He may be a mild sinner or the worst sinner on earth, yet he comes to God. He...

- falls to his knees.
- confesses his sin.
- confesses his inadequacy to save himself.
- cries for God to have mercy and to forgive his sin.
- thanks God that He does forgive sin.
- praises God for answering his prayer and forgiving his sin.

Now, who is the *Savior*, the *Deliverer*, the *Subject* who deserves the praise and the honor and the glory? The answer is obvious: God. God is the center of the picture. This is the very reason salvation and all its promises are by grace through faith. Grace puts God in the center. And when a man makes God the center of his life, casting himself completely upon God and putting all his faith and trust in God, God is bound to hear and answer the man. Why? Because the man is honoring God completely, and the man who honors God is always acceptable and heard by God.

Now note: when a man *really believes* God, his faith brings the grace of God to him. It causes him to focus upon God, to center his life upon the love of God, to see the presence of God, to secure the fellowship and companionship of God, to know the love, joy, peace, care and concern of God. Simply stated, it causes a man to seek a personal relationship with God, a relationship of trust and dependence. Such is the life of grace, the grace that is given to man by faith. It is faith that honors and praises and glorifies God, and because it does, it brings the grace of God to man.

**“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake” (Ps.115:1).**

**“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts 15:11).**

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).**

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9; cp. Ro.3:24; 5:15; 11:6; Eph.2:4-10).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Tit.2:11).**

2. Faith makes the promise sure. This is seen in the above point. When God is honored and made the center and focus of one’s life and trust, that person can rest assured God will accept him and give him the promise of the inheritance. That man will inherit the earth.

**“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).**

3. Faith assures that the promise is for everyone, that it is available to all. The promise is not given to an exclusive club of people, to an exclusive nation or race or class of people. The promise is given to all, to every person on earth. If the promise was by law, then it would be only for those who have the law and are able to keep the law. What then would happen to the heathen who do not have the law and to the handicapped who are unable to do some of the things the law commands? They could never be saved if the promise came by the law. However, when the promise is given by the grace of God through faith, no man is exempt from the inheritance. Every man can be saved and inherit the promise of eternal life in the new heavens and earth, for every man can believe and trust God (the very thing that even a human father wants of his children).

**“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away” (Lk.21:33).**

**“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Ro.4:13).**

**“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:4-7).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:11-13).**

**“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb.6:18).**

**“Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations” (Dt.7:9).**

**“The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure” (Ps.111:7).**

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| <p><b>1 The source of Abraham's faith</b><br/> a. It was God Himself<br/> b. It was God who quickened the dead<br/> c. It was God who created</p> <p><b>2 The strength of Abraham's faith</b><br/> a. His faith was in what God had said: The promise of a seed, a son<br/> 1) He was not weak in faith—despite thinking about his own physical inability</p> | <p><b>F. Abraham: The Example of a Man Justified by Faith Alone, 4:17-25</b></p> <p>17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.<br/> 18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.<br/> 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness</p> | <p>of Sarah's womb:<br/> 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;<br/> 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.<br/> 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.<br/> 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;<br/> 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;<br/> 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.</p> | <p>2) He was strong in faith—not staggering but giving glory to God<br/> 3) He was convinced of God's ability &amp; God's power</p> <p>b. His faith was credited as righteousness<sup>DS1,2</sup></p> <p><b>3 The recording of Abraham's faith</b><br/> a. That men might read<br/> b. That men might be counted righteous—by believing<br/> 1) That God raised Jesus<br/> 2) That Jesus died for our sins &amp; was raised again for our justification<sup>DS3</sup></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21**

**F. Abraham: The Example of a Man Justified by Faith Alone, 4:17-25**

(4:17-25) **Introduction:** Abraham is the prime example or pattern that a person is justified by faith and by faith alone.

1. The source of Abraham's faith (v.17).
2. The strength of Abraham's faith (v.18-22).
3. The recording of Abraham's faith (v.23-25).

**1** (4:17) **Faith, Source:** the source of Abraham's faith was God and God alone. Note three points.

1. It was God Himself whom Abraham believed: "I have made thee a father of many nations" (v.17; cp. Gen.17:1-5, esp. 4-5). Abraham had never had a son, not by Sarah. He was now about one hundred years old, and Sarah was close to the same age. They were both well beyond the years of having a son. Just think about it for a moment and the impossibility is clearly realized. If Abraham was ever to have a son, the son would have to come from God. God would have to be the source, for only God could do such an impossible thing. And note: despite the impossibility Abraham *believes God*. The source of Abraham's faith was God.

**"Have faith in God" (Mk.11:22).**

**"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb.11:6).**

2. It was the God who quickens the dead whom Abraham believed. The source of Abraham's faith was...
  - the living and true God: the God who is omnipotent, possessing all power, the power to breathe life into *dead matter*.

The source of Abraham's faith was God: God who has the power to quicken, make alive, revive, animate, rejuvenate and animate what is dead. No matter how impossible the promise seemed, God was able to fulfill it because *He is God*, the One who possesses all power (omnipotent). God is able to quicken and resurrect the dead; therefore, He is able to fulfill His promise.

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead [spiritually dead] shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (Jn.5:24-25).**

**"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn.6:40).**

**"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15).**

**"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor.15:22).**

**"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (2 Cor.4:14).**

**"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Th.4:16).**

3. It was the God who creates who was the source of Abraham's faith. Because God is God, that is, omnipotent, He is able to create. He can make something *out of nothing*. He needs nothing to create. He can speak things into existence just as He did when He created the world (Gen.1:1, 3). Abraham believed this; he believed that if it was necessary God could create life in the organs of his and Sarah's bodies. Abraham trusted and believed the promise of God. God was the source of his faith.

**Thought 1.** Note a fact often overlooked. Every promise made by God is a promise that only He can fulfill. He is not needed if man can meet and do whatever is needed. Therefore, if a man puts his faith in men, then all the hopes and promises that extend beyond this life will not be met. No man can fulfill the hope and promise of salvation from sin, death, and hell. No man can fulfill the promise that we shall be "the heirs of the world," that we shall receive eternal life in the new heavens and earth (cp. v.13). Only God can fulfill the impossible promise of eternal life.

**"But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Mt.19:26).**

**"For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Lk.1:37).**

**"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee" (Job 42:2).**

**2** (4:18-22) **Faith—Abraham:** the strength of Abraham's faith. Note two very significant lessons.

1. Abraham's faith was in *what God said*, the promise of a seed or of a son. He had nothing else to go on but God's Word: "that which was spoken."

The phrase "against hope believed in hope" means that Abraham was past hope, beyond all human help and any possibility of having a son. His situation was beyond hope, yet he believed God; he placed his hope in God and in what God had said.

a. Abraham was not weak in faith despite thinking about his own physical inability. His body was "now dead"; he and Sarah were about one hundred years old. The word "dead" is a perfect participle in the Greek which means that his reproductive organs had stopped functioning and were dead forever and could never again function. Abraham could never have a son; it was not humanly possible. He and Sarah were almost one hundred years old, now sexually "dead."

Abraham thought about the matter. The word "considered" (katanoeo) means he fixed his thoughts, his mind, his attention upon the matter. But he did not give in to the thoughts. He was not weak in faith.

**Thought 1.** Just imagine the *personal relationship* Abraham must have had with God! To know God so well—loving and trusting God so strongly—that God could give him an experience so meaningful that Abraham would believe the promise without even staggering in faith.

**"Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me" (Is.43:10).**

**"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Dt.6:5).**

**"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear [trust] the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (Dt.10:12-13).**

b. Abraham was strong in faith—not staggering at the promise of God. Instead he walked about glorifying and praising God for His glorious promise. The word "staggered" (diakrino) means he did not waiver, did not vacillate, did not question God's ability to fulfill His promise.

c. Abraham was fully convinced of God's ability and God's power. He knew God could overcome the difficulty of his body being "dead," and he believed God could and would either...

- quicken his body, or
- recreate his reproductive organs (v.17).

He did not know what method God would use, but he knew God was able to do what He had promised. Abraham believed God; he was fully persuaded that the promise would be fulfilled.

**"God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Lk.3:8).**

**"Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25).**

**"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Ro.4:20-21).**

**"Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Dt.7:9).**

“Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel” (Dt.31:19).

“Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass” (Ps.37:5).

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Pr.3:5).

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Is.26:3).

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is” (Jer.17:7).

2. Abraham’s faith was credited as righteousness (see DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Ro.4:22 for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(4:22) **Imputed** (elogisthe): means to reckon, to credit, to count, to compute, to ascribe, to deposit, to put to one’s account. Abraham’s faith was counted for righteousness. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Reckon*—Ro.6:11 for a fuller discussion.) Abraham deposited his faith with God, and God credited Abraham’s faith as righteousness.

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(4:22) **Justification—Faith—Righteousness**: in simple terms *justification* means that God takes the believer’s faith and counts it as righteousness (Ro.4:3; cp. Gen.15:6; see notes—Ro.4:1-3; DEEPER STUDY # 1—4:1-25; note—5:1. Also see DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Cross*—Jn.12:32 for more discussion.)

When a person *really believes* that Jesus Christ is *his Savior*, God takes that person’s faith and counts it for righteousness (Ro.4:3, 5, 9, 11, 22, 24). The person is not righteous; he has no righteousness of his own. He is still imperfect, still sinful, still corruptible, still short of God’s glory as a sinful human being. But he does believe that Jesus Christ is *his Savior*. Such belief honors God’s Son (whom God loves very much), and because it honors God’s Son, God accepts that person’s faith for righteousness. God counts that person’s faith as righteousness. Therefore, that person becomes acceptable to God. (In a discussion of justification, a person’s belief—the right kind of belief—is critical. See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.2:24; Ro.10:16-17.)

“And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).

**3** (4:23-25) **Faith—Abraham**: the recording of Abraham’s faith is for two purposes.

1. That men might read the account. It was not recorded just to honor Abraham as a great man. It was written so that we might read and understand how we are to become acceptable to God.

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn.1:1-3).

“It seemed good to me [Luke] also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed” (Lk.1:3-4).

2. That men might be counted righteous by believing. It is necessary to believe two things. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Ro.4:25 for discussion.)

a. That God raised Jesus our Lord from the dead (see DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Jesus Christ, Resurrection*—Ro.4:25; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:3; DEEPER STUDY # 4—2:24; note—2:25-36 for more discussion).

b. That Jesus died for our sins and was raised again for our justification (see notes—Ro.7:4; DEEPER STUDY # 2—8:3; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 1:3; DEEPER STUDY # 3—2:23; note—3:13-15. See Subject Index, *Jesus Christ, Death* for more discussion.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(4:25) **Justification—Jesus Christ, Death; Resurrection—Propitiation:** Christ was delivered to death for our sins and raised again for our justification. He offered Himself as a *propitiation* for our sin. Propitiation means sacrifice, covering. (See notes—Ro.3:25; 1 Jn.2:1-2.) Christ offered Himself as our sacrifice, as our substitute, as the covering for our sins. God accepted the offering and the sacrifice of His life for us. The resurrection proves it.

1. The resurrection shouts loudly and clearly that God is satisfied with the settlement for sin which Christ made.
2. The resurrection declares the believer justified, free from sin, and righteous in God's eyes. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Ro.4:22; 5:1. Cp.Ro.4:5; 4:1-3; 4:1-25.)

**“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:23-24).**

**“He [David] seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:31-32).**

**“And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead” (Act 10:39-41).**

**“But God raised him from the dead” (Acts 13:30).**

**“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).**

**“[God's power] which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph.1:20-21).**

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| <b>CHAPTER 5</b>   |  | joy in hope of the glory of God.<br>3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;<br>4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:<br>5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. | <b>4 There is hope for the glory of God</b><br><b>5 There is glory in trials &amp; sufferings</b><br>a. Trials stir patience<br><br>b. Patience stirs character<br>c. Experience stirs hope<br>d. Hope never shames<br><b>6 There is the continuous experience of God's love thru the indwelling Spirit</b> |
| <b>1 Justification is by faith</b><br><b>2 There is peace with God</b><br><br><b>3 There is access into the grace, the favor &amp; the presence of God</b> | <b>G. God's Unbelievable Love (Part I): The Results of Justification, 5:1-5</b><br><br>Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:<br>2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and re- |  |   |

**DIVISION III**

**FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21**

**G. God's Unbelievable Love (Part I): The Results of Justification, 5:1-5**

(5:1-5) **Introduction:** man is blessed by God through justification, blessed beyond all imagination. Justification and its results are gloriously covered in this passage of Scripture.

1. Justification is by faith (v.1).
2. There is peace with God (v.1).
3. There is access into the grace, the favor and the presence of God (v.2).
4. There is hope for the glory of God (v.2).
5. There is glory in trials and sufferings (v.3-5).
6. There is the continuous experience of God's love through the indwelling Spirit (v.5).

**1** (5:1) **Justification** (diakioun): to count someone righteous. It means to reckon, to credit, to account, to judge, to treat, to look upon as righteous. It does not mean to make a man righteous. All Greek verbs which end in "oun" mean not to make someone something, but merely to count, to judge, to treat someone as something.

There are three major points to note about justification.

1. Why justification is necessary:
  - a. Justification is necessary because of the sin and alienation of man. Man has rebelled against God and taken his life into his own hands. Man lives as he desires...
    - fulfilling the lust of the eyes and of the flesh.
    - clinging to the pride of life and to the things of the world.
 Man has become sinful and ungodly, an enemy of God, pushing God out of his life and wanting little if anything to do with God. Man has separated and alienated himself from God.
  - b. Justification is necessary because of the anger and wrath of God. "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Ps.7:11). Sin has aroused God's anger and wrath. God is angry over man's...
    - rebellion                      • ungodliness                      • sin
    - hostility                      • unrighteousness                      • desertion
 Man has turned his back upon God, pushing God away and having little to do with Him. Man has not made God the center of his life; man has broken his relationship with God. Therefore, the greatest need in man's life is to discover the answer to the question: How can the relationship between man and God be restored?
2. Why God justifies a man: God justifies a man because of His Son Jesus Christ. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that man's faith and counts it as righteousness. The man is not righteous, but God considers and credits the man's faith as righteousness. Why is God willing to do this?
  - a. God is willing to justify man because He loves man that much. God loves man so much that He sent His Son into the world and sacrificed Him in order to justify man (Jn.3:16; Ro.5:8).
  - b. God is willing to justify man because of what His Son Jesus Christ has done for man.
    - ⇒ Jesus Christ has secured the *Ideal* righteousness for man. He came to earth to live a sinless and perfect life. As Man He never broke the law of God; He never went contrary to the will of God, not even once. Therefore, He stood before God and before the world as the *Ideal Man*, the *Perfect Man*, the *Representative Man*, and the *Perfect Righteousness* that could stand for the righteousness of every man.
    - ⇒ Jesus Christ came into the world to *die* for man. As the *Ideal Man* He could take all the sins of the world upon Himself and die for every man. His death *could stand* for every man. He exchanged places with man by becoming the sinner (2 Cor.5:19). He bore the wrath of God against sin, bearing the condemnation for every man. Again, He was able to do this because He was the *Ideal Man*, and as the *Ideal Man* His death could stand for the death of every man.
    - ⇒ Jesus Christ came into the world to *arise from the dead* and thereby to conquer death for man. As the *Ideal Man*, His resurrection and exaltation into the presence of God *could stand* for every man's desperate need to conquer death and to be acceptable to God. His resurrected life could stand for the resurrected life of the believer.

Now, as stated above, when a man believes in Jesus Christ—really believes—God takes that man’s belief and...

- counts it as the righteousness (perfection) of Christ. The man is counted as *righteous in Christ*.
- counts it as the death of Christ. The man is counted as having already *died in Christ*, as having already paid the penalty for sin *in the death of Christ*.
- counts it as the resurrection of Christ. The man is counted as already having been *resurrected in Christ*.

Very simply, God loves His Son Jesus Christ so much that He honors any man who honors His Son by *believing on Him*. He honors the man by taking the man’s faith and counting (crediting) it as righteousness and by giving him the glorious privilege of living with Christ forever in the presence of God.

3. How God justifies a man: the word justify (diakioun) is a legal word taken from the courts. It pictures man on trial before God. Man is seen as having committed the most heinous of crimes; he has rebelled against God and broken his relationship with God. How can he restore that relationship? Within human courts if a man is acquitted, he is declared innocent, but this is not true within the Divine Court. When a man appears before God, he is anything but innocent; he is utterly guilty and condemned accordingly.

But when a man sincerely trusts Christ, then God takes that man’s faith and counts it as righteousness. By such God counts the man—judges him, treats him—as if he was innocent. The man is not made innocent; he is guilty. He knows it and God knows it, but God treats him as innocent. “God justifies the ungodly”—an incredible mercy, a wondrous grace. (See notes—Ro. 4:1-3; DEEPER STUDY # 1—4:1-25; DEEPER STUDY # 2—4:22.)

How do we know this? How can we know for sure that God is like this? Because Jesus said so. He said that God loves us. We are sinners, yes; but Christ said that we are very, very dear to God.

“And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6).

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:23-24).

“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ro.4:3).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:9).

“For he that is dead [counted dead, justified] is freed from sin” (Ro.6:7).

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Ro.8:33).

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).

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

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).

**2 (5:1) Peace—Justification:** the first result of justification is peace with God.

1. The meaning of peace with God is striking. Peace with God does not mean escapsim, a quiet atmosphere, the absence of trouble, the control of situations by positive thinking, the denial of problems, the ability to keep from facing reality. Peace *with* God means the *sense and knowledge*...

- that one has restored his relationship with God.
- that one is no longer alienated and separated from God.
- that one is now reconciled with God.
- that one is now accepted by God.
- that one is freed from the wrath and judgment of God.
- that one is freed from fearing God’s wrath and judgment.
- that one is now pleasing God.
- that one is at peace with God.

2. The source of peace is Jesus Christ. Men can have peace with God only because of Jesus Christ. It is He who reconciles men to God. He has made peace by the blood of His cross. (See notes, *Propitiation*—Ro.3:25.)

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace” (Eph.2:14-15).

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).

**“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Is.53:5).**

3. The reason we have peace is the glorious truth of justification (see note, *Justification*—Ro.5:1 for discussion. See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Justification*—Ro.4:1-25; note—4:1-3; DEEPER STUDY # 2—4:22 for more discussion.)

**3** (5:2) **Access—Grace:** the second result of justification is access into the grace of God.

1. Grace (charis) means a gift or a favor, an *unmerited* and undeserved gift or favor (see notes, *Grace*—Ro.4:16; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Tit.2:11-15 for more discussion.) In the present passage grace is looked upon as a place or a position. Grace is a place to which we are brought, a position into which we are placed. It is the place of God’s presence, the position of salvation. The person who is justified...

- stands in God’s presence.
- stands before God saved.
- stands in the favor of God.
- stands in the privileges of God.
- stands in the promises of God.

2. Note it is *through Christ* that we have access into this grace. The word “access” (prosagogen) means to bring to, to move to, to introduce, to present. The thought is that of being in a royal court and being presented and introduced to the King of kings. Jesus Christ is the One who throws open the door into God’s presence. He is the One who presents us to God, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe.

**“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (Jn.10:9).**

**“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Ro.5:2).**

**“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh [brought near] by the blood of Christ” (Eph.2:13).**

**“For through him we...[all] have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph.2:18).**

**“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Eph.3:12).**

**“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb.10:19).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

**Thought 1.** Note we “stand” in God’s grace, in His presence.

- 1) We are not bowed down, intimidated, stricken with fear, and humiliated. Christ has justified us, removed our guilt and shame, and given us great confidence before God. Therefore, we take a stand of honor and dignity before Him, standing in the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus.
- 2) We are not sitting or lying down, but we are standing. This pictures our service and labor for God. We are brought into His presence for the purpose of service; therefore, there is not time for sitting and lying around. We stand before Him justified, yes, but we stand to receive our orders from Him. (Cp. 1 Cor.15:58; 2 Cor.5:18-21.)

**4** (5:2) **Hope:** the third result of justification is hope, hope for the glory of God (see notes, *Rewards*—Ro.2:6-10; DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Glory*—Ro.2:7; DEEPER STUDY # 1—3:23 for discussion and verses.) Note that the hope of the believer is for *the glory of God*.

1. When Scripture speaks of the believer’s hope, it does not mean what the world means by hope. The hope of the world is a *desire*, a *want*. The world hopes—wants, desires—that something will happen. But this is not the hope of the believer. The hope of the believer is a *surety*: it is perfect assurance, confidence, and knowledge. How can hope be so absolute and assured? By being an *inward possession*. The believer’s hope is based upon the presence of God’s Spirit who dwells within the believer. In fact, the believer possesses the *hope of glory* only by the Spirit of God who dwells within him. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Hope*—Ro.8:24-25 for more detailed discussion.)

**“In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Eph.1:13-14; cp. 2 Cor.1:21-22; Eph.4:30; Jn.14:16-18).**

**“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel” (Col.1:5).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:11-13).**

**“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever” (Heb.6:18-20).**

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).

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

2. The glory hoped for by the believer is to abundantly exceed the most wonderful experience we can ask or think. Glory means to possess and to be full of perfect light; to dwell in the perfect splendor and magnificence of God (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Glory*—Ro.2:7).

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mt.13:43).

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:17).

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev.7:9).

“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps.73:24).

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Ro.8:18).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:17).

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim.2:10).

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Pt.5:1).

**Thought 1.** Note how far short we often come. Instead of rejoicing in the glorious hope God has given...

- we moan, groan, and complain, living a discouraged and defeated life.
- we slip back into the ways of the world: the lust of the flesh and the eyes and pursuing the pride of life and the things of the world. (Cp. 1 Jn.2:15-16.)
- we become discouraged and defeated, no longer conscious of the glorious hope for the glory of God.

“Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself” (Eph.1:8-9).

**5** (5:3-5) **Trials—Suffering:** the fourth result of justification is glory in trials and sufferings. When a man is truly justified, he is no longer defeated by trials and sufferings. Trials and sufferings no longer discourage and swamp him, no longer cast him down into the dungeon of despair and hopelessness. The very opposite is true. Trials and sufferings become purposeful and meaningful. The *truly* justified man knows...

- that his life and welfare are completely under God’s care and watchful eye.
- therefore, whatever events come into his life—whether good or bad—they are allowed by God for a reason. The justified man knows that God will take the trials and sufferings of this world and work them out for good, even if God has to twist and move every event surrounding the believer.

This passage explains the great benefits of trials and sufferings; it shows exactly how the trials and sufferings of life work good for us. The word “trials” or “tribulations” (thlipsis) means pressure, oppression, affliction, and distress. It means to be pressed together ever so tightly. It means all kinds of pressure ranging from the day to day pressures over to the pressure of confronting the most serious afflictions, even that of death itself.

“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).

“We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

“For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know” (1 Th.3:4).

“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev.7:14).

1. Trials stir patience (hupomone): endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, constancy, perseverance. The word is not passive; it is active. It is not the spirit that just sits back and puts up with the trials of life, taking whatever may come.

Rather it is the spirit that stands up and faces life's trials, that actively goes about conquering and overcoming them. When trials confront a man who is truly justified, he is stirred to arise and face the trials head on. He immediately sets out to conquer and overcome them. He knows that God is allowing the trials in order to teach him more and more patience (endurance).

**"In your patience possess ye your souls" (Lk.21:19).**

**"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer" (Ro.12:12).**

**"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb.10:36).**

**"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jas.1:2-4).**

**"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (Jas.5:7).**

2. Patience stirs experience (dokimex): character, integrity, strength. The idea is that of proven experience, of gaining strength through the trials of life; therefore, the word is more accurately translated character. When a justified man endures trials, he comes out of it stronger than ever before. He is a man of much stronger character and integrity. He knows much more about the presence and strength of God.

**"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Cor.1:3-4).**

**"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor.12:9-10).**

**"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph.3:16).**

**"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Col.1:11).**

**"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Heb.11:33-34).**

**"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wing as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Is.40:31).**

**"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Is.41:10).**

3. Experience stirs hope (elpis): to expect with confidence; to anticipate knowing; to look and long for with surety; to desire with assurance; to rely on with certainty; to trust with the guarantee; to believe with the knowledge. Note that hope is expectation, anticipation, looking and longing for, desiring, relying upon, and trusting. But it is also confidence, knowledge, surety, assurance, certainty, and a guarantee. When a justified man becomes stronger in character, he draws closer to God and the closer he draws to God, the more he hopes for the glory of God. (See note, *Hope*—Ro.5:2 for more discussion and verses.)

4. Hope never shames (kataischuno, makes ashamed): never disappoints, deludes, deceives, confounds, confuses. The believer, the person who is truly justified, will never be disappointed or shamed. He will see his hope fulfilled. He will live forever in the presence of God inheriting the promises God has given in His Word.

**"Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Ro.9:33).**

**"According to my earnest expectaton and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Ph.1:20).**

**"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Pt.4:16).**

**"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 Jn.2:28).**

**"They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded" (Ps.22:5).**

**"In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion" (Ps.71:1).**

**"Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments" (Ps.119:6).**

**"The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish" (Pr.10:28; cp. Ps.22:5; 71:1).**

**"For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (Is.50:7).**

**"And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed" (Joel 2:26).**

**6** (5:5) **God, Love of—Holy Spirit, Work of:** there is the continuous experience of God’s love through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

1. The love of God is demonstrated in His justifying the man who truly believes in His Son Jesus Christ.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

2. The Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts. He grows and matures us in the love of God, increasing our understanding of what God has done and is doing for us. He helps us learn more and more about our justification and more and more of the glorious salvation He promises.

The Holy Spirit...

- makes us *conscious* and *aware* of God’s love, and gives us a *deep* and *intimate* sense of God’s love.
- makes us *conscious* and *aware* of God’s presence, and of His care and concern for all that is involved in salvation.

It is the sense and intimacy of God’s love that is being stressed: a personal manifestation, a personal experience of the presence and love of God, of His justification and care for us as we walk through life moment by moment.

**“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn.14:21).**

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).**

**“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph.2:4-5).**

**“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not” (1 Jn.3:1).**

**“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” (1 Jn.4:9).**

**“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 Jn.4:16).**

Note: the Holy Spirit is “given unto us.” He enters our hearts and lives for the very purpose of sealing or guaranteeing us. He seals or guarantees our justification, and He seals the fact that God loves us and cares for and looks after us. It is because of His indwelling presence that we have the continuous and unbroken experience of God’s love. But remember: this glorious intimacy with God is a result of justification. *Only the person* who is truly justified experiences the love of God.

Note another fact: the love of God is a gift, a gift deposited in the believer by the Holy Spirit. (Cp. the divine nature which is *deposited* within us when we truly trust Jesus Christ as our Savior, 2 Pt.1:4.)

**“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:15-17).**

**“Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor.1:22).**

**“In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Eph.1:13-14).**

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| <p><b>1 We were ungodly &amp; without strength, yet Christ died for us</b><br/> a. In God's time<br/> b. Was an uncommon, unbelievable love</p> <p><b>2 We were sinners, yet God demonstrated His love for us</b></p> | <p><b>H. God's Unbelievable Love (Part II): The Great Depth of Justification, 5:6-11</b></p> <p>6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.</p> <p>7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.</p> <p>8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ</p> | <p>died for us.</p> <p>9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.</p> <p>10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.</p> <p>11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.</p> | <p>a. By Christ's death<br/> b. By justification</p> <p>c. By saving us from wrath</p> <p><b>3 We were enemies, yet God reconciled and saved us</b><br/> a. We are reconciled by Christ's death<sup>asr</sup><br/> b. We are saved by Christ's life<br/> c. We are given joy by Christ's atonement (reconciliation)</p> |
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**DIVISION III.**

**FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21**

**H. God's Unbelievable Love (Part II): The Great Depth of Justification, 5:6-11**

(5:6-11) **Introduction—Love** (agape): this passage discusses God's unbelievable love. It shows the great depth of justification. The passage also gives one of the clearest definitions of *agape love*. It actually shows the meaning of *agape love*. *Agape love* goes much farther than *phileo love*. *Phileo love* is brotherly love, a love that gives itself for a brother. But *agape love* is a new kind of love: it is a godly love, a sacrificial love, a love that gives itself for those without strength (Ro.5:6), for the ungodly (Ro.5:6), for sinners (Ro.5:8), and for enemies (Ro.5:10). (See note—Jn.21:15-17.)

1. We were ungodly and without strength, yet Christ died for us (v.6-7).
2. We were sinners, yet God demonstrated His love for us (v.8-9).
3. We were enemies, yet God reconciled and saved us (v.10-11).

**1** (5:6-7) **Jesus Christ, Death—Man, State of—God, Love of:** we were ungodly and without strength, yet Christ died for us. God's great love is seen in this unbelievable act.

1. We were "without strength" (asthenon): weak, worthless, useless, helpless, hopeless, destitute, powerless. We were spiritually worthless, useless, and unable to help ourselves.

"My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul: (Job 10:1).

"For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed" (Ps.31:10).

"O my God, my soul is cast down within me" (Ps.42:6).

"I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me" (Ps.69:2).

"But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped" (Ps.73:2).

"When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me" (Ps.73:16).

"Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go" (Jer.2:25).

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [dead], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (1 Th.4:13).

"That at that time ye were without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph.2:12).

2. We were ungodly (asebon): not like God, different from God, profane, having a different lifestyle than God. God is godly, that is, perfect; man is ungodly, that is, he is not like God; he is imperfect.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Ro.1:28-32).

"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Tim.1:9-10).

**“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit” (Jude 17-19).**

3. It was in “due time” (kata kairon) that Christ died for us. It was in God’s appointed time: His destined time, appropriate time. Men had to be prepared for Christ before God could send Him into the world. Men had to learn that they were without strength and ungodly, that they needed a Savior. (This was the purpose of the Old Testament and the law, to show men that they were sinful. See outline and note—Ro.4:14-15.)

**“And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mk.1:15).**

**“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal.4:4-5).**

**“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:5-6).**

**“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:2-3).**

**“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb.9:26).**

4. Christ died *for* us. The word “for” (huper) means for our benefit, for our sake, in our behalf, in our stead, as our substitute. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 4—Mk.10:45.)

a. Christ died as our sacrifice.

**“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor.5:7).**

**“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:15).**

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him: (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

**“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself” (Heb.7:26-27).**

**“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb.9:13-14).**

**“Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb.9:25-26).**

**“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb.10:10).**

**“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God....For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb.10:12, 14).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

b. Christ died as our ransom (see note—Ro.3:24; Gal.3:13-14).

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col.1:14).**

**“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).**

**“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb.9:12).**

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).**

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev.5:9).

c. Christ died as our propitiation (see note—Ro.3:25. Cp. 1 Jn.2:1-2.)

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Ro.3:25).

“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:2).

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn.4:10).

5. God’s love is an uncommon and an unbelievable love. Just think about the illustration given. Some persons attempt to save people who are caught in some desperate tragedy, and others offer their lives to represent leaders in their great purpose.

⇒ A few will die for a just and upright man (righteous).

⇒ Some will even *dare* to die for a “good” man.

But this is not what Christ did. Christ did not die for the righteous and godly man, nor for the good and pure man. He went well beyond what men do. Christ...

- died for the ungodly, for those who were the very opposite of righteous and good.
- died for those “without strength”: the useless, destitute, worthless, and those without value to society and men.

Christ died for those for whom no man would die, for those who were of no value and of no good. He died for those who were diametrically opposed to God, the very opposite from all that He is. Such is the unbelievable love of God; such is the depth of justification.

**2** (5:8-9) **Jesus Christ, Death—Man, State of—God, Love of:** we were sinners, yet God proved His love to us. The word “commendeth” (sunistemi) means to show, prove, exhibit, demonstrate. It is the present tense: God is always showing and proving His love to us. The word “sinners” (hamartolon) refers to a man who is sinful, the man who sins...

- by disobeying God’s Word and will (cp. Ro.1:29-31).
- by living selfishly.
- by ignoring God’s commandments.
- by doing his own thing.
- by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes.
- by pursuing the pride of life and the things of the world.

The point is this: it is “while we were yet sinners” that God proved His love to us. This is the unbelievable love of God, that He stooped down to save sinners. We would expect Him to save righteous and good men, but it catches us completely off-guard when it is stated that He saves sinners. Such is the unbelievable love of God.

Now note how God proved His love.

1. God proved His love by giving up His only Son to die *for* us. Some earthly fathers would be willing to give up their sons for a “good” man or for a great cause. But how many would be willing to give up their sons for a man who committed treason or for a man who murdered one of the greatest men living? Think of the enormous price God paid in proving His love: He gave up His Son to die for the unworthy and useless, the ungodly and sinful, the wicked and depraved—the worst sinners and outcasts imaginable. Just think what God Himself must have gone through: the feelings, the suffering, the hurt, the pain, and the terrible emotional strain. Just think what is involved in God giving up His Son:

- ⇒ God had to send His Son *out of* the spiritual and eternal world (dimension) *into* the physical and corruptible world (dimension).
- ⇒ God had to humiliate His Son by stripping Him of His eternal glory and insisting that He become clothed with corruptible flesh and die as a man.
- ⇒ God had to watch His Son walk through life being rejected, denied, cursed, abused, arrested, tortured, and murdered. God had to sit back and watch His Son suffer being murdered by the hands of men; He had to sit back when He knew He could reach out and deliver Him.
- ⇒ God had to destine His Son to die upon the cross for the sins of men.
- ⇒ God had to lay all the sins of the world upon His Son and let Him bear them all.
- ⇒ God had to judge His Son as the sinner and condemn Him to death for sin.
- ⇒ God had to turn His back upon Christ in death.
- ⇒ God had to cast His wrath against sin upon Christ.
- ⇒ God has to bear the pain of His Son’s sufferings eternally, for He is eternal and the death of His Son is ever before His face. (Just imagine! It is beyond our comprehension, but the eternal agony is a fact because of the eternal nature of God.)

As stated, God proved His love. He has given up His Son to die for us. We do not deserve it—we never have and we never will—but God loves us with an unbelievable love. Therefore, He has given His Son to die *for* us, as our substitute, in our behalf.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Is.53:5).

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (Jn.10:11).

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn.15:13).

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:3).

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb.2:9).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).

2. God proves His love by justification through the blood of Christ (see notes—Ro.5:1; 3:25 for discussion).

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:9).

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).

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

3. God proves His love by saving us from wrath (see notes and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *God's Wrath*—Ro.1:18. Also see note, pt.1—Ro.5:1 for discussion.)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (Jn.3:16-17).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).

**3** (5:10-11) **Reconciliation—Jesus Christ, Death—Man, State of—God, Love of:** we were enemies, yet God has reconciled and saved us. God reconciles and saves us by doing three things.

1. God reconciles us by Christ's death (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.5:10 for discussion).
2. God saves us by Christ's life. “His life” means the life of the *living Lord*. Christ stands before God as our great Intercessor and Mediator. Standing before God, He stands as the Sinless and Righteous Son of God, as the Ideal and Perfect Man. When we believe in Christ, God takes our belief and counts it as righteousness. The Ideal Righteousness of Christ covers us, and God accepts and saves us because we *trust* Christ as the living Lord, as our Intercessor and Mediator before God.

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Ro.8:34).

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb.7:25).

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:5).

“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb.8:6).

“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb.9:15).

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb.9:24).

“And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant” (Heb.12:24).

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:1-2).

3. God gives us joy through the atonement or reconciliation of Christ. A person who receives so much from God is bound to be filled with joy and rejoicing (see note, *Joy*—Ph.1:4 for discussion).

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (Jn.15:11).

“Hitherto [before reconciliation] have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:17).

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Pt.1:8-9).

“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps.16:11).

“Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them” (Ps.126:2).

“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Is.12:3).

“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Is.35:10).

“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Is.61:10).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(5:10) **Reconcile—Reconciliation** (katallasso): to change, to change thoroughly, to exchange, to change from enmity to friendship, to bring together, to restore. The idea is that two persons who should have been together all along are brought together; two persons who had something between them are restored and reunited.

Three points should be noted about reconciliation.

1. The thing that broke the relationship between God and man was sin. Men are said to be enemies of God (Ro.5:10), and the word “enemies” refers back to the sinners and the ungodly (Ro.5:6, 8). The “enemies” of God are the sinners and ungodly of this world. This simply means that every man is an enemy of God, for every man is a sinner and ungodly. This may seem unkind and harsh, but it is exactly what Scripture is saying. The fact is clearly seen by thinking about the matter for a moment.

The sinner cannot be said to be a friend of God’s. He is antagonistic toward God, opposing what God stands for. The sinner is...

- rebelling against God
- rejecting God
- cursing God
- ignoring God
- disobeying God
- fighting against God
- denying God
- refusing God

When any of us sin, we work against God and promote evil by word and example.

⇒ When the sinner lives for himself, he becomes an enemy of God. Why? Because God does not live for Himself. God gave Himself up in the most supreme way possible: He gave His only Son to die *for* us.

⇒ When the sinner lives for the world and worldly things, he becomes an enemy of God. Why? Because he chooses the temporal—that which passes away—over God. He chooses it when God has provided eternal life for him through the death of His Son.

This is the point of God’s great love or reconciliation. He did not reconcile and save us when we were righteous and good. He reconciled and saved us when we were enemies, ignoring and rejecting Him. As stated above, it is because we are sinners and enemies that we need to be reconciled.

2. The way men are reconciled to God is by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Very simply stated, when a man believes that Jesus Christ died for him...

- God accepts the death of Jesus Christ *for* the death of the man.
- God accepts the sins borne by Christ as the sins committed by the man.
- God accepts the condemnation borne by Christ as the condemnation due to the man.

Therefore, the man is freed from his sins and the punishment due his sins. Christ bore both the sins and the punishment for the man. The man who truly believes that God loves that much—enough to give His only begotten Son—becomes acceptable to God, reconciled forever and ever.

3. God is the One who reconciles, not men. Men do not reconcile themselves to God. They cannot do enough work or enough good to become acceptable to God. Reconciliation is entirely the act of God. God is the One who reaches out to men and reconciles them unto Himself. Men *receive* the reconciliation of God.

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor.5:18; cp. v.19-21).

“...His grace, wherein he hath made us *accepted* in the beloved” (Eph.1:6).

“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph.2:16).

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).

“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb.2:17).

“We love him, because he first loved us” (1 Jn.4:19).

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| <p><b>1 The entrance of sin &amp; death through Adam</b><sup>DS1,2</sup></p> <p>a. Sin came by one man—Adam</p> <p>b. Adam’s nature of sin &amp; death passed to all</p> <p>c. The proof: Sin &amp; death existed before the law; sin &amp; death came from &amp; thru Adam</p> <p>d. Adam’s real importance: A type of Christ, cp. 1 Cor.15:22, 45-49</p> <p><b>2 The counteraction—the reversal—of sin &amp; death by Christ</b></p> <p>a. Adam’s sin brought death; God’s gift brought righteousness</p> <p>b. Adam’s sin brought condemnation; God’s gift brought justification</p> | <p><b>I. Adam and Christ: The Two Focal Points of History, 5:12-21</b></p> <p>12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:</p> <p>13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.</p> <p>14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.</p> <p>15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.</p> <p>16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free</p> | <p>gift is of many offences unto justification.</p> <p>17 For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)</p> <p>18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.</p> <p>19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.</p> <p>20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:</p> <p>21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.</p> | <p>c. Adam’s sin brought the reign of death; God’s gift brought the reign of life</p> <p>d. Adam’s sin brought condemnation to all men; God’s gift brought justification &amp; life to all men</p> <p><b>3 Conclusion</b></p> <p>a. Adam’s disobedience made many sinners, but Christ’s obedience made many righteous</p> <p>b. The law was given to point out &amp; magnify sin, but God’s grace was so much greater</p> <p>c. Sin reigned to death, but God’s grace reigns to eternal life—thru Christ’s righteousness</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION; THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD, 3:21-5:21**

**I. Adam and Christ: The Two Focal Points of History, 5:12-21**

(5:12-21) **Introduction:** this passage deals with two of the focal points of human history. It deals with Adam and Christ, the two chief representatives and figureheads of the human race. It tells how sin and death entered the world and how Jesus Christ counteracted sin and death.

1. The entrance of sin and death through Adam (v.12-14).
2. The counteraction—the reversal—of sin and death by Christ (v.15-18).
3. Conclusion (v.19-21).

**1** (5:12-14) **Adam—Sin—Death—History, Pivotal Points:** the entrance of sin and death into the world through Adam.

1. The fact is very simply stated: sin and death entered the world through one man, Adam. God had said:
  - “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof [disobey God] thou shalt surely die” (Gen.2:17).
  - “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezk.18:4).
  - “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezk.18:20).

Adam sinned and corrupted himself; therefore, he died.

2. Adam’s nature of sin and death was and still is passed on to all men. His corruptible nature was passed on to his children and on down through history to all men. It is a well known fact that the child inherits the nature of his parents. Therefore, if the parent’s nature is bent toward sin and is corruptible, so will the child’s nature be. Nature is like an *infectious blood line*: whatever the nature is, it is passed on down to the next generation.

Now note a significant fact: a man is not condemned to death because of Adam’s sin. Scripture clearly says this: “Death passed upon all men, for that *all* have sinned” (v.12). A man dies because of his own sins, not because of his father’s sins. Every man is personally responsible to God.

**“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Ro.3:23).**

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).

“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal.3:22).

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn.1:8).

“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 Jn.5:19).

“There is no man that sinneth not” (1 Ki.8:46).

“They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Ps.14:3).

“Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Ps.53:3).

“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Pr.20:9).

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is.53:6).

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Is.64:6).

3. The proof that we inherit Adam’s nature is that sin and death existed even before the law (v.13). The law of God does charge men with sin; it does show men that they are sinful and condemned to die. But *something* caused men to sin and die before the law was ever given to Moses in a written form. The people before Moses were not charged with sin by the law, for they did not have the law in a permanent and written form. What was it then that was causing the people between Adam and Moses to sin and die? It was nature, the sinful, corruptible nature of man, the nature that every child inherited from his father; and the process began with Adam. Adam was the first man created by God, and he was the first to sin and become corruptible and bear the punishment of death.

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen.3:19).

“They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them” (Job 21:26).

“They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption” (Ps.49:6-9).

“Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust” (Ps.104:29).

“All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Eccl.3:20).

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Eccl.12:7).

“Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days” (Jn.11:39).

“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption” (Acts 13:36).

4. The importance of Adam is critical. He was “the figure [type, picture] of Him that was to come,” that is, of Christ. Adam and Christ are pictured as the two pivotal points of human history, as the two *figureheads or representatives* of the human race. (Cp. 1 Cor.15:20-28, 45-49.) Adam stands at the head of the human race, as *the first* to bring sin and death to man: “Thy first father hath sinned” (Is.43:27). Christ stands at the head of the human race...

- as the first to live a sinless and perfect life, securing a perfect righteousness.
- as the first to conquer death by literally arising from the dead.

Now note the difference between Adam and Christ. Adam was made a “living soul”; Christ a “quickenning spirit” (1 Cor.15:45). What man needs and has always needed is a “quickenning spirit,” a spirit that has the power to infuse life into his soul, life that is both abundant and eternal.

“[Adam] who is the figure of him that was to come” (Ro.5:14).

“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Ro.5:18-19).

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor.15:21-22).

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor.15:45-49).

5. Note that sin is *the cause of death*, and that Adam was the cause of sin. He was the author of apostasy. Whatever theories may say, one thing is clear: *Adam was the cause of sin in the very same way in which Christ is the cause of righteousness.*

- a. Note v.13. Since Adam, sin has been universal. But sin was not charged (that is, personal guilt) against a person because there was no law. There has to be a law for there to be a charge.
- b. Note v.14. Nevertheless, death was still the judgment and experience of man. Why? Why did man die if he was not charged with personal sin? Because Adam was the figurehead and the representative man for all who would be born with his nature. What does this mean? He sinned, took on a corruptible nature; therefore, he died (Ro.5:12f). So death *was passed on* to all men because all inherited the corruptible nature of Adam (Ro.5:12f).

Some argue that this is unjust—to be condemned to die because Adam, the father of the human race, sinned. But the argument is not familiar with the facts, for the truth is, the way to eternal life is now clearer and much more positive. God has now made a greater provision for life and salvation.

- a. This is clearly seen in three facts. A man now has a clearer choice than Adam had. A man can now live forever by simply choosing to take Christ into his life, and the positive choice of choosing Christ is greater and has more pull than Adam's choice. Adam was to remain incorruptible if he did not eat of the fruit of the tree. Note his choice was a negative command and it had no pull and no power to enable him to obey. Man's choice today is positive. Adam was *forbidden to do something*. We are instructed *to do something*—a positive command. These two facts, the fuller and clearer revelation in Christ and the stronger pull of the positive, show that every man has an equal chance at immortality; and in reality, man today has more of a chance than Adam had, more than an equal chance.
- b. There is no human life apart from being born to corruptible human beings. It is a matter of being born and privileged with life or not being born and never having the privilege of life. In order to have the privilege of living, a person has to be born of corruptible parents.
- c. The way of salvation and the way for man to live forever is now much clearer. Man could never know the love of God apart from being born into a corruptible world and experiencing the love of God demonstrated in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the birth of a person, his entrance into the world, is the greatest imaginable blessing. Being born into this depraved and corruptible world is the only way a person can ever know the love of God and experience eternal life with God.

**“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:7).**

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn.3:3).**

**“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(5:12) **Sin—Death:** Adam sinned and corrupted himself; therefore, he died. Why is there such an awful penalty for sin? Is not death an awful price to pay for sin? Such questions overlook the awfulness and seriousness of sin. Sin is the most heinous, vulgar, uncouth, abominable, outrageous, shocking, and hateful thing that can exist. Two things show the evil nature of sin.

1. Sin is the ultimate thing that can be done *against God*. Sin is *disobeying God* and *rebellious against God*. Sin acts against God, fights and struggles against God. Sin goes against all that God is. Sin is insurrection against God; it is the crime of high treason against God. To turn away from the Supreme Being of the universe is to commit the *ultimate offense* (disobedience), and the ultimate offense deserves the ultimate judgment: death. (Keep in mind the glorious love of God. The only way to truly see the love of God is to see man committing the ultimate offense against God [disobeying Him] and having to bear the ultimate punishment of death. Seeing this is the only way a man can see how God paid the ultimate price in giving His Son to die *for us*. His love is the supreme love, the love that sacrificed the greatest thing in all the world, that gave His Son to die for sinners. See outline and notes—Ro.5:6-11.)

2. Sin cost God the ultimate price, the supreme sacrifice of His Son. God, being God, is perfect love. As perfect love He is bound to prove His love by providing a way for man to be forgiven of his sin and to be saved. And the way chosen to save man had to be the perfect salvation, the perfect expression of His love.

**“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn.15:13).**

But note, Christ did not give His life just for friends. He went well beyond; He loved perfectly: He gave His life for those who were without strength, for the ungodly, the sinners, the enemies of God (Ro.5:6, 8, 10).

**“God demonstrated [proved] His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

Sin cost God the ultimate price, the supreme sacrifice, even the death of His own Son.

Sin is the most serious and awful thing a person can do against God. It is the ultimate offense against God and it costs the ultimate price, even the supreme sacrifice of God's dear Son. It is for these two reasons that sin deserves the ultimate penalty of death.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Is.53:5).

“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Is.53:12).

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor.15:3).

“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (2 Cor.5:2).

“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:15).

“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal.1:4).

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb.9:28).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 Jn.3:5).

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(5:12) **Sin—Death:** physical, spiritual, and eternal death would be involved here. Sin is universal, so death is universal—all embracing. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Heb.9:27.)

**2** (5:15-18) **Jesus Christ, Works of—Sin—Death:** the counteraction—the reversal—of sin and death by Christ. Jesus Christ has counteracted and reversed what Adam did. He has made it possible for man to live righteously and to conquer death. Note the descriptive contrast between what Adam did and what God did through Christ.

1. Adam’s sin brought death; God’s gift brought righteousness. The gift is righteousness (cp. v.17). God’s gift of righteousness differs entirely from the sin of Adam. Adam sinned and brought sin and death to “many” (to the human race). But Adam was only one man and God is far greater than one mere man, even if that man has influenced the whole human race. God was able to do “*much more*” good than Adam was able to do bad. In fact, God *has done* “much more.” He has counteracted and reversed all the bad Adam did.

a. God has showered the grace of God, His glorious favor and care and love, upon man. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Grace*—Tit.2:11-15).

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:4-9).

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).

b. God has made the gift of God (righteousness) available to man. (See note, *Righteousness*—Ro.1:17.)

“But for us also, to whom it [righteousness] shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:24-25).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

God’s grace and gift have “abounded” and overflowed to many. But note: it all comes through One Man, Jesus Christ, God’s very own Son.

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Tit.3:4-6).

2. Adam's sin brought condemnation; God's gift brought justification. God's gift differs entirely from what Adam did. Adam doomed the human race, but God's gift justifies the human race. And note how glorious God's justification is: when Adam sinned, his one sin was judged and it brought condemnation to men; but what God did is so glorious, it explodes the human mind.

⇒ God's gift not only dealt with Adam's offense and condemnation, it dealt with "many" offenses. God's gift of righteousness justifies us from *all our offenses*, not only from Adam's one offense. God's gift justifies us from all the corruption we have inherited from our fathers and from all the corruption of human nature—all the sins we have committed with our own hands.

The man who truly trusts Christ is justified from all things, from all sin, corruption, and condemnation...

- inherited from our fathers (Adam).
- committed and caused by our own sinful behavior.

**"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).**

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ro.5:1).**

**"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Gal.3:6).**

3. Adam's sin brought the reign of death; God's gift brought the reign of life. Adam sinned and brought the reign of death upon all men. But Adam was only one man, one mere man. No matter what he did, God was able to counteract it and do more, for He is greater; and He is able to do anything.

God has done more, much more. They who "receive" God's grace and God's gift of righteousness "shall reign in life." The term "reign in life" means to dwell and rule in eternal life. But note, the source of righteousness is Jesus Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Justification*—Ro.4:22; note—5:1).

**Thought 1.** Note two glorious truths.

- 1) Believers "reign in life" while on this earth. They receive the abundance of God's grace.
  - a) There is the gift of abundant life.

**"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Jn.10:10).**

- b) There is all sufficiency in all things.

**"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor.9:8).**

- c) There is great power.

**"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph.3:20).**

- d) There is the supply of all needs.

**"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Ph.4:19).**

- e) There is an abundant entrance into heaven.

**"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pt.1:11).**

- f) There is abundant satisfaction.

**"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures" (Ps.36:8).**

- 2) Believers shall "reign in life" throughout all eternity.

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).**

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (Jn.5:24).**

**"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (Lk.19:17).**

**"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me" (Lk.22:28-29).**

**“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge [govern, rule, manage] the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge [govern, rule, manage] the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Cor.6:2-3).**

4. Adam’s sin brought condemnation to all men; God’s gift brought justification of life upon all men. This is simply a summary of what has already been said.

⇒ “By the offense of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation.”

⇒ “By the righteousness of One [Jesus Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

**“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Ro.8:32).**

**“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Cor.9:15).**

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph.2:8).**

**3** (5:19-21) **Justification—Righteousness—Law:** the conclusion is one of the most instructive and striking passages in all of Scripture. It includes three points.

1. Adam’s disobedience made many (all men, v.12, 18) sinners, but Christ’s obedience made many righteous. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life; He never sinned, never displeased God—not even once. He was perfectly righteous, *securing the Ideal Righteousness*.

Since His righteousness is *the Ideal Righteousness*, it can stand for the righteousness of all men, and that is exactly what happens. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that man’s belief and counts it as righteousness. God lets the *Ideal Righteousness* of Jesus Christ cover the man because the man *believes and honors* His Son, Jesus Christ.

Any man who will so honor God’s Son by believing and trusting Him, God will honor by counting his faith as the righteousness of Christ. It is that simple and that profound: “By the obedience of Jesus Christ shall many be made righteous.” But note, a person must truly believe—he must have the kind of belief that really trusts Jesus Christ, that really casts his life upon Christ, that casts all that he is and has upon Christ and His keeping.

**“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb.2:10).**

**“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb.5:9).**

**“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:25-26).**

2. The law was given to point out and magnify sin, but God’s grace was so much greater. If righteousness is by Jesus Christ, then why did God give us the law? What is the purpose of the law? Very simply. “The law entered [the world] that the offense might abound.” The law was given...

- to point out and magnify sin.
- to make men more aware of sin.
- to give men a greater knowledge of sin.
- to stir more conviction over sin.
- to increase the fact and awareness of sin more and more.
- to make men more responsible for their sin.

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

**“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Gal.3:19).**

**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).**

But note the glorious truth about the grace of God: wherever sin abounds, the grace of God abounds even more. God’s grace is far more effective and powerful than any sin or sins, no matter how magnified. God’s grace can forgive any man, no matter how great a sinner.

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:7).**

**“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim.1:14-15).**

3. Sin reigned to death, but God’s grace reigns to eternal life.

## ROMANS 5:12-21

- a. By Adam, sin *reigns*, triumphs, holds authority and leads to death.

**“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Ro.5:12).**

**“He that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death” (Pr.11:19).**

**“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezk.18:4).**

**“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezk.18:20).**

- b. By God, grace reigns, triumphs, holds authority, and leads to eternal life. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Life*—Jn.1:4; DEEPER STUDY # 1—10:10; DEEPER STUDY # 1—17:2-3.)

**“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (Jn.1:4).**

**“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:25-26).**

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

**“But [God’s purpose and grace] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).**

**“For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us” (1 Jn.1:2).**

**“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 Jn.5:12).**

But note the source: eternal life comes only through the righteousness of “Jesus Christ our Lord.”

| CHAPTER 6   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | <b>IV. HOLINESS &amp; SANCTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE BELIEVER TO BE FREE FROM SIN, 6:1-23</b>   |  |
|   | <b>A. The Believer is Not to Continue in Sin (Part I): He is to Know His Position in Christ, 6:1-10</b>  |  |
| <p><b>1 The believer &amp; the question of license</b></p> <p>a. Does grace give a person a free reign to sin?</p> <p>b. God forbid!</p> <p>c. The bel. is dead to sin</p> <p><b>2 Know 1st: By position, the believer is immersed, placed into Christ<sup>ps1</sup></b></p> <p>a. Immersed, identified with Christ in death</p> <p>b. Immersed, identified with Christ in resurrection</p> | <p>What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?</p> <p>2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?</p> <p>3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?</p> <p>4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was</p> | <p>raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.</p> <p>5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:</p> <p>6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.</p> <p>7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.</p> <p>8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:</p> <p>9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.</p> <p>10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.</p> |
|   |  | <p>1) Raised by God's glory</p> <p>2) Purpose: That we should should walk in newness of life</p> <p>c. Immersed, identified with the most glorious hope: The believer will be raised just as Jesus was raised</p> <p><b>3 Know 2nd: By position, the bel.'s old man was crucified with Christ</b></p> <p>a. To destroy the body of sin</p> <p>b. To enable man to renounce sin</p> <p>c. Illustration: A dead man</p> <p><b>4 Know 3rd: By position, the bel. lives with Christ—now &amp; forever</b></p> <p>a. Christ has conquered death—once for all</p> <p>b. Christ now lives forever to God<sup>ps2</sup></p>  |

## DIVISION IV

### HOLINESS AND SANCTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE BELIEVER TO BE FREE FROM SIN, 6:1-23

#### A. The Believer is Not to Continue in Sin (Part I): He is to Know His Position in Christ, 6:1-10

(6:1-10) **Introduction—Holiness:** the believer who is justified (whose faith is counted as righteousness, Ro.3:21-5:21) is to let his righteousness work holiness (Ro.6:19). The believer is to live a holy life and become a servant of righteousness. A genuinely saved person cannot abuse the mercy of God. He cannot walk in sin; he cannot make a habit of sinning. To do so is to tread upon the mercy of God and make a mockery of God's grace. It is to say that God's grace gives a person the license to sin, and such is a contradiction of terms—as much a contradiction as to say that a dead man is alive. (See notes—Ro.6:14-15; Gal.5:13.)

The way for a man to break the habit of sin is for him to know the glorious position he can have in Christ. One thing is certain: every believer should definitely know the position he holds in Christ. It will revolutionize his life.

Now for the point of the passage. The believer is to know his real position in Christ. Knowledge of his position will help keep him from sin. Note the word "know" is used three times (Ro.6:3, 6, 9).

1. The believer and the question of license (v.1-2).
2. Know 1st: by position, the believer is immersed, placed into Christ (v.3-5).
3. Know 2nd: by position, the believer's old man was crucified with Christ (v.6-7).
4. Know 3rd: by position, the believer lives with Christ—now and forever (v.8-10).

#### **1** 6:1-2) **License—Grace vs. Law—Sin:** the believer and the question of license. Note three points.

1. Does the grace of God give a person a free reign to sin? Can a person just go ahead and do what he wants expecting God to forgive him? Grace means God's undeserved and unmerited favor. It means that God freely accepts and forgives a person's sins; that He freely justifies a person by faith. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Ro.4:22; 5:1 for more discussion.) Two things bother a lot of people about the teaching of salvation by grace and grace alone.

- a. Grace seems to give free reign to sin, to put no restraint upon sin. These are often the thoughts of the common man, even believers. There is the feeling that if we are forgiven by grace and not by law and doing good, then sin does not matter that much. We do not have to worry too much about the law of God and righteousness, just so we do a fair amount of good. We can pretty much do what we want, for God is going to forgive us anyway. God is gracious and loving and good; therefore, He is going to forgive our sins no matter what we do. Christ died for our sins. All we have to do is ask Him and He will forgive us.
- b. Grace seems to encourage sin. Paul had just said that grace is stronger than sin (Ro.5:15-21, esp. 20-21). God's grace is so strong it can forgive any sin, no matter how terrible. In fact, the greater the sin, the more magnified God's grace becomes. When a *great sinner* is forgiven, God's grace is much more magnified than when a morally good person repents and is forgiven. As stated, the greater the sin or sinner, the more God's grace is magnified and glorified.

Now note: some theologians and philosophers, in particular those who stress the law, carry this argument even farther in their position against grace. No doubt Paul was asked this question time and again

by the legalists who hounded and fought against him and just did not understand the wonderful grace of God. They argued that if forgiveness is by grace, then is sin not a good thing? Should we not continue in sin so that God will have more opportunity to prove His grace and become more magnified and glorified?

2. Paul's answer is the answer of righteous indignation: "God forbid!" Away with such a thought! Far be it that we ever think such a thing, especially as believers.

3. The *believer's position* in Christ shows the utter impossibility of a true believer *continuing in sin*. The word "continue" means to practice or to habitually yield to sin. A true believer no longer practices sin and no longer yields to sin. He cannot live *without sin*, not totally, but he no longer lives *in sin*. A true believer is dead to sin, and a dead man cannot do anything: he cannot think, speak, or move. How can a dead man live any longer in sin? It is utterly impossible! It is totally against nature! *Positionally*, the true believer has died to self and has been *placed* into Christ to live for Him. He now possesses the *divine nature*, God's very own nature (2 Pt.1:4). He is *placed* and *positioned* in Christ which means he is dead to self and alive to God. How can he dare think that he can go ahead and sin because God will forgive him anyway?

Note another fact: when a man turns *to* God, he turns *away from* sin. It is a contradiction to say that when a man turns to God he turns to more and more sin. God's grace does not bring a man to God so that he can be *free to sin* more; God's grace brings a man to God so that he can be *free from sin* and its guilt and judgment. Grace does not give license to sin any more than a dead man is able to move about and sin. (See note, *License*—Ro.6:14-15 for more discussion.)

**2** (6:3-5) **Jesus Christ, Death—Believer, Position in Christ:** first, the believer has been *immersed or placed into Jesus Christ*. This is the first thing the believer should know about his position in Christ. This is one of the most glorious truths in all of Scripture, yet so much controversy has raged over what is meant by baptism that the glorious meaning has often been bypassed. The meaning of baptism is discussed in another note. In the present note the glorious truth of these verses is being concentrated upon. Christians everywhere agree that baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When a true believer is immersed, he is proclaiming to the world that he is being identified with Christ:

- ⇒ by being placed under the water, he is proclaiming that he has died and been buried with Christ.
- ⇒ by being raised up from the water, he is proclaiming that he has been raised from the dead with Christ to live a new life.

Now note three glorious points.

1. The believer is immersed, placed into, or identified with Christ *in death*. This is the believer's position in Christ. Very simply, if the believer really died when Christ died, then he has died to sin and is freed from sin and its penalty and punishment. What a glorious gift from God! What a glorious position to receive from God's wonderful grace!

What happens is this. When a person really believes in Christ, then God takes that person's faith and counts it as the death of Christ. That is, God counts the person as having died in Christ. God takes the person's faith (and baptism as stated in this passage) and counts the person as *participating in Christ's death*. God counts and considers the person...

- to have died in Christ's death.
- to be placed into Christ's death.
- to be identified with Christ's death.
- to be a partaker of Christ' death.
- to be in union with Christ's death.
- to be bound with Christ in death.

When a person truly honors God's Son by trusting Him, God honors that person by spiritually placing him into the death of Christ. What is it that causes God to do so much for the believer? Very simply, His love for His Son. God loves His Son so much that He will do anything for anyone who honors His Son by believing and trusting Him.

Now note the point: if the believer is *counted* by God as having been immersed into the death of Christ, then the believer...

- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • has died to sin                 | • is freed from sin                 |
| • has died to the penalty of sin  | • is freed from the penalty of sin  |
| • has died to the judgment of sin | • is freed from the judgment of sin |

This means that the rule and reign and the habits and desires of sin no longer have control over us. Sin *ceases* to have a place or a position in our lives. We are free from sin, free from...

- |                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| • sin's habits  | • sin's enslavement    |
| • sin's control | • sin's rule and reign |
| • sin's bondage | • sin's guilt          |

It means that we no longer live "in" sin, in the *position and place of sin*. We cannot live without sin, not perfectly, but we are *free* from living "in" sin. We no longer practice and desire sin. We desire and practice righteousness, seeking to please God in all that we do. And as glorious as this is, it means that we are freed from the condemnation of sin, the terrible punishment that shall be measured out in the awful day of judgment.

This is the believer's position in Christ. He is immersed, buried, placed into, and identified with Christ in death. And having died, the believer never has to be under the rule and reign of sin and its judgment again. He is a partaker of Christ's death, bound and united to Christ in death; therefore, he is dead to sin and all its effects.

However, note a critical point. A true believer is a person who *really believes*. This simply means he repents, confesses, obeys, and is baptized. It is this person whom God credits as having died in Christ. This is the glorious position of the true believer.

**"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Ro.6:3).**

**“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Ro.6:6).**

**“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor.12:13).**

**“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal.3:27).**

2. The believer is immersed, placed into, or identified with Christ in His resurrection. The same picture of baptism is used again to reinforce this glorious truth. God counts the true baptized believer as having been raised in Christ. God takes the believer’s faith (and baptism as stated in this passage) and counts the person as participating in Christ’s resurrection. He counts and considers the person...

- to be raised in Christ’s resurrection.
- to be placed into Christ’s resurrection.
- to be identified with Christ’s resurrection.
- to be a partaker of Christ’s resurrection.
- to be in union with Christ’s resurrection.
- to be bound with Christ in His resurrection.

Note two significant points.

a. Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. This tells how our glorious position in Christ happened. It happened by the glory and the power of God. The “glory” (doxa) of God means all the excellence of God; all that He is in His might and power, love and grace, compassion and mercy. It means all His attributes: His omnipotence (all power), omniscience (all knowing), omnipresence (being everywhere), and sovereignty. In this particular passage it refers primarily to His glorious power. It was the glory of His might and power that raised up Jesus from the dead, and it is by the glory of His might and power that he *places and positions* us in Christ.

**“And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by *his own power*” (1 Cor.6:14).**

**“For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the *power of God*” (2 Cor.13:4).**

b. God’s purpose for raising us up with Christ is dynamic and meaningful. It involves walking in a whole new life. The word “walk” (peripateo) means to walk about, to walk step by step, to control and order our behavior, to constantly and habitually walk in “newness of life.”

Think about it for a moment. When Christ died, he laid aside His old life and left it behind Him. Therefore, when He arose, He took on a totally new life, a changed life, a resurrected life. It is His new life, His changed and resurrected life that is given to us. In the Bible the word “new” often carries the idea of purity, righteousness, holiness, godliness. The believer...

- receives a “new birth” (1 Pt.1:23; 2:2).
- receives a “new heart” (Ezk.11:19; 18:31).
- becomes a “new creature” (2 Cor.5:17; Gal.6:15).
- becomes a “new man” (Eph.4:24; Col.3:10).

God’s very purpose for *placing* us in the resurrected life of Jesus Christ is that we might walk in Christ, walk soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. The true believer puts off the old man of sin and puts on the new man of righteousness and godliness. He lives a pure, clean, and holy life.

**“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Col.2:12).**

**“[That you may know] what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:19-20).**

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).**

**“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph.4:1).**

**“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).**

3. The believer is immersed, placed into, or identified with the most glorious hope: that he shall be planted (immersed) in the very likeness of Jesus’ resurrection. This simply means that...

- as Jesus was raised to a *new life*, so shall the believer be.

**“Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:5-6).**

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col.3:1).

- as Jesus was raised to *live with God*, so shall the believer be.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn.14:2-3).

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th.4:16-17).

“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him [identified with His death], we shall also live with him” (2 Tim.2:11).

(See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Believer, Position In Christ*—Ro.8:1 for more discussion.)

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(6:3-5) **Baptism**: this note is being placed as the last note under verse 10 as DEEPER STUDY # 2 because of its length, and because it is a specialized note dealing with the meaning of “baptism” as used in this passage. It is suggested that the note be studied last because of its length, feeling that the reader can be helped more by going ahead and studying the notes on the major points of the outline to keep from losing the continuity of thought.

**3** (6:6-7) **Old Man—Body of Sin—Believer, Crucified with Christ**: second, the believer’s old man was crucified with Christ. This is the second thing the believer should know about his position in Christ. The Greek definitely uses the past tense: “Our old man *was* crucified with Christ.” It was a *once-for-all act* that Christ Himself effected. He took our “old man” to the cross with Him when He died. The “old man” means...

- our old self
- our old life
- our sinful self
- our sinful life
- our corrupt nature
- our depraved nature
- our unregenerate nature
- our sinful nature

Our “old man” means our old life without God, the old sinful life that is immersed or identified with Christ in death. Now note three points.

1. The old man was crucified so that “the body of sin” might be destroyed. The “body of sin” is not plural (sins) but singular (sin). Sin is seen as a *body*, a *whole package*. The human body is seen as the *seat* of sin and as the *instrument* of sin. It is seen as containing, embodying, and packaging all sin within itself. The idea is that all sin within a believer is destroyed, conquered, forgiven, and crucified with Christ. The believer is freed from sin. He starts anew, and he *stays* clean and free from sin by walking in constant confession and fellowship before God (1 Jn.1:9).

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).

“Knowing this, that our old man is [was] crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Ro.6:6).

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (Ro.8:36).

“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him [identified with His death], we shall also live with him” (2 Tim.2:11).

2. The old man was crucified to *enable* and to *empower* the believer to renounce sin. The believer is not to serve sin; he is to renounce it, knowing that it has been crucified and put to death in Christ. By the power of the cross, sin is not to be served; it is...

- to be renounced
- to be refused
- to be repudiated
- to be rejected
- to be denied
- to be conquered

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Ro.6:6).

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:11).

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:24).

**“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God...Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:3, 5).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (1 Pt.4:1-2).**

3. The clearest of all illustrations is given to show the believer’s position in Christ. He is not to serve sin because he is dead; he has been crucified with Christ. And a dead man is freed from sin. When we believe that Jesus died for our sins, our belief is counted as righteousness; our belief makes us acceptable to God once for all. And it does something else just as wonderful: it gives us constant access into God’s presence as we walk about day by day. This means that as we pick up the pollutions of this world and fail here and there, we can constantly come before God and ask forgiveness; and when we ask, He forgives. This is the way we are freed from sin: by constantly walking in *open confession* before God, praying all day long for His forgiveness. And just as He promises, He always forgives us (1 Jn.1:9). Why does He do such a glorious thing as freeing us from sin eternally?

⇒ Because we honor His Son by trusting Christ’s death to free us from sin.

⇒ Because He loves His Son and will honor any man who so trusts His Son. He will honor the man by doing exactly what the man believes. If the man honors Christ by *believing* that he is freed from sin by the death of Christ, then God counts the man as being freed from sin.

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn.1:9).**

**“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:1-2).**

**“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord [by faith], so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).**

**“The just shall live by faith” (Ro.1:17).**

This is the glorious position of the believer in Christ: his old man “was crucified” with Christ in order to free him from sin. Note the most glorious and striking truth: it is all through the *death of Christ*. Our salvation is *through the death of God’s dear Son*.

**4** (6:8-10) **Believer, Position in Christ—Hope—Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** third, the believer *shall live with Christ both now and forever*. This is the third thing the believer should know about his position in Christ. We know and possess absolute assurance and confidence that “we shall...live with Christ.” The idea is that we shall live eternally with Him. What gives us such belief and absolute assurance?

1. Christ has conquered death—once-for-all. Think about it. Christ has already died. Now we are to *know*...
  - “that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more.”
  - “that death hath no more dominion over Him.”
  - that He is freed from death.

**“But [God’s purpose and grace] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).**

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

2. Christ now lives forever to God. We are to know...
  - that Christ died unto sin once.
  - that Christ now lives in the presence of God forever.
  - that Christ lives unto God; that is, He lives in an unbroken devotion and service to God.

The believer is to live to God through all eternity, beginning right now, from the moment of his conversion. Death has no more dominion over him. He is immersed or placed into the resurrected life of Christ. He is an eternal person *now*; therefore, he is to live to God beginning right now, even as he will live unto God through all eternity.

**“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father” (Jn.16:28).**

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are” (Jn.17:11).

“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mk.16:19).

“Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God” (Lk.22:69).

“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:20).

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Ph.2:8-9).

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb.10:12).

**Thought 1.** This, of course, means that we too shall be living on and on in an unbroken devotion and service to God—forever.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (Jn.17:24).

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(6:3-5) **Baptism:** remember this note is not out of place. It is being placed as the last note of this outline because of its length and its dealing with a specialized subject. Men have dissected and argued over how a person is “saved” so much that the preciousness, and in too many cases, the truth of the experience has been lost. The result is a confused public. Many people think if they have been baptized and do half-way right, then they are saved and God will never reject them. Others, who are highly disciplined and have reformed their lives, think they are as acceptable to God as anyone else because they do live moral and decent lives. A confused public, including both those within and without the church, is basing their eternal fate upon one or more of the following. They think they are saved...

- by baptism.
- by doing good deeds.
- by being as good as they can.
- by church membership.
- by faith.
- by repentance.

Much of the confusion has been caused by men *over-stressing or misunderstanding* one of the truths of Scripture. Too often too many of us have been guilty of abusing Scripture; and once we have taken a strong position, we have been unwilling to back off or to give balance to the whole truth, even when we realized we had gone too far. It is time for us to totally commit our lives to the Lord, to lay aside our *bandwagons* and exhaustively labor to proclaim the whole truth both to the church and to the world. Again, it is time for the truth to be proclaimed, the whole balance of Scripture—time for us to help straighten out the confusion of the public, for many within the church are deceived and are without Christ; and the world cannot come to Christ with a genuine experience until they come as *Scripture dictates*.

In the passage before us an argument rages over the word baptism (v.3-4). Does “baptism” mean the actual baptism experience of a person, or is it being used in a symbolic or spiritual sense? Those who hold to baptism being essential for salvation say it means the actual baptism experience; whereas those who hold to salvation by faith tend to say it is speaking symbolically and spiritually. And the battle rages on. The great tragedy is...

- many within and without the church have become confused.
- many have never had a true experience of salvation because they have never heard the truth of Scripture.
- many have never heard nor understand the truth of Scripture.
- many have mocked the divisiveness and irrelevance of church positions.

And all with whom we have failed to share the truth are doomed, and we are responsible. Now, note several points.

1. Scripture speaks strongly in unmistakable terms on the subject of salvation—on just how we are saved—and to an *honest and thoughtful mind* it speaks clearly.

- a. We are saved by *faith*.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9; cp. Jn.1:12; 3:16; Ro.10:9-10).

- b. We are saved by *obedience*.

**“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb.5:9; cp. Mt.7:21; Jn.15:10; Rev.22:14).**

c. We are saved by *repentance*.

**“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Lk.5:32; cp. Acts 11:18).**

d. We are saved by *confession*.

**“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.10:32-33; cp. Ro.10:9-10; 1 Jn.4:15).**

e. We are saved by *baptism*.

**“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).**

Now, in all honesty, what does this show? Is it not that the true experience of salvation is a *whole* experience, a *comprehensive* experience, an experience that involves the *whole life* of a believer? Is salvation not a past and a present and a future experience? (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Salvation*—1 Cor.1:18 for discussion.)

What Scripture declares is that salvation is looked upon as the *whole* experience of a truly *born again* person. When Scripture speaks...

- of believing in Christ, it means a person who repents, confesses, obeys, and is baptized.
- of obedience to Christ, it means a person who believes, repents, confesses, and is baptized.
- of repentance toward Christ, it means a person who believes, confesses, obeys, and is baptized.
- of baptism in Christ, it means a person who believes, repents, confesses, and obeys.
- of confession to Christ, it means a person who believes, repents, obeys, and is baptized.

Now note a most critical point: just because a person professes and does some of these things does not mean the person is saved. Just because a person...

- professes faith,
- lives a moral and good life,
- is baptized,
- claims to live as Jesus taught,

...does not mean he is saved. The power of salvation is not in these things, not in profession, moral goodness, baptism, and the teachings of Jesus. The power to save is *in Jesus Christ Himself*, in believing that He is the crucified Savior, the Son of God Himself who has the power to save.

The point is this: Scripture speaks of the true believer in different ways at different times, anyone of which means that he is saved. Scripture says that a *true believer* is a person...

- who believes.
- who obeys.
- who repents.
- who confesses.
- who is baptized.

Each of these terms is *inclusive*, that is, sometimes Scripture uses each term to include the others. The present passage says that believers who “were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death.” Paul is using the symbolic meaning of our baptism experience to picture our “death” and “resurrection” with Christ. He is not saying that baptism is the “substance” that has the power to “place” us into Christ. Only God has that power. Paul is saying that the baptized person (as a person who believes, repents, obeys, and confesses) is the person who is *placed* into the death of Christ. Our baptism experience is being used as an inclusive term, not as an exclusive term or in an exclusive sense.

2. Among the believers in the New Testament, faith and baptism were not so much two experiences as two parts of one experience (F.F. Bruce. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. “The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,” p.136). A person who genuinely believed *was baptized*, and a person who was baptized *was to be a genuine believer*. To be “baptized into Jesus Christ” did not mean “to be baptized *without faith*” and to “believe in Jesus Christ” did not mean to believe *without being baptized*. Scripture definitely indicates this. Therefore, *when Scripture speaks of baptism*, it means that baptism is for a genuine believer: a genuine believer is baptized, and a baptized person is to be a genuine believer. There just was no such thing as a *genuine believer* who was not baptized unless he was providentially prohibited, and there was no such thing as a *genuinely baptized* person who was not to be a true believer.

3. Scripture definitely teaches that the power to make a person acceptable to God, to place a person into Christ is not in the water of baptism, but *in Christ*. For example, this is the whole point of Romans up to this point, the whole teaching of justification. If the power to save is in water, then what do we do with the thousands who have been baptized and live like the devil himself, the thousands who show no changed life at all?

The power is definitely in Christ; Christ is the One who saves. And He saves the person who believes, not the person who is baptized. This is clearly evident from the *unholy lives lived by so many who have been baptized*.

However, as mentioned in point one, the person who truly believes does repent and he does turn from his old life to follow Christ. He does what Christ says, and the first commandment is to follow Him in baptism. Baptism is the very first act, the very first proof that a person believes and repents.

There is another way to see the connection between faith and baptism or between our union with Christ and baptism. The power to save—to make a person acceptable to God—is not in the waters of baptism, but in Christ; therefore...

- not everyone who is baptized is saved. Their unbelieving and unholy lives prove the fact.
- Everyone who is saved will be baptized immediately as an *act of belief and obedience* in Christ. The person will be baptized unless he is physically unable.

4. The physical symbol is never the truth itself; it is a picture of the truth. No physical substance has the power to bring about anything spiritual. The whole physical world and everything in it passes away, including water. Physical substances can symbolize spiritual truth, but they cannot be the cause or the power to bring about the spiritual reality. If a physical substance such as water baptism had such power, it would mean that the spiritual reality had its basis in the physical and material which passes away. And if the basis passes away (water baptism), then the substance (spiritual salvation) itself would also pass away.

Another way to say the same thing is this: the physical can never penetrate nor create the spiritual; it is the spiritual that must penetrate and create the physical. Philosophically, we must always remember this or else we doom ourselves and cause thinking men in the world to mock us. Why? Because the philosophical and thinking men of the world know that if we are saved by water (the physical and material), then we are doomed; for no physical substance can impart something it does not have, an eternal quality (eternal life, salvation, forgiveness of sins). Only the spiritual—only God and His power—can impart the spiritual quality of eternal life, salvation, and forgiveness of sins. God can impart spiritual salvation and then say, “Immersion in water is a picture of what I do for you. And if you really believe in Me, then the very first evidence of your faith is for you to be baptized.”

5. Practical experience tells us that belief and baptism are *separate acts* involved in salvation, yet they are both involved. They are both involved in the sense that baptism is an immediate act of obedience and repentance. A true believer should be baptized, and no true believer will fail to be baptized unless he is providentially stopped.

- ⇒ Example one: a believer flying across country leads a person to truly trust Christ to save him. The plane crashes and the new believer is killed before he can be baptized. He is not doomed to hell. Scripture teaches no such thing. To say he is doomed is to say that the power of salvation is in the waters of baptism and not in God's Son. In fact, to say such is to dishonor God's Son, to take the love and power and grace that belong to Him and to ascribe it to a physical substance. If the new believer truly believes within his heart, truly honors God's Son by trusting Jesus to save him, God accepts that man. God accepts the man because he honors God's Son, and God will do anything for any man who honors His Son. The man is thereby accepted by God, accepted because he honors God's Son by believing and committing his life to Him.

However, the man who reaches the ground and is not baptized as soon as he can make arrangements is not genuine. His faith is suspect, for he is not putting God first in his life. He has not turned to Christ *ready* to obey and live for Him. The man who truly believes is the man who is not only ready to obey Christ, he *does* obey and live for Christ.

Note another example. There are masses of people who live in arid and desert countries where thousands are starving and dying of thirst. What about them and baptism? What if a missionary leads some to Christ. Are they to be immersed when there is so little water and multitudes are dying of thirst? The point is clear, not only in the teaching of Scripture, but in the love of God and in practical terms. A person is justified *by faith*, but he is to be baptized immediately, as soon as he possibly can. Why? Because he is genuine, he does believe in the Lord Jesus, loving Him and wishing to obey Him in all things and thereby fulfilling all righteousness. However, his salvation does not depend upon baptism; it depends upon God's dear Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1 He counts himself dead to sin, but alive to God<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> a. Dead to sin<br/> b. Alive to God<br/> c. Source: Thru Christ</p> | <p><b>B. The Believer is Not to Continue in Sin (Part II): He is to Live Out His Position in Christ, 6:11-13</b></p> <p>11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.</p> | <p>12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.<br/> 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.</p> | <p><b>2 He resists sin</b><br/> a. Does not let it reign<br/> b. Does not obey its lusts</p> <p><b>3 He does not yield the members of his body to sin<sup>DS2</sup></b><br/> a. He yields himself to God<br/> b. He yields the members of his body to be instruments of righteousness</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**HOLINESS AND SANCTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE BELIEVER TO BE FREE FROM SIN, 6:1-23**

**B. The Believer is Not to Continue in Sin (Part II): He is to Live Out His Position in Christ, 6:11-13**

(6:11-13) **Introduction:** the true believer does not continue in sin; he does not live in sin. He conquers and triumphs over sin. In very clear terms this passage tells exactly what the believer must do to live in victory over sin.

1. He counts himself dead to sin, but alive to God (v.11).
2. He resists sin (v.12).
3. He does not yield the members of his body to sin (v.13).

**1** (6:11) **Sin—Life, Victorious:** the believer must count himself dead to sin, but alive to God (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Reckon—Ro.6:11* for discussion). How does the believer keep from walking in sin?

1. The believer must count himself *dead to sin*. If a person is a true believer, then he has *died* with Christ. God has taken his belief and counted him as having died in Christ, and a dead man can do nothing; he cannot sin. He is freed from sin.

What happens is this: when a believer truly believes in Christ, God takes his faith and counts him *dead in Christ*. God frees him from sin and its power as well as from its consequences and penalty. Therefore, the believer is to...

- count himself
- consider himself
- reckon himself
- treat himself
- regard himself
- credit himself

...as *dead in Christ*, as being free from sin and its power. He is to *receive* this truth into his heart and life. He is to become totally *convicted and convinced* of it.

(Note a crucial point: the true believer is not left only to the power of his own mind or thoughts to convince himself of this glorious truth. It is not only a matter of *human thought and reasoning* or of mental control. God has given the Holy Spirit to stir and build confidence of the glorious truth within the believer. The Holy Spirit is our "seal," our guarantee, of salvation. But this is the subject of another discussion, of chapter eight. The present chapter concerns *our part* in overcoming sin. God does help us overcome sin through the Holy Spirit, but we also have a part. And it is our part that is presently being considered.)

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Lk.9:23).**

**"God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?...Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Ro.6:2, 6-7).**

**"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal.2:20).**

**"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal.5:24).**

**"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col.3:3).**

**"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him" (2 Tim.2:11).**

**"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pt.2:24).**

2. The believer must count himself *alive to God*. The true believer is not only identified with Christ in death, he is identified with Christ in resurrection. God not only counts the believer's faith as *death in Christ*, He counts his faith as *life in Christ*. The believer is counted to have risen in Christ's resurrection. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus counts as the resurrection of the believer. As Jesus Christ was raised to a new life, so the believer is raised to a new life. As Jesus Christ was raised to live in the presence of God and to serve Him forever, so the believer is raised to live in the presence of God and to serve Him forever.

The point is this: let the believer receive into his heart and life the truth of *his resurrected life*. Let the believer now *live unto God*. Let the believer now *serve God and not sin*. Let the believer *walk before God* in his new, resurrected life; let him walk soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Let him walk...

- counting himself
- considering himself
- treating himself
- regarding himself

...as alive to God, now and forever serving God.

**“For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him” (Lk.20:38).**

**“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:11).**

**“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Ro.14:8).**

**“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:15).**

3. Note the most glorious truth: the believer’s life is due to Christ and Christ alone. All that the believer knows—his glorious deliverance from sin and the wonderful victory of eternal life—is due to Christ’s death and resurrection. Note: it is the believer who really *keeps his mind* upon the death and resurrection of Christ that *walks above sin*. It is he who walks free from sin who conquers it every step of the way and glorifies God by the victory of his righteous life.

In conclusion, the believer’s first step in conquering sin is to count himself dead to sin, and alive unto God. The believer must *know and live out* his position, the glorious life God has given him in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. The believer who keeps his mind and thoughts upon *his position* in Christ’s death and resurrection will conquer sin—every time.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(6:11) **Reckon—Impute** (logizethe): to reckon; to credit; to set to one’s account; to lay to one’s charge; to impute; to judge; to consider; to treat; to count; to compute; to ascribe. It is an accounting word; it implies something put to a man’s credit. It is used many times throughout Romans, about eleven times in chapter four of Romans alone. It is an extremely important idea in Scripture.

1. Scripture says that righteousness is imputed or reckoned to the genuine believer by God.

**“And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:22-25).**

2. Scripture says that the genuine believer is immersed, imputed, reckoned, or counted as dead in Christ’s death; that is, his “old man” is imputed or reckoned as crucified in Christ’s death .

**“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:3-4).**

**“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Ro.6:6. See note, Sin—Ro.6:11 for more discussion and verses.)**

3. Scripture says that a new life, a resurrected life is imputed, reckoned, or put to the account of the believer through Christ’s resurrection.

**“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Ro.6:5).**

**“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God” (Ro.6:8-10).**

Very simply stated, God counts the believer righteous because of what Christ has done. Christ is seen to be “the Lord our righteousness,” and His righteousness is said to be put to a man’s account through faith (cp. Phile.18).

**2** (6:12) **Sin—Life, Victorious:** the believer must resist sin. This is an imperative—a forceful command. It is up to the believer to resist sin; he is responsible for resisting it.

1. He must not let sin reign (basileueto): have authority, rule, control, occupy, hold sway, prevail over him. The present tense is used, so the idea is a continuous attitude and behavior. The believer is always to keep his mind off sin. He is to keep his mind under control by keeping his mind off...

- wealth and material things
- position and power
- recognition and fame
- the lust of the eyes
- the lust of the flesh
- the pride of life
- parties and sex
- appearance and clothes

The believer is not to let sin dominate, control, and reign in his mortal body. Sin is not to dominate his thoughts and life. He is to resist sin by standing against it and by rebuking and fighting against it. He is to oppose sin with all his might.

**“Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (Jn.5:14).**

**“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Ro.6:12).**

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor.15:34).

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 Jn.2:1).

2. He must not obey sin in its lusts (epithumiais). The word means strong desire or craving and passion. The pull of sin is sometimes strong, very strong. All men know what it is to lust after things, after more and more, whether it be money, property, security, position, pleasure, fun, or fleshly stimulation. The true believer must not *yield* to these pulls. He must not let the lusts of his eyes and flesh rule and regulate his mind and behavior. He must not let lust *order* his life. He must not obey sin in its lusts, in its cravings, desires, and passions. He must resist the lusts of his “mortal body.”

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Mt.5:29).

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Ro.13:14).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the souls” (1 Pt.2:11).

“That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (1 Pt.4:2).

**3** (6:13) **Sin**: three things need to be said about sin at this point in Romans. (1) Sin is an offense and a disease in chapters 1-4. In chapter 6 it is a master or a ruling power. (2) Sin is not “destroyed” in the believer. It is still active and can still injure. The believer is to fight against its pull. (3) The body is not the source of sin, but the Bible says and man’s experience proves that the body is the *instrument* of sin, the *organ* which sin uses to manifest and satisfy itself. The body is under the *heavy influence* and *severe power* of sin and corruption—so much so that the sensual appetites of the body tend to enslave the soul and lead men to sin, even against his better judgment. Therefore, the believer is strongly exhorted, resist—“let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies” (Ro.6:12).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(6:13) **Sin—Life, Victorious**: the believer must not yield the members of his body to sin. The word “yield” (*paristemi*) means to offer; to put at the disposal of; to give; to grant; to turn over to. The believer *is not* to yield the members of his body to be instruments or tools of unrighteousness. If he takes a member of his body and uses it as an instrument or tool of unrighteousness, he sins. The members of a person’s body refer to all the parts of the body: the eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, hands, feet, mind, or any of the covered and dressed parts. No believer is to offer or give any part of his body over to unrighteousness. To do so is to sin. The tense is present action, so the believer is to be constantly on guard against allowing any member of his body to be yielded to sin. Note: the word “yield” has the idea of struggling. It is a struggle to fight against sin and to control and protect the members of our body.

1. —> The believer is to yield himself to God. Note a significant fact: in the Greek this is not written in the present tense, but in the aorist tense. This simply means the believer is to make a *one-time* decision for God, a *once-for-all* dedication of his life to God. The presentation of his life to God is to be sincere and genuine. He is to yield himself—his body, his life, all that he is—to God; and his decision is to be a permanent decision.

Note just how complete this dedication is to be. It is to be as deep a commitment as the dedication of those who are alive from the dead. And just think how deeply committed to God the believers are who have gone on to be with Him!

2. —> The believer is to yield the members of his body as instruments of righteousness *unto* God. The believer is to *turn* the members of his body over to God: his eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, hands, feet, mind—all his members. Every part of his body is to be given over as an instrument or tool to do righteousness. Every part of the believer’s body is to be given over to God for the purpose of working righteousness.

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Mt.5:29-30; cp. Mt.18:8-9).

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Ro.6:13).

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand” (Eph.6:13).

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jas.4:7).

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).

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| <p><b>1 Learn something: Sin shall not dominate the true believer</b><br/> a. Bc. he is not under law, but under grace<br/> b. Shall he continue to sin? Take license to sin?</p> <p><b>2 Know something: You can serve only one master, sin or God</b><br/> a. Do you serve or yield to sin? You shall die<br/> b. Do you serve or yield to God? You shall live</p> <p><b>3 Remember something: Remember your decision—you chose righteousness</b><br/> a. Fact: "You were...but now you have obeyed"<br/> b. Result: Freed from sin,</p> | <p><b>C. The Believer is Not to Continue in Sin (Part III): He Does Not Have License to Sin, 6:14-23</b></p> <p>14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.<br/> 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.<br/> 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness?<br/> 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.<br/> 18 Being then made free</p> | <p>from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.<br/> 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.<br/> 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.<br/> 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.<br/> 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.<br/> 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.</p> | <p>the despotic master</p> <p><b>4 Do something: Serve God with the same fervor that you served sin</b><br/> a. Your sin furthered more sin—resulted in more &amp; more sin<br/> b. Now let your righteousness work holiness<br/> c. You never had such opportunity before</p> <p><b>5 Question something: What fruit is there in sin?</b></p> <p><b>6 Consider something: The wages of sin vs. the gift of God, of eternal life</b></p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**HOLINESS AND SANCTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE BELIEVER TO BE FREE FROM SIN, 6:1-23**

**C. The Believer is Not to Continue in Sin (Part III): He Does Not Have License to Sin, 6:14-23**

(6:14-23) **Introduction:** a believer is not to continue in sin, for he does not have license to sin.

1. Learn something: sin shall not dominate the true believer (v.14-15).
2. Know something: you can serve only one master, sin or God (v.16).
3. Remember something: remember your decision—you chose righteousness (v.17-18).
4. Do something: serve God with the same fervor that you served sin (v.19-20).
5. Question something: what fruit is there in sin (v.21-22)?
6. Consider something: the wages of sin vs. the gift of God, of eternal life (v.23).

(6:14-23) **Another Outline:** The Believer Does Not Have License to Sin.

1. He is not to be dominated by sin (v.14).
  - a. He is not under law, but grace.
  - b. This does not give license to sin (v.15).
2. He can choose only one master—an illustration (v.16).
  - a. There are two masters: Sin or obedience to God (cp. v.22).
  - b. Sin leads to death; obedience to righteousness.
3. He has been emancipated—become a new man, a slave of righteousness (v.17; cp. v.22).
  - a. The emancipation: "Were...but now."
  - b. By obeying God's form of doctrine.
  - c. By being set free from sin, that despotic master (v.18).
  - d. By yielding his bodily members to righteousness (v.19).
4. He is now ashamed of his former behavior (sin) (v.20).
  - a. Because he was not free to do righteousness.
  - b. Because the end of those things (sin) is death (v.21).
5. He now has a new life and a new end (v.22).
  - a. A life of fruit: holiness.
  - b. An end of hope: everlasting life.
6. Conclusion: The laborer's wages (v.23; cp. v.16).

**1** (6:14-15) **Grace vs. Law—God, Father—License:** learn something—sin shall not dominate the genuine believer. There is a strong reason for this: the believer is under grace and not under the law.

1. The person under law is always struggling to keep the law, yet he is constantly aware that he fails and comes short of the law. The law is ever before his face. He struggles and strives, wrestles and grapples, works and labors to obey; but his experience is full of tension and pressure, disappointment and discouragement. The person under law never lives a victorious life, for he is constantly coming short of God's glory and perfection. When he fails, he goes through periods of self-accusation, of reproaching and censoring himself for having failed. He accuses and downs himself, feeling unworthy

and undeserving, wretched and vile before God. He is constantly feeling unacceptable to God, as though he no longer has the right to approach God; and he often does not approach God for long periods of time, living a defeated life, always bearing the burden of his sin and failure. (See note, *Spiritual Struggle*—Ro.7:24 for more discussion.)

**“Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile” (Ro.2:9).**

**“And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see” (Dt.28:66-67).**

**“If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse” (Job 9:20).**

**“The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor” (Job 15:20).**

**“For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me” (Ps.38:4).**

**“For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me” (Ps.40:12).**

**“For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me” (Ps.51:3).**

**“Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted” (Ps.107:17).**

**“The way of transgressors is hard” (Pr.13:15).**

2. The true believer is under grace, not under law. God is not a legal judge hovering over the believer to punish him every time he sins by breaking a particular law. The believer is not under such frightening dominion: he is not under law, but under grace. What does this mean?

- a. It means that the believer accepts the grace of God demonstrated in Jesus Christ. That is, the believer accepts the righteousness, the sinless perfection of Christ as his own righteousness. The believer identifies his life with the life of Christ, and God takes the believer's acceptance of Christ and counts his acceptance as righteousness. (See outline and DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Ro.4:22; 5:1; 6:1-10 for more discussion.) Very simply stated, God credits righteousness to the believer when the believer accepts the righteousness of Christ. God counts the faith of the believer as the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Such is the *great love of God*. But note, this is the *position of grace*, that is, the believer is counted righteous and placed in the *position of righteousness* when he believes in Christ. He is *placed into Christ* and *positioned in Christ* once-for-all when he truly believes. Such is the *righteous position* of the believer.

However, what about the *righteous life* of the believer? Very practically, how does the believer keep from serving sin, from living under sin, from displeasing God? How can he honestly live *under* grace day-by-day? How can he live under God's favor all of the time? How can he go about pleasing God and receiving His approval and acceptance?

- b. The genuine believer *must constantly* keep before his face this glorious truth: he is *under* God's grace. God is the believer's Father, and the believer has become a true child of God. Therefore, the true believer is favored and accepted by his Father. What the child has to do is stay in that favor. He must keep his Father's favor and approval. When he sins, he needs to go to his Father in all sincerity and ask forgiveness, repenting of his sin. If he keeps an open relationship with his Father—always approaching Him, asking His forgiveness, and repenting—he is forgiven. The slate is wiped clean—sin does not have dominion over him. There is nothing between the child and his Father. All has been discussed and forgiven. The offense is gone, resolved, put away forever. Therefore, sin does not dominate and rule over the child.

Now, note the point: God is a gracious and loving Father. He cares and suffers long with growing children. When His child falls into sin, God is long-suffering, ever willing to forgive His erring child—if the child will only come and ask forgiveness, turning from his sin (Lk.17:3-4; 1 Jn.1:9). Just how long-suffering is God? “His mercy endureth forever”; His mercy covers every sin and all sin (Ps.106:1; 107:1; 118:1-4).

**“It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Lk.17:2-3).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn.1:9).**

**“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever” (Ps.136:1).**

**“The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands” (Ps.138:8).**

3. In light of so wondrous a relationship, a question needs to be asked. Is the child of God allowed to continue in sin? Can he sin and sin expecting God to forgive and forgive him? Scripture shouts: God forbid! Then Scripture argues that a true child of God must not continue in sin. (See note—Ro.6:1-2; Introduction, Purpose—Colossians.) He does not set God aside for a night or two and sin. He does not rationalize that he can go ahead and sin because God is going to forgive him anyway. Why does the true child of God not do this? Why does he keep away from sin?

⇒ Because his Father (God) loves him and he loves his Father. A true child of God does not want to hurt and displease his Father, and his Father is displeased with sin. Consequently, the true child of God strives not to sin (Ro.2:23-24; Heb.6:6). He fights against it, for sin is contrary to the nature of his Father and cuts the heart of his Father beyond all else. Therefore, he does all he can to keep away from sin.

**“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb.6:6).**

**“For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Dt.25:16).**

**“For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee” (Ps.5:4).**

⇒ Because he turned to God in order to get away from sin, from its shame and destruction. He did not turn to God in order to have the freedom to sin, but to be set free from the enslavement and habits of sin, to break the bondage and consequences of sin. (See note, *License*—Ro.6:1-2 for more discussion.)

**“What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death” (Ro.6:21).**

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

In summary of what is said above, the believer must learn something: sin will not dominate the true believer. There are three reasons.

1. God is not a legal judge hovering over the child to punish him every time he sins by breaking a particular law. The child is not under such frightening dominion.

2. God is a gracious and loving Father. He cares and suffers long with growing children. When His child falls into sin, God is long-suffering, ever willing to forgive His erring child—if the child will only come and ask forgiveness and turn from his sin (Lk.17:3-4; 1 Jn.1:9).

3. God is a teaching Father who disciplines. He exhorts His child not to fall into the dominating trap of sin (cp. Heb.12:5-11; 1 Jn.2:1-2).

The emphasis of this chapter, however, is of supreme importance. A believer who is genuine—who really belongs to Christ—shows his genuineness by obeying Christ as Master. He does not consistently practice sin. (See note—Ro.6:1-2.)

**2** (6:16) **Sin, Results—Sin, Deliverance From:** know something—you can serve only one master, sin or God. The word “servant” (doulos) means slave. A person is either the slave of sin or of God, and there is a very simple test to tell which master a person serves.

⇒ Do you yield to sin, that is, serve sin?

⇒ Do you yield to God, that is, serve God?

If you yield to sin, you shall die. If you yield to God and obey Him, you shall be counted righteous and live.

Now note a crucial point. Either sin is your master or God is your Master. You either yield to sin or you yield to God. This does not mean that you become sinless and perfect, but that...

- you do not plan to sin.
- you hate sin and fight against it.
- you struggle to please God by not sinning.
- you diligently seek to make God the Master of your life by obeying Him.
- you study God’s Word so that you will know His commandments and can obey Him.
- you immediately seek God’s forgiveness when you do sin and you repent—you turn away from the sin (1 Jn.1:9; 2:1-2).
- you walk in open confession before God, talking to Him all day long, ever gaining an unbroken fellowship with Him as the Master of your life.

Again, note the results, for *whom* we serve determines our destiny. If we yield to sin, we shall die; but if we yield to God, we shall be counted righteous and live eternally.

**“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt.6:24).**

**“Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (Jn.8:34).**

**“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Ro.6:16).**

**“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Ro.7:22-23).**

**“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils” (1 Cor.10:21).**

**“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (Jas.1:8).**

**“While they [the carnal or fleshy] promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (2 Pt.2:19).**

“His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins” (Pr.5:22).

**3** (6:17-18) **Decision—Sin, Penalty—Sin, Deliverance From:** remember something—remember your decision. You chose righteousness.

1. Note the stated fact: believers “were the servants of sin.” They used to yield to sin, all kinds of sin ranging from...
  - ⇒ simple off-colored jokes to using God’s name in vain.
  - ⇒ immoral thoughts to adultery.
  - ⇒ simple thoughts of pride to drunkenness.
  - ⇒ simple acts of selfishness to stealing.
  - ⇒ wanting more to actually indulging.
  - ⇒ seeking position and power to hurting and crushing people.

But *now* believers have obeyed the doctrine of God, that is, the gospel of justification. Note the word “obeyed.” They obeyed the gospel of God, doing exactly what God commanded.

They obeyed God’s commandment. They “believed” on the name of God’s Son, Jesus Christ; therefore, God took their faith and counted it as righteousness. They chose God and righteousness, and because they did, God accepted them as righteous.

“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 Jn.3:23).

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jn.2:17).

2. Note the stated result: believers are freed from sin. They are counted righteous by God, *not sinful*. God sees believers as righteous people, not as sinners. Therefore, believers are freed from sin and its consequences. God does not charge believers with sin; He does not lay sin against them. Believers are freed from the accusation of sin, and they shall never be charged with sin. God has freed them from sin through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (cp. Ro.8:33-34).

Now this means something significant, very significant. The believer becomes the servant of righteousness. There is no way he could ever serve sin again, not if he has really been justified, not if he has really come to know God’s love revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Once he truly knows God’s glorious love, he is driven to serve God in appreciation for what God has done for him in Christ Jesus. He is driven to be the servant of God by living righteously and godly in this present world.

**Thought 1.** The degree to which a believer grasps the love of God in justification is the degree to which he is driven to serve God and to live righteously.

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Ro.8:33-34).

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new....For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:17, 21).

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).

**4** (6:19-20) **Dedication—Sin, Enslavement to:** do something—serve God with the same fervor that you served sin.

1. Your sin did further sin; it resulted in more and more sin. The word “members” means the parts of a person’s body: the eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, hands, feet, mind, or any of the covered and dressed parts. Before a person obeyed the gospel, truly believed in Jesus Christ, he yielded parts of his body to serve uncleanness and to work sin upon sin. He sinned and found that *sin worked sin*, just increased and increased, grew and grew. He found that sin enslaved him, became a bondage, and a habit that he could not easily break. Sin simply led to more sin, no matter what the sin was...

- |              |             |               |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| • smoking    | • lust      | • selfishness |
| • drinking   | • gossip    | • popularity  |
| • immorality | • criticism | • recognition |
| • overeating | • grumbling | • power       |
| • greed      | • cursing   | • fame        |

The point is this. The believer had found that his sin worked more sin and that he could not break the power of sin, not the power of *all* sin. Therefore, he had turned to the only hope he had, God.

“For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” (Ro.7:5).

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph.4:22).

“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pt.4:3).

**“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:14-15).**

2. Now the believer is to let righteousness work holiness (hagiasmon). The word means sanctification or holy. The believer is to yield the parts of his body to serve righteousness, and he is to let righteousness sanctify him more and more. He is to live righteously and become more and more holy like God. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Holy*—1 Pt.1:15-16 for more discussion.)

3. The believer never had the opportunity to work righteousness before he was justified. Before believing in Christ, the believer was not counted righteous, not by God. God never credits a person with righteousness unless the person honors His Son by believing in His Son’s glorious name. Only those who believe are counted righteous. Therefore, the message is loud and clear: “When you served sin, you were free from righteousness: you were not credited with righteousness. You did not have the opportunity to live righteously before God. *But now* you have obeyed God; you have believed. Now you have the opportunity to live righteously, so begin to serve God with the same fervor and energy with which you were serving sin. Let righteousness enslave you and become the bondage and habit of your life.”

**“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Ro.6:13).**

**“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Ro.13:14).**

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).**

**“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:24).**

**“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:2-5).**

**“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pt.2:11).**

**“That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (1 Pt.4:2).**

**5** (6:21-22) **Sin:** question something—what fruit is there in sin? Note several clear facts.

1. The true believer is ashamed of his past sin.

**“And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Gen.3:10).**

**“And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens” (Ezra 9:6).**

**“My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me” (Ps.44:15).**

2. The fruit of sin is death (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Death*—Ro.6:23; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Heb.9:27). The fruit of sin is not good; there is nothing good about it. Sin corrupts, destroys, and dooms all who seek its fruits. This should always be remembered by men.

3. Believers are “made free” from sin by justification, that is, through the glorious love of God. Therefore, they have become slaves to God...

- bearing the fruit of holiness.

**“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn.8:32).**

**“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (Jn.15:5).**

**“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Ro.6:18).**

**“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Ro.6:22).**

**“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Ro.8:2).**

**“That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear. In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life” (Lk.1:74-75).**

**“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor.7:1).**

**“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints” (1 Th.3:12-13).**

**“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb.12:14).**

**“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pt.1:16).**

**“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness” (2 Pt.3:11).**

bearing the glorious hope and end of eternal life.

**“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).**

**“And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (Jn.4:36).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (Jn.12:25).**

**“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Jn.17:3).**

**“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal.6:8).**

**6** (6:23) **Sin, Wages of—Death:** consider something, the wages of sin vs. the gift of God.

1. The wages of sin is death. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Death*—Heb.9:27 for more discussion.) Sin deserves death for two very clear reasons.

a. Sin is acting against God, acting against His very nature. Sin strikes out against God, attempts to tear down God’s nature...

- of purity and morality.
- of holiness and glory.
- of justice and righteousness.
- of love and grace.

b. Sin is rebellion against God. It is rejecting God, ignoring God, disobeying God, denying God, and refusing to live for God. (See note—Ro.5:10 for more discussion.)

The point is this. True justice demands that sin receive its payment or its wages. Since sin is so opposed to God’s nature and is actually rebellion against God, it deserves to die...

- to be cast far, far away from God.
- to have no part of God.
- to be banished from God’s sight.
- to be separated from God’s presence forever.
- to be condemned and punished for having dishonored and cursed God so much.

As a laborer receives his wages, so sin shall receive its wages. Just as it would be unjust not to pay the laborer, it would be unjust not to pay sin for its work. In fact, if sin did not receive its just punishment, it would be the most gross injustice of eternity. Why? Because sin is against the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, against God Himself. Sin must receive its just wages. Sin must die; it must be banished forever from the presence of God.

**“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Ro.5:12).**

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).**

**“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:15).**

**“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).**

**“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen.2:17).**

**“As righteousness tendeth to life; so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death” (Pr.11:19).**

**“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezk.18:20).**

2. The gift of God is eternal life. Note that eternal life *is not* the payment of wages. A man cannot work for and earn eternal life. It is the gift of God, and it is only through Jesus Christ our Lord (see outlines and notes—Ro.6:14-15; 5:1; 6:1-10).

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:5-7).**

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|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 The law dominates man only as long as he lives</b></p> <p>a. The two positions are illustrated by marriage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The law is alive &amp; active for the living</li> <li>2) The law is dead &amp; inactive through death</li> </ol> <p>b. The conclusion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The law condemns</li> </ol> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 7</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>V. STRUGGLE AND CONFESSION: THE BELIEVER IS TO BE FREE FROM THE LAW, 7:1-25</b></p> <p><b>A. The Two Positions of the Law to Man, 7:1-6</b></p> <p>Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?</p> <p>2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.</p> <p>3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married</p> | <p>to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.</p> <p>4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.</p> <p>5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.</p> <p>6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.</p> | <p>the living who violate its demands</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Death frees a person from the law</li> </ol> <p><b>2 Position 1: The law is dead to believers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How: By Christ's death</li> <li>b. The purpose for the believer's death             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To unite him to Christ</li> <li>2) To bear fruit</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>3 Position 2: The law is alive to those "in the flesh"</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How: By arousing sin</li> <li>b. Result: Death</li> </ol> <p><b>4 The law is inactivated by conversion</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How: By death "in" Christ</li> <li>b. Purpose: To serve in newness of Spirit</li> </ol> |
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**DIVISION V**

**STRUGGLE AND CONFESSION: THE BELIEVER IS TO BE FREE FROM THE LAW, 7:1-25**

**A. The Two Positions of the Law to Man, 7:1-6**

(7:1-6) **Introduction:** the law of God stands before man. It stands in two positions that must be understood if man wishes to secure peace in this life.

1. The law dominates man *only* as long as he lives (v.1-3).
2. Position 1: the law is dead to believers (v.4).
3. Position 2: the law is alive to those "in the flesh" (v.5).
4. The law is inactivated by conversion (v.6).

(7:1-6) **Another Outline:** The Two Marriages Illustrating the Law and Man.

1. Marriage 1: married to the law (v.1-3).
2. Marriage 2: married to Christ (v.4).
3. The divorce from the law (v.5-6).

**1** (7:1-3) **Law:** the law dominates and rules over a man *only* as long as he lives. The law applies only to the living; it has no bearing whatsoever upon the dead. A dead man is freed from the law; it has no jurisdiction or power over a dead man.

1. Note the two positions of the law illustrated by the law of marriage (v.2).
  - a. The law is alive or active to the living. (Cp. the husband and wife who are living and the law of marriage and divorce.)
  - b. The law is dead or inactive when death enters the picture. (Cp. the wife who is loosed or freed from the law when her husband dies.)
2. Note the conclusion of the illustration (v.3).
  - a. The law condemns the living who violate its demands. (Cp. the woman who marries another man while her husband lives.)
  - b. Death frees a person from the law. (Cp. the wife who is free from the law when her husband dies.)

The point is clear. When death enters the picture, a person is *no longer under* the law and he can *no longer be condemned* by the law. Death forever frees a person from the law, from its demands, guilt, and condemnation.

**2** (7:4) **The Law—Jesus Christ, Redemption:** the first position of the law is a glorious truth—the law is dead to "brothers" (believers). Note: Scripture says that believers are "dead to the law," whereas the outline states that the law is dead to believers. Both are true and are saying the same thing.

⇒ Believers are "dead to the law"; therefore the law is bound to be dead and inactive to believers.

The law has no jurisdiction, power, rule, authority, or dominion over the true believer. The law is a dead issue to the believer; it has nothing to do with the believer. The believer is dead to the law and the law is dead to the believer. The law

simply does not exist for the believer. This is a shock to most people, but it is exactly what Scripture is declaring. The believer is no longer under the law and its accusing finger, no longer under its...

- guilt and shame
- condemnation and punishment
- discouragement and frustration
- tension and pressure
- sense of failure and unworthiness
- sense of disappointment

1. Note how the glorious truth becomes a reality in the life of a person. The believer is dead to the law by the [crucified] body of Christ. The believer is slain or put to death *in Christ*. The law has nothing to say to a dead man. The believer's death in Christ is a *vicarious death*: he does not literally die himself, but he participates in the death of Christ—*spiritually*. When a man believes in Christ's death, God takes that man's belief and counts him as having died in Christ. That is, God counts the death of Christ *for* the death of the believer; God considers the believer to have been in Christ when Christ died. Why does God do this? Because Christ died in man's behalf, in man's stead, taking the penalty and punishment of the law upon Himself. Therefore, the believer—being dead in Christ—is freed from the law, from its demands and guilt and punishment.

The believer is freed "by the body of Christ," that is, by His slain body or by His death. Christ redeemed the believer from the law...

- by being a curse.

**"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal.3:10, 13).**

- by His blood.

**"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph.1:7).**

**"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph.2:13).**

- by His flesh.

**"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Eph.2:15).**

- by the cross.

**"And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph.2:16).**

- by the body of His flesh.

**"In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and un-reproveable in his sight" (Col.1:22).**

These are equivalent expressions. They teach the same truth: Christ bore our sins in His own body upon the tree (1 Pt.2:24). His sufferings satisfied justice. His death makes us acceptable to God and delivers us from the penalty of the law; therefore the believer is free from the law.

**"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pt.2:24).**

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pt.3:18).**

2. Note the glorious purpose for the believer's death to the law.

a. The believer dies to the law so that he can be united to Christ, the risen and living Lord. Note the picture of marriage is used again. Before coming to Christ, the believer was married and united to the law; he was under its rule and authority. But now, since coming to Christ, he is married and united to Christ; he is under His rule and authority. The believer no longer lives as the law says, but as Christ lived and commanded. (Note: Christ came to fulfill the law; therefore He and His commandments include not only the law, but much more. See note—Mt.5:17-18 for more discussion.) Note that believers are married to Christ, the risen and living Lord. The marriage is not a dead or an inactive marriage, but a living, active marriage.

**"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Ro.7:4).**

**"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid" (1 Cor.6:15).**

**“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor.11:2).**

**“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph.5:30).**

**“Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father” (1 Jn.2:24).**

- b. The believer dies to the law so that he can bring forth fruit unto God. Bearing fruit would mean...
- to bear righteousness (Ro.6:21-23; Ph.1:11).
  - to bear converts (Ro.1:13; Jn.15:16).
  - to bear Christian character, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23; Col.1:10).

**3** (7:5) **The Law—Lust—Sin:** the second position of the law is a warning—the law is alive to those “in the flesh.” A man “in the flesh” is the natural man: the man without Christ, the unsaved, the unjustified, and the unregenerate man. To be “in the flesh” means that a man is still “under the law,” that he must keep its demands and suffer its guilt and bear its punishment. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Flesh*—Jn.1:14; DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Cor.3:1-4 for more discussion.) Note two significant points.

1. The law is alive and active to the man without Christ.
- a. It is alive and active in that it points out sin and arouses guilt within a man when he violates the law. (See note, *Grace vs. Law*—Ro.6:14-15 for more discussion and verses on guilty feelings.)

**“By the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

**“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound” (Ro.5:20).**

**“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Ro.7:7).**

**“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal.3:19).**

**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).**

**“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers” (1 Tim.1:9).**

- b. It is alive and active in that it arouses sinful passions or “the passions of sins” (ta pathemata ton hamartion). The law not only points out sin, it actually arouses feelings and stirs the emotions to do the forbidden. Sinful feelings are actually “wrought” (energeito) by the law in our members. When the law prohibits and forbids something, it actually creates within us...

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| • an interest   | • a tug or pull |
| • an attraction | • a fascination |
| • an excitement | • a seduction   |
| • an appeal     | • an arousal    |

There is within man something that makes him want to do what he is forbidden to do. When he is restricted or fenced in, he wants to break through the restriction or fence. He wants to go beyond where he is allowed, to take control of his own life as he wishes and wills. (See note—Ro.7:8 for more discussion.)

**“For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” (Ro.7:5).**

**“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead” (Ro.7:8).**

**“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:14-15).**

**“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not” (Jas.4:1-2).**

**“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal.5:17).**

2. The result of combating the law—of refusing to obey the law—is that one bears the fruit of sin. When a man violates the law, he bears transgression and sin, and sin leads to death. In fact, sin deserves death (see note—Ro.6:23 for more discussion).

**“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Ro.5:12).**

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).**

**“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:15).**

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen.2:17).

“As righteousness tendeth to life; so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death” (Pr.11:19).

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezk.18:20).

**4** (7:6) **Law—New Life:** the law is inactivated by conversion. Believers are “delivered” (katergethemen), that is, have been *discharged* from the law. How? By their death “in” Christ (see note, *Jesus Christ, Redemption*—Ro.7:4 for discussion).

The believer is freed from the law so that he might serve in “newness of spirit,” and not in the “oldness of the letter.”

⇒ The “oldness of the letter” refers to the law. It is the *written* law which a man tries to keep in order to please God. But note: the law was the *old way* for man to live; it is no longer the way for a man to approach God.

⇒ The “newness of spirit” can refer to either the Holy Spirit or to the believer’s new spirit. The Holy Spirit is the One who brings new life to the believer and bears fruit within the believer. (Cp. Ro.8:13-17; Gal.5:22-23. See outline and notes—Ro.8:1-17.)

The believer’s new spirit is also focused upon God and upon his relationship with God. The believer is now a child of God, a true member of God’s family who has open access into God’s presence anytime and under any condition. The believer seeks to serve God knowing that if he fails, God will forgive him and allow him to continue on—as if nothing had ever happened. The believer no longer serves God in a legal and slavish spirit that dooms him to discouragement and defeat; but he serves God in “the new spirit” of love, joy, peace, forgiveness, and acceptance.

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:13-17).

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal.6:15).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn.1:9).

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:1-2).

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| <p><b>1 Is the law sin, that is, evil?</b></p> <p><b>2 The law reveals the fact of sin</b></p> <p><b>3 The law gives sin the opportunity to be aroused &amp; to work every kind of evil</b></p> <p><b>4 The law reveals the fact of condemnation &amp; death</b></p> | <p><b>B. The Purpose of the Law, 7:7-13</b></p> <p>7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.</p> <p>8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.</p> <p>9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin re-</p> | <p>vived, and I died.</p> <p>10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.</p> <p>11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.</p> <p>12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.</p> <p>13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.</p> | <p><b>5 The law reveals the deceitfulness of sin</b></p> <p><b>6 The law reveals the way of God: Holiness, righteousness, &amp; goodness</b></p> <p><b>7 The law shows that sin is exceedingly sinful and that it is the cause of death</b></p> |
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## DIVISION V

### STRUGGLE AND CONFESSION: THE BELIEVER IS TO BE FREE FROM THE LAW, 7:1-25

#### B. The Purpose of the Law, 7:7-13

(7:7-13) **Introduction:** the purpose of the law is clearly pointed out in this passage. It is a passage that needs to be carefully studied by both the world and believers. It is a passage that needs to be proclaimed from the housetops, for the law was given by God to show man his desperate need for a Savior.

1. Is the law sin, that is, evil? (v.7).
2. The law reveals the fact of sin (v.7).
3. The law gives sin the opportunity to be aroused and to work every kind of evil (v.8).
4. The law reveals the fact of condemnation and death (v.9-10).
5. The law reveals the deceitfulness of sin (v.11).
6. The law reveals the way of God: holiness, righteousness, and goodness (v.12).
7. The law shows that sin is exceedingly sinful and that it is the cause of death (v.13).

**1** (7:7) **The Law:** Is the law sin, that is, evil? This is a legitimate question because of what Romans has declared about the law.

1. The law judges and condemns men: "As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (Ro.2:12).
2. The law and ritual do not make a person a Christian: "He is a Jew [Christian], which is one inwardly; and circumcision [a ritual] is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter [law], whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Ro.2:29).
3. The law cannot make a man righteous and acceptable to God: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Ro.3:20; cp. Ro.3:27).
4. The purpose of the law is not to save man but to bear witness that man desperately needs the righteousness of God: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference" (Ro.3:21-22).
5. The law leads man to boast in himself—in his own works and self-righteousness—not in God: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (Ro.3:27; cp. Ro.4:2, 4; 2:29).
6. The law does not justify a person: "If Abraham were justified by works [the law], he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Ro.4:2-5).
7. The law is not the way a person receives the promise of God: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (Ro.4:13).
8. The law works wrath in that it accuses man of sin and condemns him: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Ro.4:15).
9. The law causes sin to increase and multiply: "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Ro.5:20).
10. The law enslaves and brings men into bondage: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Ro.6:14; cp. Ro.7:1).
11. The law arouses men to sin: "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death" (Ro.7:5).

Such facts as these can naturally cause a person to question the value of God's law. If the law lays such a burden of sin upon man, what good is it? Is it not evil? Scripture declares loudly and clearly: "God forbid! Let it never be! Such a thought is far from the truth!"

**2** (7:7) **The Law:** the law of God reveals the fact of sin. Apart from the law, man would be aware that some acts are wrong, such as stealing and killing. However, there would be much that man could not know if he did not have the law, much that he would desperately need to know in order to live a full and peaceful life.

The law reveals the fact of sin, the fact...

- that men are not in a right relationship with God.
- that men are not in a right relationship with other men.
- that men are living selfishly, thereby dooming themselves.
- that men are coveting and lusting, thereby destroying their world and their future.
- that men are displeasing God and have become unacceptable to Him.

The point is this: when a man sees the fact of sin, the fact that he is a sinner, he can *correct it* and *do something* about it. The knowledge of sin is a great and glorious thing, for we can take our knowledge and use it to *correct the wrong*. Without the law, we would roam in ignorance, not knowing what was wrong and what was right, what was dooming us and what was freeing us. If there was no restraint, that is, no law, every man would be doing what he wanted when he wanted; he would be doing his own thing—fulfilling his own desires—regardless of the fallout and the hurt inflicted upon others.

Now note: the law reveals sin; it awakens man to three facts about sin.

1. The law reveals the fact of sin, that sin actually exists. The law awakens man to the reality and truth of sin. Man knows that coveting is wrong because the law says, “Thou shalt not covet.” He knows that some things are good and other things are bad because the law tells him. He knows that certain things please and other things displease God because the law says so. In simple and clear language, the law tells a man...

- what the nature and will of God is.
- what he must do to be acceptable to God.

2. The law reveals the fact of man’s own sin, that man is unquestionably a sinner. The law awakens man to the reality that he himself is a sinner. The law shows man...

- that he does not always do the will of God.
- that he cannot keep the law of God, not perfectly.
- that he is guilty of acting contrary to the nature of God.
- that he is imperfect, guilty of violating God’s law.
- that being imperfect, he comes short of God’s glory.
- that being short of God’s glory, he is unacceptable to God.

3. The law reveals the fact of man’s sinful nature, that man is actually aroused to do some of the things that are forbidden. The law shows man that he has a sinful, depraved, polluted, and corrupted nature. The law shows man that he covets, lusts, enjoys, and is aroused...

- to take the second helping of food.
- to take the melons on the other side of the fence.
- to secure the same things owned by his neighbor.
- to go after the excitement and stimulation of the forbidden.
- to fulfill the lust of the flesh.
- to feed the lust of the eyes.
- to satisfy the pride of life.

The purpose of the law is to reveal sin so that man can correct his behavior and save himself and his world. Apart from God’s law, he would not know that he needed to be saved.

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

**“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound” (Ro.5:20).**

**“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Ro.7:7).**

**“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal.3:19).**

**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).**

**“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers” (1 Tim.1:9).**

**3** (7:8) **The Law—Lust—Sin:** the law gives sin the opportunity to be aroused, working every kind of evil. Note the exact words of the Scripture: “Sin, taking occasion [opportunity] by the commandment, works in men all manner of evil,” that is, sin uses the commandment. Sin is *not within* the commandment; it is *separate* from it. The commandment or law is not sinful. Sin is within man, not within the law. Man’s aging, deteriorating, and corrupt nature has within it...

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| • the principle of sin | • a diseased flesh     |
| • the tendency to sin  | • a selfish appetite   |
| • the fondness for sin | • a self-centered mind |
| • the urge to sin      | • a dead spirit        |

Note three points.

1. It is the law that gives sin the opportunity to be aroused. The law actually stirs, awakens, and arouses sin to work all manner of evil. When a man is told not to do something, there is something within him that is stirred and wants to do

it. Sometimes the desire to do the forbidden is so strong it becomes a rage, inflamed to such a point that the person just has to do it. (See note—Ro.7:5 for more discussion.)

2. It is man that takes and misuses the law; it is not the law that takes and misuses man. The law does not violate man; man violates the law. It is not the law that *takes* man and forces him to sin. It is man that *takes* the law and breaks it, that deliberately goes against what it says. It is sin within man that takes and misuses the law to work all manner of sin. Therefore, it is not the law that is evil; it is man who is evil.

3. Without the law, *sin was dead*; that is, it was not alive and active. It was not guiding and directing man; it was not able to fulfill its function which was so desperately needed: showing man his critical need for deliverance from sin and its condemnation of death.

Without the law, *sin is dead*, but with the law sin becomes alive. Man is able to look at the law and his true condition, that he is a sinner who must be saved if he is to become acceptable to God and live eternally. The law is not evil but good, gloriously good, for it shows us our desperate need for salvation.

**“For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” (Ro.7:5).**

**“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead” (Ro.7:8).**

**“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:14-15).**

**“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not” (Jas.4:1-2).**

**“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal.5:17).**

**4** (7:9-10) **The Law:** the law reveals the fact of condemnation and death. This is a major purpose of the law. Note three points.

1. A man who does not know or pay attention to the law feels alive. He is just not aware of the law; therefore, he does not pay attention to sin. He is not aware that he is a sinner and short of God’s glory, violating God’s will and going contrary to God’s nature. He is ignorant of God’s law; he pays little attention to right and wrong. When he does wrong and fails to do right, he is not aware of it. Therefore he feels...

- no consciousness of sin.
- no guilt.
- no dread of punishment.
- no sense of judgment.

He feels alive, safe, secure, confident, and assured that he is pleasing to God and will be approved and accepted by God. He feels alive despite the reality of his sinful state and condition. Without the law he does not know the truth, that he is a sinner, condemned and unclean and ever so short of God’s glory and acceptance.

2. A man who does know God’s law and pays attention to it sees sin come alive. By knowing the law the man becomes *acutely aware* of sin when he breaks the law. It is the law that gives him...

- a painful awareness of sin.
- a sense of guilt.
- a sense of judgment to come.
- a dread of punishment and of death.

It is the law that causes his spirit to die, that destroys his confidence, assurance, comfort, and security. It is the law that shows him the true state and condition of man: that he is a sinner who is to face condemnation and death; that he desperately needs to be delivered from sin and death; that he desperately needs a Savior who can make him acceptable to God.

3. The point is this: the law is ordained to bring life, but not in the way men think. Men think that the law was given to be kept, and that by keeping the commandment they can earn the acceptance of God and work their way into heaven. However, this is not the way the law brings life to man. The law brings life to man...

- by destroying his self-centeredness and self-righteousness.
- by revealing the truth to him, his true state and condition.
- by showing him that he is a corrupt, sinful being.
- by demonstrating that he desperately needs to be delivered from sin and death.
- by proving that he desperately needs a Savior, One who can make him acceptable to God.

When a man really looks at the law of God, he learns his true condition: he is corrupt and destined to face condemnation and death. In learning this fact, he is driven to seek the salvation of God. Therefore, the law is not evil; it is good.

**“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Ro.7:22-24).**

**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).**

**“In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death” (Pr.12:28).**

**“But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby” (Ezk.33:19).**

**5** (7:11) **The Law:** the law reveals the deceitfulness of sin. Note again: it is sin that takes the law and misuses it; it takes the law and deceives us. How? There are at least two ways.

1. Sin misuses the law and deceives a person by making him feel safe and secure. Sin, that is, self-righteousness, says obey the law and you shall live. But this is deception, for no man can keep the law perfectly. Down deep, the thinking and honest man knows he can never achieve perfection by keeping God’s law; but his sin, his self-righteousness, drives him onward to try and try; and he is forever deceived and doomed. The point is this: the law reveals the deceitfulness of sin or of self-righteousness. The law proves that man is not perfect, that he cannot live without sinning, that he sins and sins and cannot keep from sinning. When a man honestly looks at the law, the law destroys the deceitfulness of sin.

2. Sin misuses the law and deceives a person by discouraging him and making him feel helpless and hopeless. Sin deceives men into thinking that the law has been given to bring life to man. Therefore, when a man continues to break the law, he is keenly aware that he is condemned and unable to achieve the righteousness of the law. He knows that he has displeased God and senses that he is unacceptable to God. Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness swarm over him and he becomes defeated and down and out. Sin simply takes the law and uses man’s failure to discourage him. Sin uses the law, so to speak, to whip man, to make him feel unworthy and helpless and hopeless, to drive him deeper and deeper into despair.

**“For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me” (Ro.7:11).**

**“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another” (Tit.3:3).**

**“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb.3:13).**

**“The perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them” (Pr.11:3).**

**“As righteousness tendeth to life; so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death” (Pr.11:19).**

Now note: such an attitude toward the law is the attitude of sin. The law was never given to drive men to despair, and in truth, it cannot. It is sin *within* men that drives them to despair. Twisted minds and ungodly thoughts drive men into a state of hopelessness. The law was given to reveal sin to men, to take the sin that already exists and to reveal its shame and consequences to men. When the law was first given, man was already in a state of sin and death: he was sinning and he was dying. God gave the law to man because He loved man, because He knew that men needed to be pointed toward Christ and needed to be shown their terrible condition and desperate need for a Savior. Such is the glorious purpose of the law, a purpose which is far from being evil.

**6** (7:12) **The Law:** the law reveals the way of God, the way of holiness, righteousness, and goodness.

1. The law is holy: set apart and full of purity, majesty, and glory—set apart in that it reveals God’s nature and will—set apart in that it exposes sin, all that is contrary to God’s nature and will. The law is holy in that it is different and set apart from everything else on earth. The law is God’s way of holiness, the way to live a life of holiness, the way that is so different and so set apart that no man can reach its purity.

2. The law is just: righteous, fair, impartial, equitable, straight. The law treats a man exactly like he should be treated; it shows no partiality to anyone. It also reveals how a man should treat others. The law is just in that it reveals exactly how a man should live. It shows him how to live in relation to God and to his fellow man, and it judges him fairly and impartially.

3. The law is good: it shows man how to live and tells him when he fails to live that way. It exposes his sin and demonstrates his desperate need for a Savior. The law tells man the truth about the nature of man in a most explicit way, and it points him toward the need for *outside* help in order to be saved.

**“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Ps.19:7).**

**“Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth” (Ps.119:142).**

**“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Ro.7:12).**

**“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin” (Ro.7:14).**

**“But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully” (1 Tim.1:8).**

**7** (7:13) **The Law—Sin:** the law shows that sin is exceedingly sinful and that it is the cause of death. Note three points.

1. The law is good; it is not the cause of death. “God forbid! Such is impossible!”

2. The law was given to expose sin and to make men deeply aware of its presence and consequences. Men needed to know just how exceedingly sinful sin is. Men needed to know that sin...

- is the worst possible affront to God.
- is the worst imaginable rebellion against God.
- is against all that God represents.

The law proves that sin is against God: against all that He is, against all of His nature and will. Sin is selfish, destructive, dirty, ugly, and impure. The law is the very opposite. The law was given to show how exceedingly sinful sin is, to

show just how terrible it is. Take any sin and stand it up against the law that prohibits it and the great contrast is seen. For example, take murder and stand it beside the commandment "Thou shalt not kill." Look at the great contrast.

- ⇒ The commandment protected man's life, but sin took his life away.
- ⇒ The commandment protected man's presence with loved ones, but sin took his presence away.
- ⇒ The commandment protected man's existence upon earth, but sin took his existence away.
- ⇒ The commandment protected man's contribution to society, but sin took his contribution away.
- ⇒ The commandment said that man could live, but sin said "no," and killed him.

So it is with every sin, whether adultery, stealing, or taking God's name in vain. The law was given to show how exceedingly sinful sin is. It was given to make men think of their sinful state and condition and of their desperate need for deliverance and salvation.

3. The law was given to make men think about death, to make men aware that they die because they violate the will and nature of God. Men died *before* the law was ever given. They died because they did not live holy and righteous lives, did not live according to the nature and will of God. God gave the law so that sin and its condemnation of death would be *exposed* more than ever before. Men had to be shown that they were great sinners and that they died because they sinned. The law shows men clearer than ever before and in no uncertain terms...

- that they do sin.
- that they are not perfect.
- that they are condemned to die.

Therefore, they need a Savior who will deliver them from sin and its terrible consequence of death. The law shows man his desperate need to be saved from sin, death, and judgment.

**"As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God....Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Ro.3:10-12, 19; cp. v.9-19).**

**"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Ro.6:23).**

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| <p><b>1 The law is spiritual</b><br/> <b>2 Confession 1: He is carnal, sold under sin</b><br/> a. A carnal life is a helpless, unceasing struggle<br/> b. A carnal life demonstrates that human nature &amp; knowledge are inadequate<br/> c. The conclusion: man has a sinful, depraved, &amp; corrupt nature<br/> <b>3 Confession 2: He is void of any good thing</b><br/> a. He wills &amp; resolves but it is all inadequate</p> | <p><b>C. The Confessions of a Man's Struggling Soul, 7:14-25</b><br/> 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.<br/> 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.<br/> 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.<br/> 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.<br/> 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.<br/> 19 For the good that I would</p> | <p>I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.<br/> 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.<br/> 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.<br/> 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:<br/> 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.<br/> 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?<br/> 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.</p> | <p>b. The conclusion: he has a sinful, depraved, &amp; corrupt nature<br/> <b>4 Confession 3: He finds two laws or forces within</b><br/> a. The law of God works inwardly<br/> b. The law of sin wars against the law of his mind<br/> <b>5 Confession 4: He is a desperate, wretched man who needs a Deliverer</b><br/> <b>6 Confession 5: The Deliverer is Jesus Christ</b></p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**STRUGGLE AND CONFESSION: THE BELIEVER IS TO BE FREE FROM THE LAW, 7:1-25**

**C. The Confessions of a Man's Struggling Soul, 7:14-25**

(7:14-25) **Introduction:** this is a great passage of Scripture in that it portrays the struggling soul of the believer as he ploughs through life. It is a rare picture of the life of Paul, of what he sensed, learned, and experienced as he struggled to please God and to become conformed to the glorious image of the Lord Jesus. It is the confession of a man's soul as he struggles through life.

1. The law is spiritual (v.14).
2. Confession 1: he is carnal, sold under sin (v.14-17).
3. Confession 2: he is void of any good thing (v.18-20).
4. Confession 3: he finds two laws or forces within (v.21-23).
5. Confession 4: he is a desperate, wretched man who needs a Deliverer (v.24).
6. Confession 5: the Deliverer is Jesus Christ (v.25).

**1** (7:14) **Law:** the law is spiritual. It is spiritual in at least three senses.

1. The law was given to man by the Spirit of God (pneumatikos). The Greek word used is the very name of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the source of the law.
2. The law is the expression of the will and nature of God. The law is spiritual because it describes the will of God and tells man just what God is like. The rules of the law reveal both the mind and nature of God.
3. The law is spiritual because of its purposes (see note, *Law, Purpose*—Ro.7:12 for discussion. Also cp. outline and notes—Ro.7:7-13 for more discussion.)

**2** (7:14-17) **Carnal—Flesh—Man, Nature:** the first confession of Paul is that he is carnal, sold under sin. The word "carnal" or "fleshly" (sarkinos) means to be made of flesh; to consist of flesh; to have a body of flesh and blood. It means the flesh with which a man is born, the fleshly nature one inherits from his parents when he is born.

The word carnal also means to be given up to the flesh, that is, to live a fleshly, sensual life; to be given over to animal appetites; to be controlled by one's sinful nature. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Carnal*—1 Cor.3:1-4 for more discussion.)

Paul says that he is "sold under sin." He simply means that as a creature of flesh, that is, as a man, he is...

- a slave to sin.
- under sin's influence.
- subject to sin.
- capable of sinning.
- guilty of sinning.
- cannot free himself from being short of God's glory.
- cannot keep from sinning—not perfectly.
- cannot erase sin's presence—not completely.
- cannot cast sin out of his life—not totally.
- cannot get rid of sin—not permanently.

**“His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins” (Pr.5:22).**

**“Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (Jn.8:34).**

**“For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:23).**

**“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Ro.6:13).**

**“And that they [the carnal] may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2 Tim.2:26).**

**“While they [the carnal] promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (2 Pt.2:19).**

Paul makes three points about his being carnal and sold under sin.

1. He says that a carnal life is a helpless, unceasing struggle.
  - a. “That which I do I allow not”: the word “allow” (ginosko) means to recognize, to know, to perceive. A carnal man finds himself doing things, and he cannot understand why he is doing them. He fights and struggles against them, but before he knows it, he has sinned and come short. The sin was upon him before he even recognized and saw it. If he had known that the behavior was sin, he would have never done it, but he did not recognize it as coming short of God’s glory and God’s will for his life.
  - b. “What I would, that do I not.” Paul says that he wanted to do right and to please God as he walked throughout life day by day. He wanted to be conformed to the image of Christ and to become all that God wanted him to be. But despite his desire and expectation, before he knew it, he found himself coming short of God’s glory and will.
  - c. “What I hate, that do I.” Paul hated sin and hated coming short of God’s glory. He struggled against failing and displeasing God; he hated everything that hurt and cut the heart of God, and he fought to erase it completely from his life. But no matter how much he hated and struggled against coming short, he still found himself failing.

**“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal.5:17).**

2. A carnal life demonstrates that human nature and knowledge are inadequate. A carnal man fails to live for God as he should. No matter how much he tries to please God and to be conformed to the image of Christ, he comes short.

Now note: it is the law that tells man that he comes short. The law tells him that despite all his efforts to please God, he is short and not acceptable to God. He may know the law and he may try to keep the law, but his desire to know and to seek God will not save him. His nature and knowledge are not enough; they fail. What he needs is a Savior, One outside his own flesh who can forgive his sins and impart eternal life to him.

Note another fact: a carnal life proves the law is good. The word “consent” (sumphemi) means to agree, to say the same thing, to speak right along with the law, to prove, demonstrate, and show that the law is right. The law proves and demonstrates that a man cannot live a perfectly righteous life. A carnal man proves the very same thing. He sins, finding himself doing exactly what the law says not to do and what he himself prefers not to do.

The point is this: when a carnal man sins, the law points out his sin. The law tells the carnal man the truth: he is a sinner doomed to die. Knowing this, the carnal man is able to seek the Lord and His forgiveness. Therefore, the carnal man agrees with the law; the law is very good, for it tells him that he must seek the Savior and His forgiveness. He may not actually follow through and seek the Lord, but the law has at least fulfilled its function and shown the carnal man what he needs to do.

**“The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace” (Is.59:8).**

**“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge” (Jer.4:22).**

**“Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God” (Jer.5:4).**

**“But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor” (Mic.4:12).**

**“For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Ro.10:3).**

**“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).**

3. Paul’s conclusion is that man has a sinful, depraved, and corrupt nature. What causes him to conclude this? As a man who was a genuine believer, he did not want to sin; he actually willed not to sin. However, he found that he could not keep from sinning. He continually came short of the glory of God and failed to be consistently conformed to the image of Christ. Why?

- ⇒ Not because he failed to exercise his will.
- ⇒ Not because his mind was not focused upon Christ.
- ⇒ Not because he did not know God’s will.
- ⇒ Not because he did not seek to do God’s will.
- ⇒ Not because he did not call upon every faculty and power of his being.

He came short and failed because of *sin that dwells in him*, because of *sin within* his flesh. The carnal man finds a principle, a law of sin *within* his flesh that tugs and pulls him to sin. He finds that no matter what he does, he sins...

- by living for himself before he lives for God and others.
- by putting himself before the laws concerning God and the laws concerning man. (This refers to the ten commandments where the first laws govern our relationship to God and the last laws govern our relationship to man.)

No matter what resources and faculties man uses and no matter how diligently he tries, he is unable to control sin and to keep from sinning. Sin is *within* his flesh; it *dwells in* him. In fact, man is corrupt and dies for this very reason. He was never made to be corruptible nor to die; he was not created with the *seed of corruption* that causes him to age, deteriorate, and decay (Ro.5:12). The *seed of corruption* was planted in his flesh, in his body and life when he sinned. The carnal life proves that man cannot keep from sinning, that man is diseased with the *seed of corruption*, the seed of a sinful and a depraved nature.

“Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled” (Jn.6:26).

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Ro.7:22-24).

“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Ro.8:7-8).

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind” (Eph.4:17).

“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled” (Tit.1:15).

**3** (7:18-20) **Flesh—Sin—Man, Nature:** the second confession of Paul is that he is void of any good thing. By “flesh” (sarki) Paul means the human, sinful, depraved, and corrupt nature of man. (See note, *Carnal—Ro.7:14-17* for more discussion.) Paul declares: there is no “good thing” in his flesh. This does not mean that he never did any good thing or work. It means that his flesh...

- is unable to please the goodness of God.
- is unable to be as good as it should be.
- is unable to be perfectly good.
- is unable to conquer the tendency and push toward sin.
- is unable to be conformed to the image of Christ.
- is corrupted and short of God’s glory.
- is contaminated and diseased by sin.
- is incapable of reaching God on its own and by itself.
- is aging and deteriorating, dying and decaying.
- is condemned to face the judgment of God.

1. Note why Paul says that his flesh is void of any good thing. He wills and resolves not to sin, but it is all to no avail. No matter how much he wills and resolves, he fails and comes short. Note that being *willing to do good is ever present* with him. The word “present” means that it is constantly before his face. He is *always* willing to do good and to please God. There is no lack of will in him. It is not the weakness of will nor of his resolve that causes him to come short of God’s glory and will. How does he know this?

⇒ Because what he wills to do, he fails to do.

⇒ Because the evil he tries not to do, he does.

2. Paul’s conclusion is the same as that of point one. He is void of any good thing because he has a sinful, depraved, and corrupt nature. He is held in spiritual bondage (see note, pt.3—Ro.7:14-17 for discussion and verses).

**4** (7:21-23) **Sin, Law of—Mind, Law of—Inward Man:** the third confession of Paul is that he finds two laws or two forces *within* him. Very simply, as soon as Paul wills to do good, he is immediately confronted...

- by a law of evil (v.21).
- by the law of sin (v.23).

The law of sin and evil battles *the law of the inward man* (v.22), *the law of his mind* (v.23).

1. The *law of evil* or the *law of sin* means that sin is a law, a rule, a force, a principle, a disposition, an urge, a tendency, a pull, a tug, a corruption, a depravity within man’s nature or inner being. It is called a law...

- because of its regularity; it rises up and rules all the time.
- because of its permanent and controlling power.
- because it is impossible to break its rule and to keep from sinning.
- because it has captivated and enslaved the nature of man (Ro.7:14f).
- because it is not passive but active, constantly struggling to gain the ascendancy over the law of the mind.

Any man who allows the law of sin to rule in his life is a miserable and helpless victim of sin.

2. The *law of the inward man* or *the law of the mind* means...

- the divine nature of God implanted within the believer.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).

- the “new man” created when a believer is born again.

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:23-24).

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).

- the abiding presence of Christ in the believer’s life.

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you....At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (Jn.14:18, 20).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

- the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you....But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn.14:16-17, 26).

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).

- the “hidden man of the heart.”

“But let it [one’s appearance] be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pt.3:4).

Very simply stated, the *law of the inward man* is the law, rule, disposition, urge, tendency, pull, and tug of the Holy Spirit to please God and to delight in doing His will.

The confession of Paul is striking. He declares that the law of sin wars against the law of his mind and that it gains the ascendancy. The law of sin captivates and enslaves him.

**5** (7:24) **Spiritual Struggle—Sanctification—Paul:** the fourth confession of Paul is that he is a desperate, wretched man who needs a Deliverer. There is a sense in which man is a walking civil war. He has the ability to see what is good, but he is unable to do it. He can see what is wrong, but he cannot keep from doing it. Paul says he was pulled in two directions, pulled so much that he was almost like two men in the same body. He knew *the right*, yet he did *the wrong*. He knew what was wrong, yet he was unable to stay away from it.

There is no believer, no matter how advanced in holiness, who cannot use the same language used by the Apostle. There is a bondage, a power of sin, within the believer’s nature that he cannot totally resist. True, he may and does struggle against the power, and he desires to be free from it; but despite all his efforts, he still finds himself under its influence. This is precisely the bondage of sin, of coming short of the glory of God. Too often he finds himself distrusting God, being hard of heart, loving the world and self, being too prideful, too cold, too slothful—disapproving what he knows to be right and approving what he hates. He groans under the weight of sin, of being short of God’s glory and of failing to be conformed to the image of Christ. He aches to walk in humility and meekness and to be filled with the fruit of love, joy, and peace. But day by day he finds the force of sin reasserting its power over him. He struggles and struggles against it, but he finds that he cannot find the power to free himself. The believer senses an utter helplessness and longs and desires for God to free him. He is a slave looking and longing for liberty. As one has said, this conflict between the flesh and spirit “continues in us so long as we live, in some more, and in others less, according as the one or the other principle is the stronger. Yet, the whole man is both flesh and spirit, and contends with himself until he is completely spiritual” (Martin Luther as quoted by Charles Hodge. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950, p.236).

It is this consciousness that drives the believer to the awareness that deliverance is found only through Jesus Christ our Lord. (See note—Gal.5:16-18.)

“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb.6:6).

“For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Dt.25:16).

“For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee” (Ps.5:4).

**6** (7:25) **Spiritual Struggle—Sanctification—Deliverance—Life, Victorious:** the fifth confession of Paul is that the great Deliverer is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an exclamation! Paul bursts forth with praise to God, for there is a

glorious deliverance from sin! But note: the deliverance does not come through...

- some man-made law.
- some man-possessed power.
- some man-possessed ability.
- some superior quality and faculty.
- some great spiritual force.

1. The deliverance comes through the great Deliverer Himself, Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the Deliverer from sin; He alone can deliver from sin. He is perfectly clear about this.

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

**“And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Mt.9:2).**

**“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mt.26:28).**

**“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).**

**“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Ro.8:2).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:3-6).**

Jesus Christ delivers the believer from sin in two ways.

- a. Jesus Christ justifies the believer (see note, *Grace vs. Law*, pts.1, 2—Ro.6:14-15 for discussion).
- b. Jesus Christ places the believer under God’s grace (see note, pt.2f—Ro.6:14-15 for discussion).

2. Paul’s conclusion is that he serves the law of God with his mind, that is, with his *renewed mind*. The believer who truly *knows* that his deliverance is through Jesus Christ our Lord learns something. He learns that his *mind* is *transformed* and *renewed* by Jesus Christ; he learns that his “mind” is born again and experiences a new birth just as his “old man” does. He learns that his *old mind* becomes the *new mind* and that his “old man” becomes the “new man.” (See note, *Mind*—Ro.12:2 for more discussion and verses.)

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).**

**“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).**

**“That ye put off concerning the former conversation [behavior] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:22-24).**

**“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.1:13).**

Because of Jesus Christ, the believer takes his *new mind* and does all he can to serve the law of God. When he fails—when his flesh caves in to sin—he knows that it is the law or force of sin that has caused it, not the law of his *new mind*. He knows that he is still flesh as well as spirit, that he is still indwelt by two laws, two forces that struggle for allegiance; therefore, he does all he can to focus his mind upon the law of God. He simply serves God—His will and His nature (that is, His law)—trying to please God in all that he does. He dedicates himself not to come short of God’s glory but to be conformed to the image of Christ. He knows that he is delivered from the law (force) of sin through Jesus Christ; therefore, the believer keeps justification and God’s grace ever before his face. The believer knows that when his flesh serves the law of sin by failing, he has open access into God’s presence to ask forgiveness. Therefore, he “girds up the loins of his mind” and comes before God for forgiveness. Once receiving a fresh surge of God’s forgiveness and grace, he starts all over again. The believer begins to sense the law of God with renewed fervor, the fervor of his renewed mind.

It should be noted that most commentators see the latter part of this verse as reverting back to what Paul had been saying, as a summary statement of what the carnal man or believer experiences. However, it seems much more natural to see Paul building upon his confession of Jesus Christ as the great Deliverer from sin. After coming to know Jesus Christ as the great Deliverer, it is not reasonable for him to be reverting back to the fleshly struggle of the carnal man. It is much more reasonable to see the mind as the *renewed mind* of the “new man.” However, if one prefers the summary interpretation, then the meaning would be as follows.

- ⇒ The carnal man uses his mind, his human, fleshly reasoning to serve the law of God. He tries and tries with all his might to honor and to keep the law of God.
- ⇒ However, he is flesh and he is carnal; therefore, he is subject to sin. No matter how much he tries to struggle against sin, his flesh gives in to the law of sin and comes short of God’s glory.

| CHAPTER 8  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>1 Now since Christ has come</b> (3:21-22)</p> <p>a. The believer is not condemned</p> <p>b. Why: He is “in” Christ<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p><b>2 The Spirit gives life</b></p> <p>a. By freeing the believer from sin &amp; death</p> <p>b. By doing what the law could not do</p> <p>c. By Christ condemning sin in the flesh<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>d. By Christ providing righteousness: For those who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit</p> <p><b>3 The Spirit pulls the mind to spiritual things</b></p> <p>a. The carnal mind vs. the spiritual mind</p> <p>b. The fate of both minds: Death vs. life &amp; peace</p> <p>c. The reason the carnal mind dwells in death</p> | <p><b>VI. DELIVERANCE AND REDEMPTION: THE BELIEVER SHALL BE FREED FROM STRUGGLING AND SUFFERING BY THE SPIRIT, 8:1-39</b></p> <p><b>A. The Man in Christ Jesus is Freed from Condemnation: The Power of the Spirit, 8:1-17</b></p> <p>There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.</p> <p>2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.</p> <p>3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:</p> <p>4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.</p> <p>5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.</p> <p>6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.</p> <p>7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it</p> | <p>is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.</p> <p>8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.</p> <p>9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.</p> <p>10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.</p> <p>11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.</p> <p>12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.</p> <p>13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.</p> <p>14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.</p> <p>15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.</p> <p>16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:</p> <p>17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.</p> <p>1) It is bitterly set against God</p> <p>2) It cannot please God</p> <p><b>4 The Spirit dwells within the believer</b></p> <p>a. He removes him from being “in” the flesh</p> <p>b. He identifies him as being “in” Christ</p> <p><b>5 The Spirit gives life to the spirit of the believer</b></p> <p>a. He gives life <i>now</i></p> <p>b. He gives life, quickens the mortal body <i>later</i><sup>DS3</sup></p> <p><b>6 The Spirit gives the power to mortify—to put to death—evil deeds</b></p> <p>a. Believers are debtors to the Spirit</p> <p>b. Believers determine their own fate: Death or life</p> <p><b>7 The Spirit leads the believer, identifying him as a son of God</b></p> <p><b>8 The Spirit adopts</b></p> <p>a. He delivers from the bondage of fear</p> <p>b. He gives access to God</p> <p><b>9 The Spirit bears witness with our spirit</b></p> <p>a. We are God’s children</p> <p>b. We are heirs of God</p> <p>c. We are equal heirs with Christ<sup>DS4</sup></p> <p>d. We are conquerors over suffering</p> |

## DIVISION VI

### DELIVERANCE AND REDEMPTION: THE BELIEVER SHALL BE FREED FROM STRUGGLING AND SUFFERING BY THE SPIRIT, 8:1-39

#### A. The Man in Christ Jesus is Freed from Condemnation: The Power of the Spirit, 8:1-17

(8:1-17) **Introduction:** this is one of the most important passages in all of Scripture. Its subject cannot be overemphasized: the power of God’s Spirit in the life of the believer. If the believer needs anything, he needs the power of God’s Spirit. Forcefully, Scripture spells out point by point what the power of the Holy Spirit is.

1. Now since Christ has come (v.1).
2. The Spirit gives life (v.2-4).
3. The Spirit pulls the mind to spiritual things (v.5-8).
4. The Spirit dwells within the believer (v.9).
5. The Spirit gives life to the spirit of the believer (v.10-11).
6. The Spirit gives the power to mortify—to put to death—evil deeds (v.12-13).
7. The Spirit leads the believer, identifying him as a son of God (v.14).
8. The Spirit adopts (v.15).
9. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit (v.16-17).

**I** (8:1) **Condemnation—Deliverance From:** since Christ has come, a most wonderful thing has happened. The people who believe *in* Christ are not condemned.

1. “No condemnation” (ouden katakrima) means that the believer is not doomed and damned, but is freed from the penalty and condemnation of sin; he is not judged as a sinner, but is delivered from the condemnation of death and hell; he is not judged to be unrighteous, but is counted to be righteous.

Very simply stated, the person who is *in Christ* is safe and secure from condemnation now and forever. He will not be judged as a sinner; he will not face condemnation. He is beyond condemnation; he shall never be condemned for sin; he shall never be separated from the love of God which is *in Christ Jesus our Lord* (cp. Jn.3:16; Ro.8:33-39). (But remember: the believer is to be judged for his faithfulness to Christ. He will be judged for how responsible he is—for how well he uses his “spiritual gifts” for Christ—for how diligently he serves Christ in the work of God. The judgment of the believer will take place at the great *judgment seat of Christ*.)

2. Now note the most crucial point: only the believer who is *in Christ Jesus* will not be condemned. All non-believers will face condemnation for sin. A genuine believer is a person who does not “walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Note what it means to be *in Christ Jesus* (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Believer*—Ro.8:1 for discussion).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(8:1) **Believer, Position In Christ:** What do the words “in Christ” mean? What does it mean for a person to be *in Christ*?

1. In the simplest of terms, to be *in Christ* means that a person’s faith in Christ *places* him *in Christ*. Positionally, the person is placed in all that Christ is. Christ lived, died, and arose, so to be *in Christ* means that a person lives, dies, and arises *in Christ*. Christ is the person’s Representative, his Agent, his Substitute, his Mediator in life and death and resurrection. The person who believes *in Jesus Christ* is *identified* with Christ: counted and considered to be “in” Christ; reckoned and credited as “in” Christ.

Spelled out in a little more detail, when a person believes *in Christ*, God *places and positions* the believer “in” Christ. The believer’s faith actually causes God to identify the believer *with Christ*, to count the believer...

- as having lived *in Christ* when Christ lived upon earth; therefore, the believer is counted sinless and righteous because Christ was sinless and righteous.
- as having died *in Christ*; therefore, the believer never has to die (Jn.3:16). The penalty and condemnation of his sins are already paid for in the death of Christ.
- as having been raised “in” Christ; therefore, the believer has received the “*new life*” of Christ. Just as Christ had a new life after His resurrection, even so the believer receives the “*new life*” of Christ when he believes in Christ. (See outline and notes—Ro.6:3-5. Also see DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Ro.4:22; notes—5:1; 6:14-15.)

2. To be *in Christ* means that a believer walks and lives *in Christ* day by day. A true believer lives, moves, and has his being *in Christ*. He is in union with Christ. To truly believe is to walk and to truly walk is to believe. A true believer...

- lays his life—his past sins, his present behavior, all that he is—upon Christ.
- entrusts his present welfare and destiny—all that he is or ever will be—into the hands of Christ.

A person who truly *lays* his life upon Christ and *entrusts* all he is to Christ is a person...

- who truly believes.
- who lives and walks *in Christ*.

Now, to live and walk *in Christ* means that we do not “walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Ro.8:1, 4). It means that “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit.2:12). It means that we bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23). It means that we abide *in Christ*, that we become as connected and attached to Christ...

- as the members of the body are connected and attached to each other (1 Cor.12:12-27).
- as the branch is connected and attached to the vine (Jn.15:4-7).

This is what it means for a person to be “in” Christ. A person simply *believes* in Christ, putting all he is and has into the hands and keeping of Christ. The person honestly believes that Christ will take care of his past sins, present welfare, and future destiny. Therefore, the believer simply places and positions himself—his faith and welfare—*in Christ*. God in turn identifies the person with Christ, with all that Christ is. God counts and considers the person to be *in Christ*. (See note, *Believer, Position In Christ*—Ro.6:3-5 for more discussion.)

**2** (8:2-4) **Holy Spirit—Life—Believer:** the Spirit gives life. The term “the law of the *Spirit of life*” means two things. It means...

- the *law of the Holy Spirit*.
- the *Spirit of life* which is in Christ Jesus.

Within the universe there is a law so important that it has become the law of the Holy Spirit. It is called “*the law of the Spirit of life*.” What is meant by this law? Very simply, life is in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. Whatever life is—energy, being, spirit, love, joy, peace—it is all in Jesus Christ and nowhere else. Within Christ’s is the *Spirit of life*, the very energy and being of life. This fact is important, so important that God has written it into the laws of the universe. It is titled “the law of the *Spirit of life*,” which is in Christ Jesus and in Him alone. The Spirit of life for which we long and ache is available *in Christ Jesus*.

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (Jn.1:4).

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn.10:10).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:25-26).

“I am the way, the truth and the life” (Jn.14:6).

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 Jn.5:12).**

Now for the critical question. How does the Spirit give life? How does a person go about securing “the Spirit of life” so that he may not die but live forever?

1. The Spirit gives life by freeing the believer from sin and death, that is, from the “law of sin and death.” The “law of sin and death” simply means the rule and reign of death. Every man dies: death rules and reigns over every man. But the Spirit of God frees a man from the rule and reign of death. This is natural and understandable; it is common sense, for it is a rule of the universe. If a person has the Spirit of life, then he naturally does not have the spirit of sin and death. He is not sinning and dying; he is living righteously and eternally. This is exactly what the Spirit of life does for the believer:

- ⇒ He frees the believer from sin and death: from the law or the energy and the power of sin and death.
- ⇒ He frees the believer to live righteously and eternally: to live in the Spirit of life or in the energy and power of life.

Stated another way, the Spirit of life frees the believer from both sin and death. The Holy Spirit frees the believer to live as Christ lived, to actually live out the life which Christ lived. The *active energy* of life, the dynamic force and being of life—all that is in Christ Jesus—is given to the believer. The believer actually lives *in* Christ Jesus. And the Spirit of life which is in Christ frees the believer from the fate (law) of sin and death. This simply means that the believer lives in a consciousness of being free. He breathes and senses a depth of life, a richness, a fullness of life that is indescribable. He lives with power—power over the pressure, strain, impediments, and bondages of life—even the bondages of sin and death. He lives now and shall live forever. He senses this and knows this. Life to him is a *spirit, a breath, a consciousness* of being set free through Christ. Even when he sins and guilt sets in, there is a tug, a power (Holy Spirit) that draws him back to God. He asks for forgiveness and removal of the guilt (1 Jn.1:9), and immediately upon asking, the same power (the Holy Spirit) instills an instantaneous assurance of cleansing. The spirit of life, the consciousness of living instantaneously takes up its abode within him once again. He feels free again, and he feels full of life in all its liberating power and freedom. He bubbles over with all the depth of the richness and fullness of life itself. He is full of the “Spirit of life.” Life itself becomes once again a *spirit, a consciousness of living*. He lives now and forever.

**“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor.3:17).**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

**“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps.16:11).**

2. The Spirit gives life by doing what the law could not do. The law could not make man righteous because man’s flesh is too weak to keep the law. No man has ever been able to keep the law of God, not to perfection or even close to perfection. All flesh has miserably failed—come far short of God’s glory and law. Consequently, all flesh dies physically and spiritually. Therefore, righteousness and life just cannot come by the law. *But* what the law could not do, the Spirit is able to do. He can provide righteousness and life.

3. The Spirit gives life by Christ condemning sin in the flesh (see DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Christ, Fulfills Law—Ro.8:3* for discussion).

4. The Spirit gives life by Christ providing righteousness for us. He provides righteousness for those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. This is a most marvelous statement, a glorious truth.

- a. The Spirit “fulfills righteousness *in* us.” He credits righteousness as being *in* us. When?
  - ⇒ When we believe that Jesus Christ is our righteousness, the sinless and perfect Son of God.
  - ⇒ When we believe that Jesus Christ is our Savior, the One who died *for* us.

When we believe in Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God fulfills righteousness in us; that is, He takes the righteousness of Jesus Christ (which is the righteousness of the law) and credits it to us. He actually places within us the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. He places the Divine nature (righteousness) of God *in* us (2 Pt.1:4).

It is critical to see this fact, for the Spirit fulfills righteousness *in* us, *not by* us. We do not and cannot even come close to keeping the law perfectly, but Christ did (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Ro.8:3). If His righteousness cannot be credited and fulfilled *in* us, then we are hopeless and doomed.

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6).**

**“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).**

**“Now it was written for his sake alone, that it [righteousness] was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:23-25).**

**“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Ph.1:11).**

b. Now note: righteousness is not fulfilled or credited *in* everyone. It is only fulfilled in those...

- who *do not* walk after the flesh,
- who *do* walk after the Spirit.

You can tell who is righteous and who is not; you can actually see who is fulfilling righteousness and who is not. All we have to do is look and see:

- ⇒ Is a man walking after the flesh?
- ⇒ Is a man walking after the Spirit?

The point is this: the Spirit gives life to men, but He gives life only to those who forsake the flesh and walk after the Spirit. The spiritual man, the man who walks after the Spirit, loves Christ and wants to honor Christ *in all that he does*. Therefore, he strives to follow Christ and His example. Such love and honor of Christ pleases God to no end, for God loves His Son with a perfect love. He loves His Son so much that He will take whatever honor a man gives His Son and match it for the man. Whatever recognition and honor a man heaps upon Christ, God matches it for the man.

- ⇒ If a man trusts Christ for righteousness, then God gives that man righteousness.
- ⇒ If a man trusts Christ for meaning, purpose, and significance, then God gives the man meaning, purpose, and significance.
- ⇒ If a man trusts Christ to lead him through some trial or need, then God leads him through the trial or need.

Whatever the man sows in Christ, he reaps: God matches it. Whatever a man measures out to Christ, the same is measured back to the man: God matches it. In fact, Scripture says that God will even go beyond and do much more than we ask or think (cp. Eph.3:20).

Therefore, the man who *walks after* the “Spirit of life” which is in Christ Jesus is given the Spirit of life. The Holy Spirit fulfills and credits him with the righteousness of the law, with the right to live eternally.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:4).

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Ro.8:1).

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Ro.8:13-14).

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph.4:1).

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(8:3) **Christ, Fulfills Law—Sin:** Christ condemned sin in the flesh by three acts.

1. Christ pointed to sin and condemned it as being evil. The very fact that He never sinned points out that sin is contrary to God and to God’s nature. Christ rejected sin, and by rejecting it He showed that it was evil, that it was not to be touched. He condemned it as evil and unworthy of God and man.

2. Christ secured righteousness for all men. When He came into the world, He came with the same flesh that all men are born with—the same flesh with all its desires, passions, and potential for evil. However, He never sinned, not once. Therefore, He secured a perfect righteousness; and because His righteousness is perfect and ideal, it becomes the model and pattern for all men. It stands for and covers the unrighteousness of all men. His perfect righteousness overcomes sin and its penalty—it condemns sin. It is to be noted that He condemned sin “through the flesh”; therefore, all flesh finds its perfection and ideal in His righteousness and perfection. All flesh finds its power to condemn sin “in Christ,” in His ideal righteousness.

“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?” (Jn.8:46).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb.4:15).

“For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:26).

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

“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:19).

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pt.2:22).

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 Jn.3:5).

3. Christ allowed the law of sin and death to be enacted upon Him instead of upon the sinner. Man has sinned, so the natural consequence is corruption and death. However, Christ allowed God to accept His *Ideal righteousness* for the unrighteousness of man. He allowed God to lay man's sin and death upon Himself. He allowed God to let Him bear the law of sin and death for man and to experience hell for man. He asked God to let Him condemn sin and death "in His own body upon the tree" (1 Pt.2:24). He was the perfect, ideal Man. Therefore, He could bear all the violations of the law and all the experiences of death for *all* men. God so purposed, and God bore the awful price of having to condemn sin and death in the death of His very own Son. Sin and its power have been made powerless. Death has been conquered (1 Cor.15:1-58, esp. vs.54-57), and he who had the power of death has been destroyed, that is, Satan. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.16:11. Cp. Heb.2:14.) (See note—Mt.5:17-18.)

**"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Ro.5:6).**

**"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro.5:8).**

**"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Cor.15:3).**

**"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor.5:15).**

**"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal.3:13).**

**"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit.2:14).**

**"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb.2:9).**

**"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb.9:28).**

**"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pt.2:24).**

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pt.3:18).**

**"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 Jn.3:16).**

**3** (8:5-8) **Mind, The—Carnal—Flesh—Spiritual Mind:** the Spirit pulls the mind to spiritual things. This is one of the most important passages in all of Scripture, for it discusses the human mind: "As [a man] *thinketh* in his heart, so is he" (Pr.23:7). Where a man keeps his mind and what he thinks about determine who he is and what he does. If a man keeps his mind and thoughts in the gutter, he becomes part of the filth in the gutter. If he keeps his mind upon the *good*, he becomes good. If he focuses upon achievement and success, he achieves and succeeds. If his mind is filled with religious thoughts, he becomes religious. If his thoughts are focused upon God and righteousness, he becomes godly and righteous. A man becomes and does what he thinks. It is the law of the mind. Scripture says three things about the power of the Spirit and of the human mind.

1. There is the carnal mind vs. the spiritual mind. The carnal mind is the mind of man's flesh or body. The phrase "to be carnally minded" (to phronema tes sarkos, v.6) means the *mind of the flesh*. It is the mind with which man is born, the fleshly mind which he inherits from his parents.

The carnal mind also means something else, something that must be heeded. It means the mind that is *given over to the flesh*; that focuses upon the flesh and its worldly urges and desires; that gives its attention and pursuits over to the flesh; that savors tasting and partaking of the flesh; that is controlled by one's sinful nature.

The carnal mind focuses upon three areas of life, or to word it another way, there are three directions of thought the carnal mind takes:

- a. The carnal mind may focus upon the base, the immoral, the violent, the material, and the physical. This is usually the lifestyle most people think about when a carnal or fleshly person is mentioned. The minds of some are consumed with the lust for sex, power, money, houses, lands, furnishings, recognition, position—concerned and filled with the earthly and the worldly.
- b. The carnal mind may focus upon the moral, upright, and cultured life. Some minds are centered upon the welfare and comfort of themselves and of their society. They want themselves and their society to be as refined and educated, as moral and upright as possible, so they focus their minds upon such *commendable* ends. And they are commendable purposes, but a person can be refined and well educated and live as independently and as separate from God as the base and immoral person. Most cultured people depend upon their *good works* and service to make them acceptable to God. Most just think that God will accept them because their lives and efforts have been focused upon building a good life and better society for all. What they fail to see is that God is interested in building a God-centered society and not a world-centered society. God wants the needs of every man to be met, but He wants it to be done from a spiritual basis, not from a human basis. He wants men led to Christ—their minds and lives focused upon God—so that they may have life, life that is both *abundant* and *eternal*. Just taking care of the physical needs of man does not meet the spiritual needs of man. It leaves a gaping hole in man's life; for the *spirit* of man determines how a man lives, either defeated or victorious, either with or apart from God (see note—Eph.1:3).

- c. The carnal mind may also focus upon religion: upon living a religious life of benevolence and good works, of ceremony and ritual. However, note again: a person can be a strict religionist and still live separate from God. He can have his mind *set on religion* and its welfare instead of God. He can be living for religion instead of for God, carrying out the function of *institutional religion* instead of the mission of God. He can be depending upon his commitment to religion to make him acceptable to God instead of believing and trusting God's Son: Jesus Christ our Lord. In all of this, note where the religionist's mind is—note where his thoughts are. There is little if any stress upon a *personal relationship* with God; little stress upon knowing God—really knowing, believing, and understanding Him—little stress upon walking and living in Him. The stress of the carnal religionist is his religion and its rituals and ceremonies, its welfare and projects. Such a focus is fleshly and carnal. It is of the earth, attached to the physical and material *institution* which passes away and dies.

The point is this: a carnal mind does not necessarily mean that a man's thoughts are upon the base, immoral, and vicious. A carnal mind means any mind that does not find its basis in God, any mind that is not focused upon God first. A carnal mind may focus upon a moral, upright, and cultured life and still ignore, neglect, and exempt God. A carnal mind may also focus upon religion and still exempt God. A carnal mind is a mind that finds its basis in this world, that focuses its thoughts upon the physical and material instead of God.

**“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Ro.1:28).**

**“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Ro.8:7).**

**“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind” (Eph.4:17).**

**“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Col.2:18).**

**“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled” (Tit.1:15).**

2. There is the spiritual mind. It is the natural mind of man that has been *renewed by the Spirit of God*. (See notes, pt.2—Ro.7:21-23; 7:25 for more discussion.)

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).**

**“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:22-24).**

The words “spiritually minded” (to phronema tou pneumatou) mean to be possessed by the Spirit or to be controlled and dominated by the Spirit. It means that the man who walks after the Spirit *minds* “the things of the Spirit” day by day. And note: it is the Spirit of God who draws the believer's mind to focus upon spiritual things. The Spirit of God lives within the believer. He is there to work within the believer, both to will and to do God's pleasure. He is there to keep the mind and thoughts of the believer focused upon spiritual things.

- a. The believer *keeps* his mind upon developing spiritual character and fruit.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance” (Gal.5:22-23).**

- b. The believer *keeps* his mind upon carrying out the ministry and mission of Christ.

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).**

**“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21).**

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20).**

**“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).**

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).**

- c. The believer *keeps* his mind upon knowing, believing, and understanding God.

**“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Is.43:10).**

**“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Jn.17:3).**

**“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Ph.3:10).**

- d. The believer *keeps* his mind upon being conformed more and more to the image of Christ.

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).**

**“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor.3:18).**

**“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).**

**“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).**

**“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).**

- e. The believer *keeps* his mind upon casting down imaginations and making *every thought* obedient to Christ.

**“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5.)**

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Ph.4:8).**

3. There is the fate of both minds. The carnal mind is strongly warned, whereas the spiritual mind is assured and comforted.

- a. The fate of the carnal mind is death. By death is meant spiritual death, being separated and cut off from God eternally. It means the soul is dead *now*, while the man lives on this earth. It also means that the soul remains dead (separated and cut off from God) even when the man enters the next world. The carnal mind...

- cannot ignore God now and expect to have thoughts of God in the next world.
- cannot focus upon the flesh now and expect to focus upon God in the next world.
- cannot think as it wills now and expect to think as God wills in the next world.
- cannot have a worldly mind now and expect to have a spiritual mind in the next world.
- cannot choose the flesh now and expect to be saved from the flesh in the next world.
- cannot reject God now and expect to be accepted by God in the next world.

Very simply stated, whatever the mind chooses will continue on and on. If the mind chooses the flesh instead of God, then the choice is made. The mind will continue on without God from now on, forever and ever. The mind is allowed to do as it chooses. If it chooses to be separated and cut off from God so that it can dwell upon the flesh, then the soul *shall* have the flesh; it shall be separated and cut off from God. God loves man. God will not violate man’s mind and force man to choose Him. The choice is man’s: he may choose God, or he may choose flesh and death (to be separated and cut off from God).

**“The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead [spiritually dead]” (Pr.21:16).**

**“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (Jn.6:53).**

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

**“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead [spiritually dead]” (2 Cor.5:14).**

**“And you...were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.2:1).**

**“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph.5:14).**

**“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:15).**

**“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead” (Rev.3:1).**

**“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).**

- b. The fate of the spiritual mind is life and peace. It is the very opposite of death. The spiritual mind is a state of mind, a mind that is filled with life and peace, with thoughts of life and peace. The spiritual mind dwells in life; it lives all that life was intended to be and lives it eternally. The spiritual mind is full...
- of meaning, purpose, and significance.
  - of assurance and confidence.
  - of joy and rejoicing.
  - of knowing, believing, and understanding God.
  - of spiritual fruit, the fruit of love, joy, and peace (Gal.5:22-23).

The spiritual mind is also full of peace. The man who is spiritually minded is at *peace with God*: he has peace with God because he knows beyond question that his sins are forgiven and that he is now acceptable to God. He also dwells in the *peace of God*: he has the *peace of God* because he experiences the day by day care and guidance of God in his life. He actually walks through life in the peace of God, knowing that God is looking after him and working all things out for his good. He knows his eternity is taken care of, that he shall be given the glorious privilege of living eternally and serving God in some glorious responsibility. Note something else as well: the man who is spiritually minded is at peace with all other men. He loves and cares for all men, no matter who they are, just as Jesus loves and cares for them.

The spiritual mind, the mind that focuses upon the things of the spirit, knows and experiences life and peace. Life and peace are its destiny forever and ever. Such is the promise of God and the testimony of His saints who have gone on before. To be spiritually minded reaps its reward, and its reward is eternal life and peace.

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).**

**“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:17).**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

**“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Ps.119:165).**

**“In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death” (Pr.12:28).**

**“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Is.26:3).**

4. There is the reason the carnal mind dwells in death. The carnal mind dwells in death because it is at enmity with God. This is simply seen.

- ⇒ God is holy, righteous, and pure; whereas the carnal mind is impure, immoral, and polluted. The carnal or fleshly mind is opposed to God by its very nature.
- ⇒ God acts only in morality and justice and goodness; whereas the carnal mind behaves immorally, unjustly, and selfishly. The carnal or fleshly mind is opposed to God by its very behavior.
- ⇒ God is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting; whereas the carnal mind ages, deteriorates, dies, and decays. The carnal or fleshly mind is opposed to God by its very destiny: death.

The carnal mind is opposed to God, to all that He is. It is not pure or lasting; it is fleshly and full of corruption, and it dwells in death. The carnal or fleshly mind is bitterly opposed to all that God is. Therefore, the carnal mind dwells in death, and it shall dwell in death eternally.

Now note: all this is saying one simple thing: the carnal mind “is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.” The carnal mind cannot be subject to God’s law because it is not “like” God: not by nature, not by behavior, not by destiny. A carnal mind has no interest in the law of God nor in trying to live as God wishes. The carnal mind wants to live as it wishes and do its own thing. The carnal man wants to indulge his flesh, whether by food, sex, pride, power, position, money, recognition, fame, or self-righteousness.

The fate of the carnal mind is clearly stated, a fate that is strongly warned.

**“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Ro.8:8).**

**“She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Tim.5:6).**

**“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb.9:28).**

**“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mt.25:41).**

However, the glorious truth is this. The Spirit of God can transform the mind of man. The Spirit of God can pull the mind to spiritual things. (Cp. Ro.12:2; Eph.4:22-24. See notes, pt.2—Ro.7:21-23; 7:25 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** Most carnal minds are influenced heavily by their environment and those around them. If their friends are materialistic or immoral, they focus upon the same. If their environment offers films and literature, they fill their minds with such, whether X-rated or educational and philosophic. Few carnal minds ever break away from their environment and friends. Only the Spirit of God can penetrate the human mind and set it free from the flesh and its carnal passions.

**4** (8:9) **Indwelling Presence—Holy Spirit, Power of:** the Spirit dwells within the believer, putting the Spirit of Christ within him. There is so much in these two verses that cannot be outlined beside the verses. There just is not enough space.

1. The power of the Spirit is seen in the word “dwell” (oikeo). The word “dwell” gives the picture of a home (oikos). The Holy Spirit dwells within the believer: He makes His home, takes up residence, and lives within the believer just as we live in our homes.

2. The power of the Spirit creates the glorious truth of the *indwelling presence* of God within the believer and of the believer within God.

⇒ The believer is said to be “in the [Holy] Spirit” (v.9).

⇒ The Spirit of *God* is said to “dwell” in the believer (v.9).

⇒ The believer is said to have “the Spirit of Christ” (v.9).

⇒ Christ is said to be in the believer (v.10).

**“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).**

**“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you....If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:20, 23).**

**“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).**

**“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor.3:16).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor.6:19).**

**“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (2 Tim.1:14).**

**“But the anointing [Holy Spirit] which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).**

**“And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezk.36:27).**

Note how the deity of Christ is being proclaimed. The “Spirit of Christ” is said to indwell the believer the same as the “Spirit of God.” Both are said to be equally within the believer. (Cp. Gal.4:6; Ph.1:10; 2 Cor.3:18; 1 Pt.1:11.)

3. The power of the Spirit removes the believer from being “in” the flesh and places him within *Himself*, within the Spirit of God. Very simply...

- the believer is no longer *positioned* “in” the flesh: not in God’s eyes and not in God’s accounting. The believer no longer dwells “in” the flesh: he no longer makes his home in the flesh nor lives in the flesh. He is no longer at home, that is, no longer comfortable with the things of the flesh.
- the believer is *positioned* “in” the Spirit of God. God sees and counts the believer as being placed and positioned in His Spirit; therefore, the believer dwells “in” the Holy Spirit. He makes his home in the Spirit, and he takes up his residence and lives “in” the Spirit. He is at home and comfortable only with the things of the Spirit.

4. The power of the Spirit identifies the believer as being “in” Christ. This is easily seen. Whatever spirit dwells within a man, it is *that spirit* to whom man belongs. If he has the spirit of selfishness within, he belongs to the spirit of selfishness and is known as being selfish. If he has the spirit of complaining, he belongs to the spirit of complaining and is known as being a complainer. If he has the spirit of evil, he belongs to evil and is known as an evil person. If he has the spirit of caring, he belongs to the spirit of caring, and he is known as a caring person. If he has the Spirit of Christ, he belongs to Christ and is known as a follower of Christ.

**“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (Jn.14:18).**

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Eph.3:17).

“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col.1:27).

“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him [Christ], and he in him” (1 Jn.3:24).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).

A person is *spirited*, driven to live according to the spirit that is within him. The Holy Spirit has the power to drive the believer to live as Christ lived. We can look at the spirit of a person and tell if he has the Spirit of Christ. If he does, then he bears the fruit of Christ’s Spirit. The Spirit and His fruit are seen in the life of the believer. The true believer *proves* that he is “in” Christ, that he is placed and positioned “in” Christ by the life which he lives.

**5** (8:10-11) **Holy Spirit—Resurrection, Believers:** the Spirit gives life to the *spirit* of the believer. The idea of the Greek makes this verse clear: “If Christ be in you, *although* the body is to die because of sin, the spirit shall live because of righteousness.” Very simply stated, the body of man does die, but his spirit can live forever if Christ is “in” him. Note two points.

1. The Spirit of Christ gives life to the *spirit of man* now, the very moment a person believes. Man’s body is to die because of sin: the body is corruptible, aging, deteriorating, decaying, and dying. It is in a process of dying—in such a rapid movement toward death—that it can actually be said to be *dead*. The body is dying; therefore, its death is inevitable. However, it is in the midst of death that the Spirit of Christ enters. He enters and converts the spirit of man from death to life. How?

- a. The spirit of man lives because of the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, “*In Christ*”—Ro.8:1; cp. Ro.4:22; 5:1).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).

- b. The spirit of man lives by living a righteous and godly life (see notes—Ro.6:14-15; 6:17-18; 6:19-20).

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Ro.6:17-18).

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Ro.8:1).

2. The Spirit of Christ quickens the mortal body *in the future*, in the great day of redemption. Note two things.
  - a. The word “quicken” (*zoopoiesei*) means to make alive, to give life, to cause to live, to renew and remake life.
  - b. The “mortal body” shall be quickened and made alive.
    - ⇒ The mortal body is the same body that died. The person is the very same person.
    - ⇒ The mortal body is given a totally new life; its elements are recreated and remade into a perfect and eternal body. The new body is to be given the power and energy of eternal elements, eternal molecules and atoms or whatever the most minute elements are. All will be arranged so that the mortal body becomes an immortal body.

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn.6:40).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn.11:25).

“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor.15:42-44).

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,

at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor.15:50-53).

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Th.4:16).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pt.1:3-4).

c. There are two great assurances of the believer’s resurrection.

⇒ The assurance of Jesus’ resurrection (see DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Resurrection, of Believers*—Ro.8:11 for discussion. Also see outline and notes—1 Cor.15:12-19; 15:20-23.)

⇒ The assurance of the Holy Spirit, of Him who indwells the believer. The very same Spirit who raised up Christ shall raise up the believer (2 Cor.4:14). He is the power and energy of life, and He dwells within the believer. Therefore, He shall raise up the believer. (See note, *Spirit of Life*—Ro.8:2-4 for more discussion.)

“[Jesus Christ] declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(8:11) **Resurrection, of Believers—Jesus Christ, Resurrection of:** the resurrection of Jesus Christ assures the believer that he too shall be raised from the dead.

1. The resurrection of Christ proves that *God is:* that He does exist and care for the earth. There is no power on earth that can raise a man from the dead. Only a Supreme, Eternal Power and Person can do that. Only God can give life to dead matter and to the dust of the earth. The very fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead proves that God exists and cares for this earth.

2. The resurrection of Christ proves that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, the Son of God Himself. It proves that Jesus Christ was sent to earth to secure the Ideal righteousness for man and to die and to arise from the dead for man. (See note, *Justification*—Ro.5:1 for more discussion.)

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).

“Which [God’s mighty power] he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:20).

3. The resurrection of Christ proves that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. It proves that Christ is the very One whom God sent to earth to save men from death and to give them life. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Ro.6:3-5 for discussion.)

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:25).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Ro.10:9).

“By which [the gospel] also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:2-4).

4. The resurrection of Christ proves that He is “the Spirit of life.” It proves that Christ is the very Energy and Force of life, the very Power and Being of life, and that He can give the same “Spirit of life” to men. He can raise men from the dead, even as He arose from the dead. (See note—Ro.8:2-4 for more discussion. Also see outline and notes—1 Cor.15:12-19; 15:20-23.)

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11).

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” (1 Th.4:14).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).

**6** (8:12-13) **Holy Spirit:** the Spirit gives the power to mortify or put to death evil deeds. Note two points.

1. Believers are in debt to the Spirit, not to the flesh. The word “debtors” (opheiletes) means to be obligated, to owe, to be bound by some duty.

a. Believers are not in “debt” to the flesh. The flesh has done nothing for man, nothing of real value. Note what the flesh has done for man.

- ⇒ It is sinful flesh, contaminated by sin (v.3).
- ⇒ It is carnal or fleshly minded (v.5).
- ⇒ It causes man to die (v.6, 13).
- ⇒ It is the opposite of life and peace (v.6).
- ⇒ It has a mind that is at enmity with God (v.7).
- ⇒ It cannot please God (v.8).

A man owes the flesh nothing. He is not in debt or obligated to the flesh, for the flesh brings nothing but misery and suffering to man.

**Thought 1.** A man is a fool to focus his life upon such a weak thing as the flesh; a fool to live as though he is in debt and obligated to something that *caves in*...

- to sickness and disease so often.
- to sin and shame so often.
- to death much too quickly.

**“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Ro.7:18).**

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace”**

**(Ro.8:6).**

**“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Ro.8:8).**

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die” (Ro.8:13).**

**“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal.5:17).**

**“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal.6:8).**

**“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).**

b. Believers are in debt to the Spirit. It is the Spirit who has done so much for man, the Spirit to whom we are so indebted. The Spirit of God...

- is the “Spirit of life” (v.2).
- has freed us from sin and death (v.2).
- fulfills righteousness “in” us (v.4).
- pulls our minds to spiritual things (v.5).
- gives us life and peace (v.6).
- dwells within us, removing us from the flesh and identifying us as being “in” Christ (v.9).
- gives life to our spirits now and assures us that He will give life to our mortal bodies in the great day of redemption (v.10-11).

It is the Spirit who has done so much for us; it is the Spirit to whom we are “in debt” and obligated.

2. Believers determine their own fate. The point is clearly seen: if a man lives after the flesh, he shall die because the flesh dies. The flesh is doomed; it dies, and there has never been an exception. Therefore, if a man chooses to live after the flesh, that is, to follow after the flesh, then in following the flesh he experiences what the flesh experiences. If the flesh stumbles and falls, the man stumbles and falls, for he is following after the flesh. If the flesh kills itself, then the man dies with the flesh, for he is following the flesh. Scripture clearly teaches this.

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).**

**“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die” (Ro.8:13).**

**“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:15).**

**“The soul that sinneth it shall die” (Ezk.18:20).**

However, if a man mortifies or puts to death the deeds of his body, he shall live. Note four facts.

- a. “The deeds of the body” mean the evil deeds, the evil lusts and passions, the desires and urges that lead to sin and shame, destruction and death.
- b. To “mortify” (thanatoute) means to put to death. The idea is that of denying, subjecting, subduing, deadening, destroying the strength of.
- c. The power to mortify the evil deeds of the body comes “through the Spirit.” However, note this: we deny the evil deeds, and then the Spirit gives the strength to *deaden* and to *subdue* their strength. We are involved just as the Spirit is involved. He cannot destroy the strength of sin unless we exercise our will and work to destroy it ourselves, and we cannot will and work at it apart from Him. Both the Spirit and ourselves have

to be involved, each doing their part, if we wish the evil deeds of the body to be put to death. To repeat the point above: we exercise our will to deny the evil deeds, and then the Spirit immediately steps in to *deaden* the pull and strength of the evil deed. If we do not want the evil deeds of our body destroyed, if we want to continue living in the sins of the flesh, if we want nothing to do with the Spirit—then the Spirit can do nothing for us. God loves us too much to force us; He will not override our choices. But if we honestly will to follow the Spirit and honestly desire to destroy the evil deeds of our body, the Spirit will step in and give the power to do so. He will break the power of sin: He will deaden and subdue the strength of it.

⇒ Our part is to *will* to follow the Spirit: to mortify the evil deeds and begin to deny them. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.9:23 for more discussion.)

⇒ The Spirit's part is to deaden and subdue and eventually to destroy the strength of evil deeds.

Now note: the conquest of evil deeds is not an immediate, once-for-all thing. It is a continuous struggle as long as we live in the flesh. This is actually brought out in the tense of the verb "live." The tense is a continuous and habitual action. We must *continue* to follow the Spirit and *continue* to mortify the evil deeds of the body. It is a day by day experience just as living is a day by day experience. We are to *live* by developing the habit of living in the Spirit and conquering the evil deeds of the body. The believer *cannot* destroy his flesh while on earth, but he *can break* the strength of evil deeds in his flesh. He can destroy evil deeds in his body.

- d. The person who puts the evil deeds of his body to death shall live. A man dies because of evil, and he lives because of righteousness. If he destroys the evil deeds and follows the Spirit of righteousness, he will not die. He will live.

**"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Mt.5:29; cp. Mt.18:8).**

**"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Ro.6:6).**

**"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Ro.8:13).**

**"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Ro.13:14).**

**"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal.5:16).**

**"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal.5:24).**

**"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col.3:5).**

**"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pt.2:11).**

**"That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Pt.4:2).**

**7** (8:14) **Believers, Duty:** the Spirit leads the believer. There are several ideas in the Greek word *lead* or *led* (ago).

- ⇒ There is the idea of *carrying and bearing along*. The Spirit leads the believer and carries him through the trials of this life. He bears the believer up, carrying him over the corruptions of this world.
- ⇒ There is the idea of *leading and guiding along*. The Spirit leads and guides the believer along the way of righteousness and truth. He guides the believer by moving in advance and going ahead of him. He blazes the path, making sure the believer knows where to walk (cp. Jn.16:13; cp. Gal.5:18; 2 Pt.1:21).
- ⇒ There is the idea of *directing on a course and of bringing along to an end*. The Spirit directs the believer where to go and how to get there, and He actually brings the believer to his destined end. The Spirit actually becomes involved in the life of the believer, directing him to live righteously and conforming him to the image of Christ. He actually brings the believer to his destined end, that is, to heaven, to live eternally in the presence of God Himself.

This is one of the great powers of the Holy Spirit, the power to lead the believer and to become involved in his life.

Now note a crucial point. The evidence or proof that a person is a son of God is just this: Is the person led by the Spirit of God?

- ⇒ Is the person being carried through the trials of life victoriously, acknowledging God and rejoicing in His strength and eternal security?
- ⇒ Is the person being led along the way of righteousness and truth?
- ⇒ Is the person being directed and brought along on the course to heaven, to spend eternity with God?

Very simply, is the person living for God and talking about the things of God? The person who is truly led by the Spirit is wrapped up in the things of God, for he is a son of God. He rejoices in his Father and seeks to please His Father in all that he does.

**"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (Jn.16:13).**

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor.2:13-14).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).

“For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death” (Ps.48:14).

“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps.73:24).

“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Is.30:21).

**8** (8:15) **Adoption:** the Spirit adopts the believer. Note two very significant points.

1. The Spirit delivers man from a terrible spirit—“the spirit of bondage.” Note what the bondage is: it is fear. Man is gripped by the bondage of fear, usually experiencing some apprehension, anxiety, tension, dread, alarm, danger, terror. Man is usually sensing some subjection, some enslavement to some form of fear. The one spirit with which all men are familiar is the *spirit of fear*. Men are enslaved and held in bondage by fear. What causes fear? Almost everything and anything can arouse fear: a list could go on and on. A few of the more prominent things are...

- suffering
- disease
- unemployment
- loss of livelihood
- not measuring up
- failure
- disapproval
- blame
- death
- traumatic trials
- loss of position
- loss of spouse
- falling short
- punishment
- condemnation
- rejection

The point is this: the Holy Spirit delivers the believer from the bondage of fear. How? By adoption, by actually adopting the believer as a son of God.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn.1:12).

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Ro.8:15).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:4-6).

“For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself” (Dt.14:2).

“Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting” (Is.63:16).

2. The Spirit gives access into God’s presence. The believer has access to God because he has been adopted as a son of God. Note: the Spirit is called “the Spirit of adoption.” Adoption is such a significant work of the Holy Spirit that it is called “the Spirit of adoption.” The believer actually receives the “Spirit of adoption” and the sense—the consciousness, the awareness, the knowledge—that he is a son of God. The believer is a son of God with all the privileges of sonship, especially the privilege of access—of entering God’s presence anytime and anyplace. It is this wonderful privilege that enables the believer to break the bondage of fear and to conquer the spirit of fear.

No matter what faces the believer, the believer is able...

- to enter the presence of God.
- to lay his fear before God.
- to cry out, “Father, Father—help me!”
- to know that God will help him, for God loves him as His adopted son.

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (Jn.10:9).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Ro.5:1-2).

“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph.2:18).

“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Eph.3:12).

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be

touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:14-16).

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb.10:19).

“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil” (1 Pt.3:12).

Every *genuine believer* knows what it is to fear in this life, and he knows what it is to experience God’s delivering him through the fear. He knows what it is to have the “Spirit of adoption” surge through his being, giving assurance and confidence that God is in control and looking after him. He knows what it is to be a true son of God, a son whom God loves so much that He will move the world in order to meet the need of His dear child. God’s love for His adopted child is as great as God’s sovereign power. God will do anything for the believer who is His adopted son. (One of the great powers of the Spirit is the power of adoption. See DEEPER STUDY # 2, Adoption—Gal.4:5-6 for more discussion.)

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Ro.8:28).

**9** (8:16-17) **Adoption:** another power of the Spirit is the power to bear witness with our spirit. He bears witness to four glorious truths.

1. The Holy Spirit bears witness that we are the children of God. Very simply stated, the Holy Spirit *quickens* our hearts with the perfect knowledge and the complete confidence that we are children of God.

Note how clearly Scripture proclaims this glorious truth, the truth which every believer longs for the world to know.

a. The Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. He spreads the knowledge that God loves us and spreads it all through our beings.

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Ro.5:5).

b. The Spirit is the earnest or the guarantee that we are children of God.

“Who hath also sealed us, and give the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor.1:22).

“Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit” (2 Cor.5:5).

c. The Spirit is the seal or the guarantee that we are children of God.

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Eph.1:13).

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph.4:30).

2. The Holy Spirit bears witness that we are the heirs of God. If God is truly our Father, then we inherit what He possesses.

a. We are heirs of eternal life.

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).

b. We are heirs of salvation.

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb.1:14).

c. We are heirs of the promises made to Abraham, that is, the promises to inherit the world and to become the citizens of a great nation of people. The heirs of God shall inherit a great kingdom: the new heavens and earth.

“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Ro.4:13).

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal.3:29).

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Eph.3:6).

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph.5:5. See note—Ro.4:13 for more discussion.)

“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb.11:9-10).

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb.11:13-16).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise [of the inheritance], look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).

d. We are heirs of glory.

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:17).

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph.1:18).

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col.1:12).

e. We are heirs of righteousness.

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb.11:7).

f. We are heirs of the grace of life.

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pt.3:7).

The point is that the Holy Spirit is the One who seals the truth to our hearts. He is “the earnest [the guarantee] of our inheritance” (Eph.1:14). There is much more that we inherit as children of God (see note—Lk.16:10-12; DEEPER STUDY # 4—Ro.8:17).

3. The Holy Spirit bears witness that we are joint-heirs with Christ. However, this does not mean that we will receive an equal amount or quantity with Christ. (See DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Inheritance*—Ro.8:17 for discussion.)

4. The Holy Spirit bears witness that we are conquerors over suffering. All men suffer: as long as a man lives in a sinful and corrupt world, he will suffer and he will be unable to escape suffering. Sin and corruption take their toll upon his body and spirit and pull him ever onward toward the grave. However, this is not the suffering being spoken about in this passage. There is a suffering that is distinct to the true Christian believer, a suffering that can be called *godly persecution*. *Godly persecution* means more than being persecuted for some great cause or purpose. Many men in the world suffer persecution by some of their fellow citizens because of their dedication to some great purpose. However, not all men within the world oppose them. It is this that makes *godly persecution* different and distinctive. Every person in the world who is not godly opposes the *genuine* Christian believer. The world and its citizens oppose the believer by their very nature. The believer stands for and proclaims righteousness and self-denial, the sacrifice of all one is and has. The world opposes such a life and message, and they desire to stamp it out. (See note, *Persecuted*—Mt.5:10-12 for more discussion.)

It is suffering for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness that is the point of the Scripture. If we suffer with Christ in the great cause of God and His righteousness, then we will be glorified with Him eternally.

The point is clearly seen. The person who is a true follower of Christ proclaims and stands for Christ; therefore, he suffers the persecution of the world even as Christ did. And because he does suffer with Christ, he will share in the glory of Christ as well.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Mt.19:29).

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (Ro.8:36).

“And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation” (2 Cor.1:7).

“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Ph.3:10).

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us” (2 Tim.2:12).

“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb.11:25).

“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God” (1 Pt.2:20).

“But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled” (1 Pt.3:14).

“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1 Pt.4:16).

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pt.5:10).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 4

(8:17) **Inheritance:** the believer is a joint-heir with Christ. This is an astounding truth and promise. We shall inherit all that God has and all that Christ is and has. We will be given the privilege of sharing in all things with the Son of God Himself.

However note this: to be a joint-heir with Christ does not mean that believers will receive an equal amount of the inheritance with Christ. Rather, it means that believers are fellow-heirs with Christ; that is, believers will share in the inheritance of Christ; they will *share* Christ’s inheritance with Him.

Being a fellow-heir with Christ means at least three glorious things: it means that we will share in the *nature, position, and responsibility* of Christ. The following chart shows this with a quick glance.

#### FELLOW HEIRS BY NATURE

Christ is the Son of God, the very being and energy of life and perfection. Therefore, we share in the inheritance of His nature. We receive...

- the adoption as a son of God (Gal.4:4-7; 1 Jn.3:1).
- the sinless nature of being blameless (Ph.2:15).
- eternal life (Jn.1:4; 10:10; 17:2-3; Jn.3:16; 1 Tim.6:19).
- lasting possessions (Heb.10:34).
- a glorious body (Ph.3:21; 1 Cor.15:42-44).
- eternal glory and honor and peace (Ro.2:10).
- eternal rest and peace (Heb.4:9; Rev.14:13).
- a crown that will last forever, an incorruptible body (1 Pt 1:3-4; 1 Cor.9:25; 15:42).
- a righteous being (2 Tim.4:8).

#### FELLOW HEIRS BY POSITION

Christ is the exalted Lord, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, the Lord of lords and King of kings. Therefore, we share in the inheritance of His position. We receive...

- the position of exalted beings (Rev.7:9-12).
- a citizenship in the Kingdom of God (Jas.2:5; Mt.25:34).
- enormous treasures in heaven (Mt.19:21; Lk.12:33).
- unsearchable riches (Eph.3:8).
- the right to surround the throne of God (Rev.7:9-13; 20:4).
- the position of a king (Rev.1:5; 5:10).
- the position of a priest (Rev.1:5; 5:10; 20:6).
- the position of glory (1 Pt.5:4).

*FELLOW HEIRS BY RESPONSIBILITY*

Christ is the Sovereign Majesty of the Universe, the One who is ordained to rule and oversee all. Therefore, we share in the inheritance of His responsibility. We receive...

- the rulership over many things (Mt.25:23).
- the right to rule and hold authority (Lk.12:42-44; 22:28-29).
- eternal responsibility and joy (Mt.25:21, 23).
- rule and authority over cities (Lk.19:17, 19).
- thrones and the privilege of reigning forever (Rev.20:4; 22:5).

These passages will give some idea of what Scripture teaches when it speaks of the believer being a *fellow-heir* with Christ. There are a large number of Scriptures that could be added to these. As Paul declares:

**“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor.2:9).**

**“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Ro.11:33-36).**

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| <p><b>1 In this life</b><br/> a. The believer suffers &amp; struggles<br/> b. The future glory will be worth the agony</p> <p><b>2 The creation suffers &amp; struggles for deliverance from corruption</b><br/> a. Creation is subject to corruption<br/> b. Creation will be delivered<br/> c. Creation groans in labor for deliverance</p> | <p><b>B. The Whole Creation Shall Be Freed from Struggling and Suffering, 8:18-27</b></p> <p>18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.<br/> 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.<br/> 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.<br/> 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.<br/> 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.</p> | <p>23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.<br/> 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?<br/> 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.<br/> 26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.<br/> 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.</p> | <p><b>3 The believer suffers &amp; struggles for deliverance from corruption</b><br/> a. The first-fruits of the Spirit deliver &amp; save him<br/> b. Hope delivers &amp; saves him<sup>DS1</sup><br/> c. Prayer &amp; the Spirit deliver &amp; save him<br/> d. God delivers &amp; saves him</p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**DELIVERANCE AND REDEMPTION: THE BELIEVER SHALL BE FREED FROM STRUGGLING AND SUFFERING BY THE SPIRIT, 8:1-39**

**B. The Whole Creation Shall Be Freed from Struggling and Suffering, 8:18-27**

(8:18-27) **Introduction:** this is one of the most glorious promises in all of Scripture. God is going to free *all creation* from struggling and suffering.

1. In this life (v.18).
  - a. The believer suffers and struggles.
  - b. The future glory will be worth the agony.
2. The creation suffers and struggles for deliverance from corruption (v.19-22).
3. The believer suffers and struggles for deliverance from corruption (v.23-27).

**1** (8:18) **Suffering—Spiritual Warfare, Struggle:** in this life the believer suffers and struggles. The word “suffering” means all the forms of suffering which the believer experiences throughout life. It means...

- the suffering that comes from persecution.
- the suffering that comes from the struggle of his spirit to overcome the flesh and the world.

Very simply, suffering means the struggle waged by our spirits to overcome all that is experienced in this life, all that is involved in the flesh and the world. (See note—Gal.5:16-18 for more discussion.) It is the spiritual struggle discussed in Romans Chapters 5-8, and so descriptively illustrated in Chapter 7. It is the weight and agony of fighting to overcome...

- sin and corruption.
- disease and pain.
- abuse and persecution.
- unregulated urges and desires.
- weaknesses and shortcomings.
- aging and loss.
- deterioration and decay.

The genuine believer struggles against everything that keeps him from living abundantly and eternally. His sole passion is to bring everything under the control of Christ and to be conformed to the image of Christ. Therefore, he struggles to overcome the flesh and the world with their aging and corruption, sin and death. No matter what suffering is required, the believer bears it in order to overcome and gain the victory of eternal life and its glory.

Note that the believer is to suffer with Christ “in order that” (ina—Greek) he may be glorified with Christ (Ro.8:17). Suffering prepares the believer to participate in the glory of Christ. It is the necessary condition for exaltation. Suffering and struggling are a refining process through which the believer must pass (1 Pt.1:6-7). It refines the believer by forcing him to expand his trust in God more and more. Suffering drives a believer to cast himself more and more upon the care of God; therefore, the believer moves closer and closer to that perfect trust and care in God. He will never achieve the perfect trust and care in God, but he will come to know it when God transports him into the very Kingdom of Heaven itself. Suffering enlarges, purifies, expands, and ennoble the believer. It makes him more and more like what he will be when he actually lives face to face with God. This future glory *transcends immeasurably* the suffering and struggling of this present world.

- a. The future glory shall be revealed “in” us; it shall become part of our very nature and being. Glory shall radiate and shine forth from our resurrected bodies.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Ro.8:18).

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph.1:18).

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim.2:10).

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Pt.5:1).

- b. The future glory shall be an *eternal weight* of glory (just imagine such a weight, a weight beyond all measure, surpassing all measurements and calculations).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor.4:17-18).

- c. The future glory shall far exceed anything we have seen or heard or longed for in our hearts.

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor.2:9).

“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pt.5:4).

- d. The future glory shall be so glorious it will reflect through us to others, making us *ministers* of glory.

“They are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ” (2 Cor.8:23).

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph.3:10).

- e. The future glory shall make us just like Jesus in all that He is.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).

“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).

**2** (8:19-22) **Creation:** the creation suffers and struggles for deliverance from corruption. The word “creation” refers to everything *under* man: animal, plant, and mineral. All creation is pictured as living and waiting expectantly for the day when the sons of God shall be glorified. The words “earnest expectation” (apokaradokia) mean to watch with the neck outstretched and the head erect. It is a persistent, unswerving expectation, an expectation that does not give up but keeps looking until the event happens. Note three facts revealed about the universe in which man lives.

1. Creation is subject to corruption. This is clearly seen by men; and what men see is constantly confirmed by such authorities as the botanist, zoologist, geologist, and astronomers of the world. All of creation, whether mineral, plant, or animal, suffers just as men do. All creation suffers hurt, damage, loss, deterioration, erosion, death, and decay—all creation struggles for life. It is full of “vanity” (mataios), that is, condemned to futility and frustration, unable to realize its purpose, subject to corruption. Note the two things said about creation in this verse (v.20).

- a. Creation was condemned to vanity—futility and frustration—by God. Creation did not willingly choose to be condemned to corruption. The world was made to be the home of man, the place where he lived. Therefore, when man sinned, his world was doomed to suffer the consequences of sin with him. Man’s world was cursed right along with him.

“Cursed is the earth for thy sake” (Gen.3:17).

“The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away [for] the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth” (Is.24:4-6).

“How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein?” (Jer.12:4).

**Thought 1.** Just picture the enormous hurt and damage and decay that take place in our world. Think about...

- the disease and savagery of the animal world.
- the hurt and damage that so easily happens in the plant world.
- the destruction and deterioration that takes place in the mineral world.

Think about the earthquakes, tornados, storms, diseases, starvation, attacks, and struggles for survival that take place. And these are only a few of the myriad happenings that show the corruption of the world.

- b. Creation has been subjected to corruption “in hope.” The news of Scripture is glorious: the situation of the world is neither hopeless nor final. Creation has the same *hope of redemption and of renovation* as man. The world was made for man, therefore all creation shall be ultimately delivered from corruption just as man shall be delivered from corruption.

2. Creation shall be delivered from corruption. This is the wonderful news of the glorious gospel. Note a most significant point: whatever happens to man is bound to happen to his world. Man is the summit of God’s creation; therefore, all that is under man is intertwined, interwoven, and interrelated to him. Man and his world are one and the same; they are dependent upon each other. This is enormously significant: since man and his world are interrelated, it means that the world will experience whatever man experiences. When man fell, his world was bound to fall with him. But this is the glorious news as well. When man is liberated from corruption, his world shall be liberated as well. God had to subject man’s world to man’s fate, but God also had to subject man’s world “in” hope. Creation will experience the glorious hope of *living forever* with man, of being completely and perfectly renovated. There will be a “new heavens and a new earth” (cp. Ps.96:11-13; 98:7-9; Is.11:6-9; Rev.5:13).

**“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).**

**“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Rev.21:1; cp. Heb.12:26-27).**

**“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Is.65:17).**

**“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain” (Is.66:22).**

3. Creation groans in labor for deliverance. Note that all creation suffers together: all creation is interrelated, intertwined, and interconnected. The whole universe is dependent upon its various parts for survival. The earth could not survive without the heavens, and the heavens would have no purpose apart from God’s creation of man and his earth. This does not mean that man is to be egocentric or egotistical. It simply means that man and his earth are the focal point of God’s unbelievable creation, of His eternal plan and purpose. Being the center of creation *before God* is not a truth to make man proud, but to make him humble—a truth to cause him to bow in worship and praise, appreciation and thankfulness. Being the summit of God’s creation is not a gift of privilege, not presently, but of enormous responsibility.

Note the words “groaneth and travaileth.” The picture is that of a woman giving birth. Creation experiences *birth pangs* under its struggle to survive. And note: it has been experiencing the *birth pangs until now*, that is, from the fall of man up until this present moment.

In conclusion, the whole scene of these four verses is that creation awaits a renovated world. Creation resents evil and struggles against decay and death. It fights for survival. It struggles against the bondage of being slaughtered or changed.

The idea expressed is that creation awaits the Day of Redemption: anxiously, expectantly, longingly, and eagerly awaits for its deliverance from corruption. Creation moans and groans and cries for the unveiling of the Son of God.

**“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Ro.8:21).**

**“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:13).**

**“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev.22:3-5).**

**3** (8:23-27) **Corruption, Deliverance from:** the believer suffers and struggles for deliverance from corruption. Note four facts.

1. It is the first-fruit of the Holy Spirit that delivers and saves man. The term first-fruit means either the presence of the Holy Spirit or the fruit of the Holy Spirit: life, love, joy, peace (Gal.5:22-23). When a believer is truly saved, he possesses the Holy Spirit and bears the fruit of the Spirit. He actually begins to live abundantly and eternally, and he experi-

ences the fulness of God's Spirit: His love, joy, and peace. Experiencing these causes the believer to groan and ache...

- for the perfection of the Spirit's presence and fruit.
- for the day of adoption, the day when he will actually move into the perfect presence of God.
- for the redemption of his body.

The believer is stirred by the taste of the Spirit and of His first-fruits, stirred to groan for their perfection. He groans and aches to be delivered from the sufferings of this world and released into the glorious *liberty of perfection* with God.

**“It is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor.15:44).**

**“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor.15:49).**

**“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption...For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor.15:50, 53-54).**

**“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (2 Cor.5:2).**

**“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Rev.21:4-5).**

2. It is hope that delivers and saves man. Hope saves us, for it is hope that keeps us seeking after God and His redemption. We hope for redemption; therefore, “with patience we wait for it” (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Hope*—Ro.8:24-25 for discussion).

3. It is prayer and the Holy Spirit that delivers and saves a man. As the believer faces the sufferings of this life he has the greatest resource imaginable: prayer. He has the right to approach God whenever needed, and to ask God for the strength to walk through and to conquer the suffering. That is what prayer is all about.

Two significant things are said about prayer.

- a. Believers do not know how to pray *as they should*. Note the word “we.” Paul includes himself in this, which is to say no believer knows how to pray. By nature we are weak, lacking the power...
  - for prolonged concentration.
  - to avoid distractions.
  - to stop all wandering thoughts.
  - to prevent emotional changes.
  - to govern varying affections.
  - to know what lies in the future, even one hour from now.
  - to know what is *really* best for us and our growth in any given situation.

- b. The Holy Spirit helps our infirmities. It is true that He helps us in *all* our infirmities, but the point of the present passage deals only with prayer. Note: it is assumed that we are praying in this verse. The Spirit is not going to force us to pray. It is our responsibility to pray, to take the time to get alone and pray. When we do this, the Spirit begins to act both *upon* and *for* us.

Note this also: the Spirit “helpeth our infirmities.” Whatever our particular weakness is, it is that weakness which He helps. If we are truly sincere and are wrestling to pray, then the Spirit helps us to control concentration, distractions, wandering thoughts, emotional changes, and affections. How? As we struggle to pray by controlling our flesh and its weakness, the Holy Spirit takes our mind and emotions and...

- quiets and silences them.
- stirs and excites them.
- draws and pulls them.
- directs and guides them.

He leads us to pray as we should, controlling and subjecting the flesh and concentrating upon the prayer.

Note another fact: the Holy Spirit makes “intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Sometimes the struggles and sufferings of life become so heavy we just cannot bear them. At other times, matters of such importance grip our hearts to such an extent that words are impossible. Emotions become too much for words. We become lost in the presence of God. Every genuine believer knows what it is to be speechless before God and left groaning in the Spirit. Every believer has experienced...

⇒ God's unspeakable gift.

**“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Cor.9:15).**

⇒ joy unspeakable.

**“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pt.1:8).**

⇒ words which are unspeakable.

**“How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Cor.12:4).**

The point to note is that the Holy Spirit takes these great moments of prayer and helps us in our “groanings” before the Lord. We are not able to utter words; therefore, the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.

**“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).**

**Thought 1.** The believer’s great need is to come before God—and to come often—in such intense prayer.

**“Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually” (1 Chron.16:11).**

**“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Mt.7:7).**

**“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk.18:1).**

4. It is God who delivers and saves a man. Note the three things said in this verse.
- a. God searches the heart of us all. There is no exception. He knows exactly what is within our hearts. He can read and understand what our groanings and needs are. Not a need will be missed.

**“And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever” (1 Chron.28:9).**

**“Shall not God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart” (Ps.44:21).**

**“I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jer.17:10).**

- b. God knows the mind of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit prays for us according to the will of God; therefore, God knows exactly what the Spirit is requesting for us. There is perfect agreement between the Holy Spirit and God the Father.

**“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).**

- c. God will answer our prayer and meet our need. He will deliver and save us, causing the very best thing to happen.

**“Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father” (Jn.16:23-24).**

**“At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God” (Jn.16:26-27).**

**“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Ro.8:28).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(8:24-25) **Hope** (elpis): assured expectation, confident knowledge, inward possession, spiritual surety. Note the statements of definition again, for they are packed full of meaning. The believer’s hope cannot be defined as the world defines hope. The believer’s hope is entirely different from the world’s hope, desire, or wish. The world desires and wishes for what it can see, and they may or may not be able to get what they long for.

The believer’s hope is entirely different in that it deals with spiritual things and the believer will unquestionably get what he hopes for. The believer’s hope is based on the *inward experience and witness of God’s Spirit*. The believer knows that God’s Spirit lives within him, and he actually experiences the things of the Spirit *now*. Granted, his experience is but a taste; the things of the Spirit are *not yet perfected* in his life, *but they do exist*, and they are present in his body. He already possesses the things of God while in the flesh. His hope of salvation is a present experience—he is saved now—he already has a taste of salvation. The believer’s hope to be saved is a living reality now; therefore, his hope is a *sure* hope. To the genuine believer, hope is the absolute assurance of things promised, but not yet seen.

He has absolute assurance because he already experiences the things of God. They are already an *inward possession*, a *spiritual surety*, an *assured expectation*, a *confident knowledge*. Note four facts about hope.

1. God has chosen for us to be saved by hope and not by sight. If we were saved by sight, we would not hope in God. If we could actually see and experience perfect redemption and salvation now, then there would be nothing more for

which to hope. The result would be catastrophic: we would not be drawing close to God, believing and trusting Him, nor looking to Him to provide a perfect salvation for us. There would be *no liberty and freedom between God and man, no love and trust established*. There just would be no relationship and no fellowship between God and man, not based on a *free moral love, trust, and belief*.

2. God is after one thing: our being patient in hope, that is, our persevering in hope. Why? The more we *hope* for salvation and redemption, the closer we draw to God. And, above all else, God wants us to draw near Him: fellowshiping, believing, trusting, loving, and hoping in Him.

3. The path of hope is the only way God could choose for salvation. For only as a man hopes in God will he draw near to God; and in reality, the more a man hopes in God, the closer he draws to God. The more he hopes, the more he will trust, believe, love, and depend upon God. And this is exactly what God is after; it is His plan and purpose for man and his world.

4. The believer's hope is expressed in several glorious ways. Note that God Himself is called "the God of hope" (Ro.15:13).

- a. The hope of "the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:6).
- b. The hope of the promise (Acts 26:6-7).
- c. The hope of Israel (Acts 28:20).
- d. The hope that is the object of faith (Ro.4:18; cp. Acts 26:6-7).
- e. The hope of the glory of God (Ro.5:2; Col.1:27; Tit.2:13).
- f. The hope that saves us (Ro.8:24).
- g. The hope that causes believers to endure afflictions (Ro.8:25; 1 Th.1:3).
- h. The hope of believers that comes through the Scripture (Ro.15:4).
- i. The hope which is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Ro.15:13).
- j. The hope that is one of the three essential traits of the believer (1 Cor.13:13).
- k. The hope in Christ (1 Cor.15:10; 1 Tim.1:1).
- l. The hope of righteousness (Gal.5:5).
- m. The hope of God's calling (Eph.1:18; 4:4).
- n. The hope which the lost do not have (Eph.2:12).
- o. The hope of the gospel (Col.1:23).
- p. The hope of salvation (1 Th.5:8).
- q. The "good hope" which God gives (2 Th.2:16).
- r. The hope of eternal life (Tit.1:2; 3:7; cp. Acts 2:26).
- s. The "blessed hope" of the Lord's return (Tit.2:13).
- t. The hope that stirs diligence and gives full assurance (Heb.6:11).
- u. The hope set before believers (Heb.6:18).
- v. The hope which anchors the believer's soul (Heb.6:19).
- w. The hope that stirs belief (Heb.11:1).
- x. The "living hope" of the believer (1 Pt.1:3).
- y. The hope that stirs believers to purify themselves (1 Jn.3:3).

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| <p><b>1 Assurance 1: God works things out for those who love Him</b></p> <p><b>2 Assurance 2: God has determined to fulfill His purpose for the believer</b><br/>a. To conform him to Christ<br/>b. To honor Christ</p> <p><b>3 Assurance 3: God has set the glorification of the believer—once-for-all</b></p> <p><b>4 Assurance 4: God has acted for the believer, not against him</b><br/>a. He is our Saviour<br/>b. He is our Provider<br/>c. He is our Justifier</p> | <p><b>C. God Assures Deliverance (Freedom) from Struggling and Suffering, 8:28-39</b></p> <p>28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.</p> <p>29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.</p> <p>30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.</p> <p>31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?</p> <p>32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?</p> <p>33 Who shall lay any thing</p> | <p>to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.</p> <p>34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.</p> <p>35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?</p> <p>36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.</p> <p>37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.</p> <p>38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,</p> <p>39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.</p> | <p><b>5 Assurance 5: Christ does not condemn the believer</b><br/>a. He died for us<br/>b. He arose for us<br/>c. He was exalted for us<br/>d. He intercedes for us</p> <p><b>6 Assurance 6: Christ delivers the believer through the severest circumstances</b></p> <p><b>7 Assurance 7: Christ delivers the believer through the most extreme experiences &amp; forces</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**DELIVERANCE AND REDEMPTION: THE BELIEVER SHALL BE FREED FROM STRUGGLING AND SUFFERING BY THE SPIRIT, 8:1-39**

**C. God Assures Deliverance (Freedom) from Struggling and Suffering, 8:28-39**

(8:28-39) **Introduction—Predestination—Man, Struggles—Suffering:** the glorious message of Romans is that God assures deliverance (freedom) from struggling and suffering—through Christ. This is the whole point of all that has been written before. Man desperately struggles against the pressures and forces both within himself and alien to himself. He struggles against the weight and discouragement of trials; against the pollution and corruption of life; against the relentless accusations and bombardments of conscience and law; against the pain and decay of his body; against the striking fear and hopelessness of an eternal judgment hereafter. He struggles against the unknown and against pain, hurt, sorrow, loneliness, alienation, aging, death, and hell (cp. Gal.5:17). Somehow, through his suffering and struggle throughout life, he feels that his suffering and struggling are *due to a wrong relationship with God*.

Therefore, man views his many problems as *really* being one supreme problem: how to get right with God. If he can establish the right relationship with God, he feels sure God will help him through his trials and take care of his future hereafter.

This is the very message of Romans. Man needs to get right with God, for he is under the condemnation and wrath of God (Ro.1:18-3:20). Man needs a right relationship with God; he needs to be justified, that is, declared righteous by God (Ro.3:21-5:21). Man needs to be freed from the struggle of sin, for sin corrupts and leads to death (Ro.6:1-23). Man needs to be freed from the bondage of law (spiritual legalism); for the law enslaves, accuses, condemns, and strikes hopelessness within the heart (Ro.7:1-25).

**“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Ro.7:24).**

**“I thank God [that] Jesus Christ our Lord” shall free me from struggling and suffering (Ro.7:25a; cp.Ro.8:1-39).**

All the discussion in Chapter 8 up to this point has now moved to the summit. Those who love God and are called by Him will definitely be freed from the bondages and corruptions of this life and ushered into glory. God assures this. Nothing, absolutely nothing, shall prevent God's settled plan and purpose from coming about in the life of the believer. God's settled plan and purpose for the universe shall be consummated. He has determined two supreme things (Ro.8:29).

⇒ Believers shall be conformed to the image of His dear Son (v.29).

⇒ His Son shall have many brothers, among whom He is to be honored as the first (the most preeminent) Person (v.29).

1. Assurance 1: God works things out for those who love Him (v.28).
2. Assurance 2: God has determined to fulfill His purpose for the believer (v.29).
3. Assurance 3: God has set the glorification of the believer—once-for-all (v.30).
4. Assurance 4: God has acted for the believer, not against him (v.31-33).
5. Assurance 5: Christ does not condemn the believer (v.34).

6. Assurance 6: Christ delivers the believer through the severest circumstances (v.35-37).
7. Assurance 7: Christ delivers the believer through the most extreme experiences and forces (v.38-39).

**1** (8:28) **Assurance—Call—Man, Struggles—Salvation:** God works all things out for those who love Him. This is the first assurance of deliverance. What a comforting declaration! Scripture actually declares that “all things work together for good” for the believer. Think about it: nothing could assure the believer any more than God’s working all things out for his good. Note four things.

1. The words “all things” go well beyond the great events of the world. God does control the events of the world, but He controls much more. He rules over “all things”—all the events and happenings that occur in the life of the believer. He works “all things” out for good in behalf of His dear child.

2. The words “work together” (*sunergei*) mean to create and eliminate, place and replace, connect and group, interrelate and intermingle, shape and forge, press and stretch, move and operate, control and guide, arrange and influence. The words “work together” are also present action which means that all things *are continually* working together for good. God is in control of the believer’s life. Daily, moment by moment, God is arranging and rearranging all things for the believer’s good.

3. The word “good” (*agathon*) means for the ultimate good. We cannot see the future; we cannot take a single event and see all the lines and ramifications that run from it. We cannot see all the things that result from one single event, much less see the results of every event. But God does; therefore, God takes all the events of our lives and works them out for our ultimate good.

4. There is, however, a limitation on this glorious promise, a limitation that desperately needs to be noted. God works all things out for good *only* for those who *love God* and are *called* according to His purpose.

- a. This fact is graphically seen in the Greek. The clause “to those who love God” is placed first in the sentence: “But we know that to those who love God all things work together for good.” Scripture makes sure the point is not missed. God *only* looks after the affairs of the person who loves Him.

**Thought 1.** Think about it for a moment, for it is the only reasonable conclusion. If a man does not love God—does not place his life into the hands of God—how can God take care of Him? If the man turns his back and walks away from God, how can God look after him? God is not going to force His care upon any of us. He is not going to make mechanical robots out of us, forcing us to live at His beck and call. Such is not love; it is only mechanical behavior. What God wants is love that flows from a heart that *chooses* to love Him. The choice is ours: we either turn our lives over to Him in love, or we continue to take our lives into our own hands.

- b. Note the words, “called according to his purpose.” The believer’s deliverance is purposed by God. God calls him for the glorious purpose of being saved from the struggle and sufferings of this life.

Note a significant fact. The believer’s *position* and *behavior* are both involved in the call of God.

⇒ *Positionally*, God chooses the believer by setting him apart through the Holy Spirit and through belief of the truth.

**“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th.2:13-14).**

⇒ *In behavior*, God calls the believer to a life of purity and holiness.

**“For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (1 Th.4:7).**

The point is this: God delivers the person who is positioned in Christ and who lives a pure and holy life. The person who truly *loves God* and is living a godly life is the person who experiences all things being worked out for his good. It is the godly person who loves God that will be delivered from the struggling and suffering of this corrupt world.

**“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).**

**“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all” (Ps.34:19).**

**“Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).**

**“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is.43:2).**

**Thought 1.** Contrast the carnal attitude of Jacob and the spiritual attitude of Paul.

⇒ Jacob said, “All these things are against me” (Gen.42:36).

⇒ Paul said, “All things work together for good to them that love God” (Ro.8:28).

**2** (8:29) **Assurance—Foreknowledge—Predestination—Conformed—Image—Salvation:** God has determined to fulfill His purpose for the believer. This is the second assurance of deliverance. Note three significant points.

1. This passage is often abused and misused. It is not dealing so much with theology or philosophy, but more with the spiritual experience of the Christian believer. If the pure logic of philosophy and theology are applied, then the passage says that God chooses some for heaven and others for a terrible hell. But this is simply not the meaning God intends for the passage. What God wants believers to do is to take heart, for He has assured their salvation.

God knows the suffering that believers go through daily (cp. Ro.8:28-39). God “did foreknow” even before the foundation of the world (v.29). But no matter how great the suffering, no matter how great the opposition, no matter how great the struggle, God is going to complete His purpose for believers. God has “predestinated [believers] to be conformed to the image of His Son,” and absolutely nothing can change that. Why? “That Christ might be the first-born [have the pre-eminence] among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).

God loves His Son in the most supreme way possible. God has ordained that His Son shall have many brothers (adopted brothers) who will love and serve Him as the first-born, that is, as the first Person or the most preeminent Person of the universe. God has ordained that Jesus Christ shall hold the highest rank and position: that He be the exalted Head of all creation and the One to whom all men look (cp. Col.1:15, 18). Therefore, God is going to allow nothing to permanently defeat believers. God is going to allow no fallen child of His to ever remain down permanently. God is going to fulfill His purpose in every child of His, and nothing can stop His purpose. Jesus Christ, His Son, will have a *multitude of brothers and sisters* who worship and serve Him throughout eternity.

2. Believers will be conformed to the image of God’s dear Son. The words “conformed to the image” (summorphous tes eikonos) mean both an inward and an outward likeness.

- a. “Conformed” (summorphous) means the very same form or likeness as Christ. Within our nature—our being, our person—we shall be made just like Christ. As He is perfect and eternal—without disease and pain, sin and death—so we shall be perfected just like Him. We shall be transformed into His very likeness.
- b. “Image” (eikonos) means a derived or a given likeness. The image of Christ is not something which believers merit or for which they work; it is not an image that comes from their own nature or character. No man can earn or produce the perfection and eternal life possessed by Christ. The image of Christ, His perfection and life, is a gift of God. To be conformed to the image of God’s Son means...
  - to become a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pt.1:4).
  - to be adopted as a son of God (Eph.1:5).
  - to be holy and without blame before Him (Eph.1:4; 4:24).
  - to bear the image of the heavenly: which is an incorruptible, immortal body (1 Cor.15:49-54; cp. 1 Cor.15:42-44).
  - to have one’s body fashioned (conformed) just like His glorious body (Ph.3:21).
  - to be changed (transformed) into the same image of the Lord (2 Cor.3:18).
  - to be recreated just like Him (1 Jn.3:2-3).

3. Note what it is that assures the believer’s deliverance from the suffering and struggling of this world. It is two things.

- a. The foreknowledge of God. The word “foreknow” (proginosko) is used three different ways in Scripture. It means...
  - to know something beforehand, ahead of time.
  - to know something intimately by loving and accepting and approving it.
  - to elect, foreordain, and predetermine something.

The present passage is interpreted differently by scholars. Note that the second and third meanings are much the same. When a person is loved and approved, selection or election is involved. The person becomes a very special or select person.

Again, the point to see is not the pure logic of the theological or philosophical argument. This is not God’s purpose in this passage. God’s purpose is to assure the believer: the believer is going to be conformed to the image of Christ, and nothing can stop the glorious process. God *foreknew* the fact, saw it even before the world was ever founded. He has always loved and approved the believer, electing and ordaining him from the very beginning. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Foreknowledge—Acts 2:23* for more detailed discussion.)

**“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18).**

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).**

**“God hath not cast away his people [Israel] whom he foreknew” (Ro.11:2).**

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained [foreknown] before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Pt.1:18-20).**

**“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).**

**“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1 Pt.1:2).**

- b. The predestination of God. The word predestination (proorisen) means to destine or appoint before, to foreordain, to predetermine. The basic Greek word (proorizo) means to *mark off or to set off* the boundaries of something. The idea is a glorious picture of what God is doing for the believer. The boundary is marked and set off for the believer: the boundary of being conformed to the image of God’s dear Son. The believer shall be made just like Christ, conformed to His very likeness and image. Nothing can stop

God's purpose for the believer. It is predestinated, set, and marked off. The believer may struggle and suffer through the sin and shame of this world; he may even stumble and fall or become discouraged and downhearted. But if he is a genuine child of God, he will not be defeated, not totally. He will soon arise from his fall and begin to follow Christ again. He is predestinated to be a brother of Christ, to worship and serve Christ throughout all eternity. And Christ will not be disappointed. God loves His Son too much to allow Him to be disappointed by losing a single brother. Jesus Christ will have His joy fulfilled; He will see every brother of His face to face, conformed perfectly to His image. He will have the worship and service of every brother chosen to be His by God the Father. The believer's eternal destiny, that of being an adopted brother to the Lord Jesus Christ, is determined. The believer can rest assured of this glorious truth. God has predestinated him to be delivered from the suffering and struggling of this sinful world. (See notes, *Predestination*—Jn.6:37; 6:39; 6:44-46 for God's part and man's part in salvation. See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 2:23; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.9:10-13; note—9:14-33 for more discussion.)

**“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph.1:4-5).**

**“According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom [Christ] we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Eph.3:11-12).**

**3** (8:30) **Glory of Believer:** God has set the glorification of the believer once-for-all. This is the third assurance of deliverance. It must be remembered throughout this passage that Scripture is talking about the genuine believer. A genuine believer is a person who sincerely believes in Jesus Christ and diligently seeks to please Him by living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Tit.2:11-13). It is the genuine believer whose glorification is predestinated, set forever and ever by God. The true believer can rest in this glorious truth, for God has done three wonderful things for him. God has *called, justified, and glorified him*. Note that all three steps are in the past tense; all three steps are something already accomplished. The believer's glorification has already taken place in the plan and mind of God. God already sees believers glorified; He already sees believers in His presence. It is assured and predestinated—already written down in the annals of heaven, never to be erased.

Again, does this mean that some are destined to hell and some to heaven? No, a thousand times, no! This is not the purpose of this Scripture. God's purpose is to give enormous assurance to the true believer: he shall be delivered from the struggling and suffering of this sinful world. He is going to be freed—if he is a true believer—freed from all the sin and shame, failure and shortcoming, pain and death. He is going to be glorified right along with God's dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. God has *called* the true believer. Some time ago the Spirit called and stirred the heart of the true believer to come to Christ. The believer responded to the call. Scripture definitely teaches that the believer had a choice. He could have chosen to respond or not to respond. (Cp. Rev.22:17.) Thank God he responded and came to Christ. Therefore, the call was *effective*; the call worked. The believer did respond to Christ. (See note, *Draw*—Jn.6:44-46 for God's part and man's part in salvation.)

**“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt.11:28).**

**“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20).**

**“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).**

**“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).**

**“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Is.1:18).**

**“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is.55:1).**

2. God has *justified* the believer. Again, note the past tense. Justification has *already taken place* for the true believer. (See note, *Justification*—Ro.5:1.)

**Thought 1.** The point is clear. If the believer has been truly *called*, if he has been truly saved, then his deliverance from struggling and suffering is assured. His deliverance is a past fact and it is set eternally by God. No matter how deeply the believer senses his shortcoming and failure, his struggle with the sin and suffering of this world, he is a child of God. Every time he comes short or stumbles and falls, he needs to get up and begin all over again. He must not become discouraged and defeated, self-accusing and incriminating, feeling unworthy and undeserving, or unwanted and rejected. Such a state of mind is one the most useful strategies of the devil—a strategy which he uses to defeat believers by the multitudes. God *has called* the believer, so he must arise and begin to diligently follow Christ once again. Every believer who is walking about defeated—no matter how great his fall—should arise right now and turn back to Christ. This is our call, our duty.

**“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).**

**“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:1-2).**

Paul the apostle, who was a converted murderer, is a dynamic example of this victorious attitude, the very attitude needed so desperately by all believers.

**“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Ph.3:13-14; cp. Job 17:9; Ps.84:7; Pr.4:18; Heb.12:4).**

3. God has glorified the believer. This, too, is past tense: the glorification of the believer is an accomplished fact, a fact that has already taken place in God’s mind and plan. God already sees and counts the believer as *glorified* in His presence for eternity (see DEEPER STUDY # 1,2,3—Ro.2:7; DEEPER STUDY # 1—3:23; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.17:22 for what the believer’s glorification involves).

**“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Ro.8:18).**

**“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:17).**

**“[That ye may know] what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph.1:18).**

**“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).**

**“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).**

**“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim.2:10).**

**“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Pt.5:1).**

**“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev.22:5).**

**“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps.73:24).**

**4** (8:31-33) **God, Work of—Assurance—Jesus Christ, Death:** God has acted for the believer, not against him. This is the fourth assurance of deliverance. This is the greatest truth in all the world. God did not have to act for man, but He did. God loves every man, no matter his condition, sin, and shame. Therefore, believers can rest assured that nothing, absolutely nothing shall ever separate them from the plan and purpose of God. God’s love is absolute. It is perfect. And God shall have His perfect love expressed by completing His perfect plan and purpose for each life. The believer can have absolute assurance that God will work all things out for his good, even things that fail and are painful to the heart. God shall deliver the believer through the struggling and suffering of this world. The true believer shall be conformed to the image of Christ and glorified with Him (v.29-30).

The point is this: God Himself is the believer’s assurance. God Himself has acted for the believer; He has done everything necessary and then more: “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

1. God is our Savior. It was God who “spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (v.32). The words “spared not” (ouk epheisato) mean that God did not hold back or refrain from giving His Son; He did not refuse or even hesitate to give His Son. The picture is that of God weighing man’s eternal separation from Him against the sacrifice of His Son. He had a choice to make and He made it; He deliberately chose to sacrifice His Son for us. God knew exactly what He was doing. He wanted man delivered from this struggling and suffering world, and there was only one way for man to be saved:

⇒ Someone had to bear man’s penalty for transgression and sin, which was the judgment of death.

Therefore, God handed His own Son over to die *for* us—in our behalf, in our stead, in our place, as our substitute. God *spared not* His own Son; He delivered Christ Jesus up for us all. What a glorious, marvelous, wonderful love! And just how wonderful His love is can be clearly seen in this: it was while we were sinners, acting and rebelling against God, that He gave His Son to die for us.

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8)**

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal.1:4).**

**“All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is.53:6).**

(See notes, Jesus Christ, *Death*—Jn.3:16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 2:23 for more discussion. Cp. 1 Pt.2:24; 3:18.)

2. God is our Provider. Since God has done such a great and glorious thing, how shall He not also give us all things? Giving His own Son for us was the greatest gift in all the world; therefore, He is bound to give us everything else. Nothing could ever cost God anything close to the price He has paid in giving up His Son; therefore, God shall give us everything else. Note three points.

- a. God's provision includes spiritual, eternal, and material gifts.  
 ⇒ The spiritual provision is the fruit of the Spirit (See note—Eph.1:3.)

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph.1:3).**

- ⇒ The eternal provision is deliverance from the struggling and suffering of this sinful world. It is the gift of eternal life, of living gloriously conformed to the image of His dear Son, Jesus Christ (see note, pt.2—Ro.8:29 for just what this means).

**“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:7).**

- ⇒ The material gifts are the necessities of life (see outline and notes—Mt.6:25-34).

**“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?...But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:31, 33).**

**“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).**

- b. The provision is *freely* given. God's gift of His Son was freely given; therefore, all that God provides for man is freely given. No man can merit or earn God's provision. God provides and meets the need of the believer because He loves the believer.

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

- c. The provision of God comes through Christ and through Him alone. Note the words “with Him.” It is *with Christ* that God gives us all things. If we are *with Christ*, then all things are given to us. We shall be delivered from struggling and suffering. Believers can rest assured of this. No matter how much we struggle and suffer through the sin and shame of this world, God will see us through it all. He is going to conform us to the glorious image of His Son.

**“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” (Jn.4:10).**

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

**“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Cor.9:15).**

3. God is our Justifier. This is the most glorious truth: God does not charge us with sin. In fact, He does not *lay anything* to our charge; He justifies us (see DEEPER STUDY # 1,2, *Justification*—Ro.4:22; 5:1 for more discussion).

Note the question: Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God; only God can charge us with sin and shame. But note: if we have truly trusted Jesus Christ as our Savior, if we are one of God's elect, He does not charge us with sin. He justifies us. He forgives our sin and counts us righteous in Christ Jesus. If we are God's child, no one can charge us with anything. We are God's; we belong to God. No one can charge, count, or doom us to be...

- |               |                    |               |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| • a failure   | • an embarrassment | • lost        |
| • a detriment | • hopeless         | • unusable    |
| • a shame     | • helpless         | • unworthy    |
| • a sinner    | • defeated         | • of no value |

Man is not our judge; therefore, man cannot judge these things to be true of us—only God can. God is our Judge, and this is the glorious truth: God does not judge His elect. He does not lay sin and shame against His children; He justifies His children. No matter how much we have struggled and suffered through the sin and shame of this world, God delivers us. No matter how far we have fallen, no matter how discouraged we have become, if we are truly God's child, He picks us up and justifies us in Christ Jesus and continues to conform us to the image of His dear Son. God does not leave us down and defeated, nor does He go around charging us with sin and shame. God justifies us and continues His work of forgiveness and grace in our lives. (See note, *Grace*—Ro.6:14-15 for more discussion. Also see note, *Foreknowledge and Predestination*—Ro.8:29 for a discussion of the elect.)

**“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:9-11).**

**“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Ph.1:6).**

**“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand” (Ro.14:4).**

**“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb.13:6).**

**“He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD” (Ps.112:7).**

**“But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil” (Pr.1:33).**

**5** (8:34) **Jesus Christ, Work of—Salvation:** Christ does not condemn the believer. This is the fifth assurance of deliverance. Note how direct and forceful the question is: “Who is he that condemneth?” It is Christ; only Christ can condemn us for our sin and shame. But the glorious news is that Christ does not condemn us. On the contrary, the very opposite is true. Christ does four wonderful things for us.

1. Christ has died for us. Christ is our glorious Savior. When we *honestly* come to Him, He does not condemn us for our sin and shame; He forgives us. He is able to forgive us because He died for us.

⇒ Our sins are a shame, for sin is rebellion against God. Sin acts against God, fights and struggles against God. Sin goes against all that God stands for. Sin is insurrection against God; it is the crime of high treason against God. Sin is the most terrible act that can be done against God.

Therefore, we deserve to be condemned by God and put to death for sin. But we do not have to face condemnation. Christ has already paid the penalty for sin. Christ has already been condemned and executed for our transgression against God. This is the glorious love of Christ. He has already died *for us*: in our place, in our stead, as our substitute. Therefore when we sincerely come to Christ, He does not condemn us; He loves us and forgives our sin and shame. This is the very purpose of His death—to free us from sin, from its penalty and condemnation.

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

**“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:10).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

**“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 Jn.3:5).**

**“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is.53:6).**

2. Christ has risen from the dead for us. Christ is our risen Lord. His resurrection does two marvelous things for the believer.

a. The resurrection of the Lord proves that God was perfectly *satisfied* with the death of Jesus Christ. What Christ did—His dying for our sins—was *acceptable* to God; therefore, God has *accepted* Jesus’ death *for us*. God has *approved* His dying *for us*. God’s divine justice was perfectly satisfied with Christ dying for us. This is clearly seen in the resurrection of Jesus Christ: if God had not been satisfied, He would have left Jesus in the grave. But thank God, God was satisfied, so He raised up Jesus to live forever as the Sovereign Savior of the world.

**“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).**

**“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:25).**

**“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).**

**“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Cor.15:17).**

b. The resurrection of the Lord gives the believer a new life, making the believer a *new creature* and a *new man* (see note, pt.2—Ro.6:3-5 for discussion).

**“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:4).**

**“For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:10-11).**

**“For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).**

**“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again....Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:15, 17).**

**“[That you may know] what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:19-20).**

**“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Col.2:12).**

**“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col.3:1).**

3. Christ has been exalted for us. He is our exalted Lord. He sits face to face with God at His right hand. This gives two assurances to the believer.

- a. The believer shall also be exalted into the presence of God. Just as Christ lives face to face with God, the believer shall also live face to face with God throughout all eternity. (See note, pt.2—Ro.8:29 for discussion. See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.3:23 for more discussion.)

**“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Ro.6:5).**

**“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God” (Ro.6:8-10).**

**“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11).**

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).**

**“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn.14:2-3).**

**“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (Jn.17:24).**

**“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).**

- b. The Lord Jesus Christ is exalted as the Sovereign and majestic Lord of the universe. He is the Ruler who reigns and rules over all, who possesses all might and power and is full of all wisdom and truth. He is the One who is going to destroy and utterly eliminate sin and evil in the world. He is the One who is going to establish a kingdom of righteousness, justice, love, and truth in the new heavens and earth.

**“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph.1:20-21).**

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

**“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:3).**

**“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (1 Pt.3:22).**

**“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).**

**“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev.3:21).**

Note: it is Jesus Christ (and not another) who rules and reigns over the universe. This stirs enormous assurance in the hearts of genuine believers. Why? Because Jesus Christ has demonstrated His glorious love and care for the world. He not only can, but He will look after us and work all things out for good until

He returns (v.28). The *control of evil* in the world and our lives are under His care. He is working all things out for good to those of us who truly love Him and are called according to His purpose (v.28).

**“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?...But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:31, 33).**

**“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:20).**

**“But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Lk.12:7).**

**“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (Jn.10:28).**

**“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Ro.8:28).**

**“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).**

**“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pt.5:7).**

**“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).**

**“And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of” (Gen.28:15).**

**“Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps.121:4).**

**“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is.43:2).**

4. Christ makes intercession for us before the throne of God. He is our great Intercessor, our Mediator, and Advocate who stands between God and man. It is Christ Jesus who brings us to God and who makes redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins, possible (Eph.1:7).

⇒ It is His advocacy, the advocacy of His death and resurrection for us, that forgives our sins.

**“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:1-2).**

⇒ It is His intercession, the intercession of His death and resurrection for us, that saves us.

**“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:25).**

⇒ It is His presence in heaven and His plea, the *plea* of His death and resurrection *for us*, that opens the door of heaven to us.

**“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb.9:24).**

The point is this. The believer has the greatest assurance imaginable: he shall be delivered from the struggling and suffering of this world. No matter the sin and shame of his life, if he truly comes to Christ, he is not condemned. He is not judged for sin, no matter how terrible or how far he has fallen. If he will only come to Christ, Christ will deliver him. Christ will not leave him down, discouraged, and defeated. Christ will not even scold or reproach him. Christ will receive His dear child with open arms.

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn.1:9).**

**“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt.11:28).**

**6** (8:35-37) **Trials, Deliverance from—Salvation—God, Love of:** Christ delivers the believer through the severest circumstances. This is the sixth assurance of deliverance, and it is the most wonderful assurance imaginable. “Who [or what] can separate us from the love of God?” Too many people, even believers, feel that God does not love them, that He just could not love them. They feel unworthy of His love, for they come too short, are too disobedient, and fail too often. How could God possibly love them when they go against His will so much? The results of such feelings are...

- a sense of unworthiness
- a downing of oneself
- a sense of discouragement
- an accusing of oneself
- a low self-esteem
- a defeated life

Note a crucial point: such feelings totally contradict Scripture. Look at the verse: “Who [or what] can separate us from the love of Christ?” There is no circumstance, no situation, no event that can cause Christ to turn away from us. No matter

how terrible or severe the situation, it cannot separate the true believer from the love of Christ. Christ loves the believer regardless of the circumstance, and He longs to be reconciled to the believer. No more severe circumstance can be imagined than the ones given:

- ⇒ Tribulation: to undergo struggle, trials, temptation, suffering, or affliction.
- ⇒ Distress: to suffer anguish, trouble, strain, agony; not knowing which way to turn or what to do.
- ⇒ Persecution: to be abused, mocked, ridiculed, shamed, mistreated, ignored, neglected, harrassed, attacked, or injured.
- ⇒ Famine: to have no food, to be starving and have no way to secure food.
- ⇒ Nakedness: to be stripped of all clothes and earthly comforts; to be bare, having all earthly possessions taken away.
- ⇒ Peril: to be exposed to the most severe risks; to be confronted with the most terrible dangers to one's body, mind, soul, property, family, and loved ones.
- ⇒ Sword: to be killed; to suffer martyrdom.

Just imagine a person experiencing all this. What would his thoughts be? Would he feel that he had been forsaken by God? In the midst of so much dark trouble, would he believe that God loved him?

Scripture declares loudly and clearly that God does love him. There is absolutely nothing—no matter how dark and depressing, no matter how severe—that can separate the believer from the love of Christ. Circumstances are not evidence that God does not love us. God loves us no matter what the circumstances may be.

But believers must always remember: they are going to suffer while they are in this world. In fact, the world is going to count them as sheep for the slaughter, rejecting and persecuting them (Ps.44:22). The world is going to persecute believers as long as believers continue to live for Christ. Their lives of godliness convict the world, and the world rejects godliness. (See note, *Persecution*—Mt.5:10-12 for why believers are persecuted.)

However, note what is said. No matter the circumstances, we are more than conquerors through Christ who has loved us (v.37). No matter the circumstances and their severity, Christ will carry us through all, strengthening and encouraging us. We cannot lose, no matter the severity of the situation. Christ loves us and is going to look after and take care of us. The believer can rest assured, Christ delivers him from the severest circumstances:

- ⇒ Christ meets all the material necessities of life.

**“Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?...But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:31, 33).**

- ⇒ Christ gives us rest.

**“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt.11:28).**

- ⇒ Christ gives us peace.

**“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn.14:27).**

**“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).**

- ⇒ Christ provides an escape from temptation.

**“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).**

- ⇒ Christ comforts us through all trials.

**“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2 Cor.1:3-4).**

- ⇒ Christ supplies all our needs.

**“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Ph.4:13).**

- ⇒ Christ delivers us through persecution.

**“For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Heb.12:3).**

**“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13).**

⇒ Christ delivers us into His very presence, giving us eternal life if we are martyred.

**“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me [transport, take me] unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).**

**“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev.3:21).**

⇒ Christ cares for us no matter the situation.

**“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pt.5:7).**

⇒ Christ enables us to overcome the world.

**“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 Jn.5:4).**

⇒ Christ shows Himself strong in our behalf.

**“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him” (2 Chron.16:9).**

⇒ Christ delivers us from fear.

**“Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).**

⇒ Christ sustains and supports the aged believer.

**“And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Is.46:4).**

**7** (8:38-39) **Trials, Deliverance from—Salvation—God, Love of:** Christ delivers believers from the most extreme experiences and forces. This is the seventh assurance of deliverance. There is nothing in the universe that can separate the believer from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The believer can be fully persuaded of this glorious fact. Just consider the experiences and forces mentioned by Scripture:

- ⇒ Not death: confronting death and leaving this world cannot separate us from Christ and His love (Jn.5:24).
- ⇒ Not life: no trial or pleasure or comfort of life, not any person nor anything in this life can separate us from Christ and His love.
- ⇒ Not angels, principalities, or powers: no heavenly or spiritual creature, no being from any other dimension can separate us from Christ and His love.
- ⇒ Not anything present or anything to come: neither present events, beings or things, nor future events, beings, or things—absolutely nothing in existence or anything in future existence—can cut us off from Christ and His love.
- ⇒ Not height or depth: nothing from outer space or from the depths of the earth can separate us from Christ and His love.

Note the *grand finale*: if there be any other creature than the ones named, that creature cannot separate us from “the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

**“The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph.3:17).**

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“At that day [after Jesus’ ascension] ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God” (Jn.16:26-27).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

**“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph.2:4-5).**

**“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not” (1 Jn.3:1).**

**“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” (1 Jn.4:9).**

**“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee” (Jer.31:3).**

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| <p><b>1 A man's great love for his people</b><br/> a. The plea of a distressed man to be trusted<br/> b. The heart of a distressed man</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 9</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>VII. ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 9:1-11:36</b></p> <p><b>A. The Privileges of Israel and Their Tragic Failure, 9:1-5</b></p> <p>I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,<br/> 2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in</p> | <p>my heart.<br/> 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:<br/> 4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;<br/> 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.</p> | <p>c. The unbelievable willingness of a man to be sacrificed for his people<br/> <b>2 A man's great respect for his people</b><br/> a. Were Israelites<sup>DS1</sup><br/> b. Had the adoption<sup>DS2</sup><br/> c. Had the glory<sup>DS3</sup><br/> d. Had the covenants<sup>DS4</sup><br/> e. Had the law<sup>DS5</sup><br/> f. Had the true worship<sup>DS6</sup><br/> g. Had the promises<sup>DS7</sup><br/> h. Had the fathers<sup>DS8</sup><br/> i. Had the Messiah<sup>DS9</sup></p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 9:1-11:36**

**A. The Privileges of Israel and Their Tragic Failure, 9:1-5**

(9:1-11:36) **DIVISION OVERVIEW:** **Israel:** the change from Chapter 8 is abrupt and striking. Chapters 9-11 have to do with the place of the Jews in world history. The church faces this bewildering problem because the Jews were God's chosen people with a unique and special place in God's purposes. However, when God sent His Son into the world, the Jews rejected Him. How can this tragic and terrible paradox be explained? Why would God's people choose to reject and crucify God's very own Son? This is the problem that Paul begins to deal with in these chapters.

Two things need to be noted throughout this section.

First, the Jews were the special chosen people of God. Paul never questioned this. The Jews had a very special place in God's plan for the salvation of man down through human history. (See notes also DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.4:1-25.)

Second, the real chosen people, the real Israel, always lay in a righteous remnant, not in the whole nation (cp. Ro.9:25, esp. 27f).

(9:1-5) **Introduction:** Paul bears his heart in this passage, revealing a deep evangelistic fervor for his people, the Jews. It is a rare glimpse of the burning compassion that every servant of God should possess for his own loved ones and kinsmen.

1. A man's great love for his people (v.1-3).
2. A man's great respect for his people (v.4-5).

**1** (9:1-3) **Evangelism—Witnessing—Compassion—Great Commission:** this is the picture of a man's great love and concern for his people, a love and concern for their salvation.

1. Paul pleads for his people to trust him. The Jews called Paul a false prophet and a liar. Why? He was now proclaiming God's love and salvation for all men instead of just for the Jews. Man no longer had to become a proselyte of Jewish religion in order to know God (cp. Ro.10:12-13). To the traditional Jew, Paul was a heretic. He was a man who was to be utterly distrusted. They hated and despised him and wanted to kill him and do away with his message (see notes—Acts 21:27-30; 24:1-9. Cp. Acts 22:22; 1 Cor.4:13.)

2. Note how distressed Paul's heart is. Despite the rejection and ill treatment from the Jews, Paul still loved his kinsmen, and he sensed a deep urgency for them to grasp the truth. Their salvation was of such concern that he swore his concern by three things: Christ, his conscience, and the Holy Spirit. Paul was forcibly saying, "I am not lying..."

- "I say the truth *in Christ*..."
- "*my conscience* also bears me witness..."
- "*my conscience* bears witness in the *Holy Spirit*..."

"I do have a great concern and love for my kinsmen. But my concern is not that their sinful ways be approved, but that they come to know the truth; for without the truth, they will be lost and doomed."

Just how deeply Paul's heart was distressed over his kinsmen is clearly seen in the description of his heart.

- ⇒ "I have great heaviness" (lupe): pain, grief, mourning.
- ⇒ "I have...continual sorrow" (odune): intense pain, anguish, torment. And note: it is continuous and unceasing. Paul was always bearing pain for the salvation of his kinsmen. The depth of Paul's love and concern is graphically seen in what he said.

3. Paul is the picture of a man who had an unbelievable willingness to be sacrificed for his people. He could wish to be accursed (anathema), that is, separated, from Christ if it would save his people. He could be willing to swap his salvation for their doom if it would lead to their salvation. Paul felt the deepest emotion, love, and concern for his people.

Note: the words of Paul must not be stretched too far. Paul was speaking from an evangelistic fervor, not from a theological view. He was immersed in emotion, just as so many of God's people sometimes become over loved ones who are lost. Many have been so immersed in emotion that they have offered to swap their salvation for a loved one. Sometimes the Spirit of God works in the hearts of God's people to strain and suffer through intense prayer for the salvation of lost

souls, and sometimes the strain and intensity of prayer is so deep that a believer could wish one extreme (his own salvation) for the other extreme (the salvation of loved ones).

**Thought 1.** The point is forceful: God's people should be willing to suffer the ultimate pain for the salvation of souls.

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (Jn.4:35).

“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Ro.10:1).

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor.9:22).

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20).

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 21-23).

**2** (9:3-5) **Israel, Privileges of—Glory:** a man's great respect for his people. Paul had just declared his great love for Israel; now he assures them of his respect. He did not deny their place in the plan and purposes of God. He knew they were a greatly privileged people, a people who had been highly favored by God. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1-9—Ro.9:4-5 for discussion. Also see DEEPER STUDY # 8, *Israel*—Mt.21:43 for an overview of Israel.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(9:4) **Israel—Israelites:** the Jews were Israelites. Their very name, Israel, meant *a prince with God* or *one who rules with God* or *one who contends with God*. And their name had been given them from the very founding of their nation. It had come from Jacob, whose name had been changed by God to Israel. The name was later adopted by the descendants of Jacob (Gen.32:28; 34:7; Jn.1:47).

**Thought 1.** In the providence of God, believers have been highly privileged just as Israel was. Believers have been given the name of God's own Son, *Christian*, which means *a follower* or *a disciple of Jesus Christ*. What we must guard against is bringing shame to the Lord's name. Too many profess His name, but do not really follow Him.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).

“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Mt.15:8; cp. Is.29:13).

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(9:4) **Adoption:** the Jews had the privilege of being adopted by God. They were chosen in a very special sense to be the children of God (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22; DEEPER STUDY # 8—Mt.21:43 for more discussion).

“You are the children of the Lord your God” (Dt.14:1).

“Israel is my son, even my first-born” (Ex.4:22).

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt” (Hos.11:1).

Note a crucial point: this does not mean that the whole nation of Israel was saved. Not all citizens of Israel *believed* God, and being adopted into God's family has always been by genuine faith. In order to be a true child of God it has always been necessary for a *person* to believe in God, entrusting his whole being into God's keeping. (Cp. Ro.9:6-8, 27, 29; 2:28-29; 4:13. See DEEPER STUDY # 8—*Israel*, pt.3—Mt.21:43 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** Believers, too, have the glorious privilege of being adopted by God through faith (see notes, *Adoption*—Ro.8:15; 8:16-17; DEEPER STUDY # 2—Gal.4:5-6 for discussion and application).

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn.1:12).

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Ro.8:15).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:5-6).

### DEEPER STUDY #3

(9:4) **Shekinah Glory:** the Jews had the privilege of the glory of God, that is, the Shekinah Glory. The Shekinah Glory was the brilliant light which descended into the midst of God’s people when God was visiting His people. It symbolized God’s glorious presence and was revealed in the form of a cloud. The cloud of God’s glory and presence was revealed in two very special ways.

1. It was the glorious presence of God in the cloud that led Israel through the wilderness wanderings.

“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night” (Ex.13:21).

“And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud” (Ex.16:10).

“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled....And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly....And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount” (Ex.19:16, 18, 20).

2. It was the glorious presence of God in the cloud that filled the tabernacle and came to rest over the ark.

“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Ex.40:34).

“And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory” (Ex.29:43).

“I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat” (Lev.16:2).

“The glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord” (1 Ki.8:11).

**Thought 1.** Believers have seen “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor.4:6); believers are the light of the world (Mt.5:14). This means two significant things.

- 1) It is a terrible thing to possess the light and the glory of God and not to share it with those in darkness (see note—Mt.5:14-15 for more discussion).

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim.2:10).

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a parkater of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Pt.5:1).

- 2) It is a terrible thing to be in darkness and to see light off in the distance and not follow after it. There is absolutely no excuse for seeing the glory of God and failing to follow it.

“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (Jn.12:36).

### DEEPER STUDY # 4

(9:4) **Covenants:** the Jews had the privilege of the covenants. A covenant is an agreement made between two parties; a contract drawn up between two or more people; a special relationship set up and established between persons. Note the plural is used: covenants. God made several covenants with Israel. There was...

- the covenant with Noah after the flood (Gen.9:9f).
- the covenant with Abraham (Gen.12:1f; 15:18; 17:4f).
- the covenant of law made at Mount Sinai (Ex.19:5; 24:8; 34:10; Dt.29:1f).
- the covenant with David (2 Sam.7:16).
- the covenant of grace (Heb.8:8-13).

The point to note is the great love of God. He did not reach out for man only once and then leave man to his doom. God reached out to man time and again. God sought man at every opportunity, seeking to establish a relationship with him.

**“Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer.31:3).**

**“O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart” (Ps.36:10).**

**“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 5**

(9:4) **Law:** the Jews had the privilege of the law. They did not just have the ten commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai, but they had the whole law of God. By law is simply meant the will of God written down. Through the centuries God simply had Moses and His messengers write out His will so that man would always know exactly how to live.

**Thought 1.** One of the great tragedies of human life is for a person to know that something is right and not do it. Yet, this is the daily life of man. It may be a simple matter of consuming something that damages his body or the more serious matter of cursing God’s name. No matter what the transgression is, man stands guilty. He is inexcusable, for he has the law of God, and he has had God’s law for centuries. Man knows how to live in love and justice. No greater indictment could exist than the charge: “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Ro.3:10; cp. Ro.3:9-18).

**“And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes” (Lk.12:47).**

**“Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months” (Jas.5:17).**

**“Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully [negligently]” (Jer.48:10).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 6**

(9:4) **Worship—Witnessing:** the Jews had the privilege of true worship and of the true service of God. They had...

- the true temple.
- the true ordinances of God.
- the true priests, prophets, and messengers of God.
- the true approach to God.
- The Jews had been given every opportunity and privilege to approach God, and even more, to understand and grasp the person of God Himself. The Jews were greatly privileged. While other people stumbled and wandered about in the darkness of false worship, creating *gods* within their own imaginations, the Jews had access to God Himself, access to the only true and living God. They had the opportunity to establish a personal relationship with God.

**Thought 1.** What an indictment! To have the opportunity to know God personally, but to turn one’s back and walk away. However, there is an even greater offense than this. How much greater is the offense when a person knows the true approach to God and does not share it.

Believers know the truth; they know the way to God. Therefore, they must share the glorious message of the *only* living and true God. Note two significant facts.

- 1) Many know the truth; they know the true approach to God, yet they refuse to enter His presence. The tragic fact is this: God does not close the door to them; they shut the door upon themselves.

**“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27).**

- 2) The blood of the lost is upon the hands of the believer. Why? Because the way to God and the means to proclaim the message to the world has existed for some time. Yet, we have failed to go into the world and share the life-saving news. There is no one to blame but us. Note the severe warning of God to His people:

**“But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand” (Ezk.33:6-8).**

The only way for us to be freed from the judgment is to share the message of God and warn men.

**DEEPER STUDY # 7**

(9:4) **Promises:** the Jews had the promises of God. God had shared with them all of His blessings and He had given them the hope for which a man's soul craves. He had shared with them the plan and destiny for which He had created man. When man sinned and turned away from God, it was to the Jews that God gave...

- the promise of the Savior. (See notes—Lk.3:24-31; DEEPER STUDY # 3—Jn.1:45 for most of the prophecies concerning the first coming of Jesus Christ.)
- the promise of the world as an inheritance (cp. Acts 13:23, 32-33. See notes—Ro.4:13; DEEPER STUDY # 4—8:17; note—Acts 7:2-8 for more detailed discussion.)
- all the glorious promises stretching from Genesis to Revelation.

**Thought 1.** Three things are essential when dealing with the promises of God, three things which so many within Israel failed to do.

1) We must not stagger at the promises of God.

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Ro.4:20).

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).

2) We must fear lest we come short of His promises.

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb.4:1).

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (Heb.2:1-3).

3) We must steadfastly look for the promise of the new heavens and earth.

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation....But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:3-4, 10-13).

**DEEPER STUDY # 8**

(9:5) **Heritage—Backsliding:** the Jews had the privilege of the fathers and their heritage. Their ancestors had been the primary recipients of the promises between God and man. They had the tradition and the history. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22 for the four primary reasons God chose Israel.)

**Thought 1.** It is a sad thing for a person to have a godly heritage (parents, friends, teachers, schooling, etc.) and go astray. The Bible is full of examples.

- ⇒ There were the two who began denying the resurrection (2 Tim.2:16-19).
- ⇒ There was Demas, who turned back to the world (2 Tim.4:10).
- ⇒ There was Judas, who forsook Christ (Mt.26:14-16).

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb.6:4-6).

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (Heb.10:26-27).

**DEEPER STUDY # 9**

(9:5) **Israel—Messiah:** the Jews had the privilege of the Messiah coming from their roots. This was the most glorious privilege of the Jews. It involved being the very people...

- through whom God was to send His Son.
- through whom God was to bless the world.

Note that Paul declares both the humanity and deity of Jesus Christ. He came in the "flesh," but He "is over all, *God* blessed forever."

**Thought 1.** A person's attitude and response toward Jesus Christ determine his eternal destiny.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Mt.10:32-33).

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mk.8:38).

"Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God" (Lk.12:8).

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Ro.10:9).

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us" (2 Tim.2:12).

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pt.2:1).

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (1 Jn.2:22-23).

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 Jn.4:15).

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| <p><b>1 God's Word, His promise, has not failed</b></p> <p><b>2 They are not members of a race or institution</b></p> <p><b>3 They are not of any particular parentage or heritage</b></p> <p><b>4 They are the believers of God's promise</b></p> <p>a. Proof 1: Scripture—<br/>God's Word &amp; God's promise to Abraham</p> | <p><b>B. The True Israel or Children of God, 9:6-13</b></p> <p>6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:</p> <p>7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.</p> <p>8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.</p> <p>9 For this is the word of</p> | <p>promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.</p> <p>10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;</p> <p>11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)</p> <p>12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.</p> <p>13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.</p> | <p>b. Proof 2: Scripture—<br/>God's Word &amp; God's promise to Isaac<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p>1) The promise was before the children's birth</p> <p>2) The promise was by election, not by the goodness of the children<sup>DS2</sup></p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 9:1-11:36**

**B. The True Israel or Children of God, 9:6-13**

(9:6-13) **Introduction:** this is a startling passage, a passage that should awaken many a person to their true relationship with God. In no uncertain terms this passage declares just who the children of God are.

1. God's Word, His promise, has not failed (v.6).
2. The children of God are not members of a race or institution (v.6).
3. The children of God are not of any particular parentage or heritage (v.7).
4. The children of God are the believers of God's promise (v.7-13).

**1** (9:6) **Word of God—Promises—Israel vs. Gentiles:** God's Word, His promise, has not failed. God made a glorious promise to Abraham, a promise that had two major points. If Abraham would follow God...

- then God would give him a seed, a son through whom a great nation would be born. He would become the father of a great host of people.
- then God would cause all nations to be blessed through his seed.

Scripture says that Abraham did exactly as God said. He believed God with all his heart and followed God not knowing where God would lead him (Heb.11:8. Think how this is true of every follower of God.) (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.4:1-25; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22 for more detailed discussion.)

Note a significant point: all the promises in Scripture are based upon this single promise to Abraham; that is, if the promise made to Abraham is voided and done away with, then all the promises of God's Word are invalid. God's Word and His promises will have failed. In light of this there are two things that make some people think the Word of God has failed.

1. Israel rejected God's Son, Jesus Christ, when God sent Him to earth. Ever since that day, very few Jews have turned and followed Christ. Where is the nation that God promised Abraham?
2. The Gentiles are the ones who are following God through His Son Jesus Christ, not the Jews. Therefore, it looks like God has turned from Israel to the Gentiles.

These two facts cannot be denied. They are a fact of history. How then can God's Word and promise to Abraham ever be fulfilled? Have God's Word and promise failed? Is God's Word now invalid?

Forcefully, Paul declares that God's Word has not failed. God's Word and the promises of it are effective and still valid. God is fulfilling His promise to Abraham: a nation is being born to Abraham, a nation which is the true Israel and the true children of God.

**"The Word of God shall stand forever" (Is.40:8).**

**"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Mt.5:18).**

**"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away" (Lk.21:33).**

**"Therefore it [the promise] is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all" (Ro.4:16).**

**2** (9:6) **Salvation:** the true children of God are not members of a race or institution: "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Many Jews believed they were children of God because they were...

- born in the nation of Israel as an Israelite.
- reared in the Jewish religion.

The Jewish people revered God and His law and were known as a God-fearing and religious people. Therefore, a Jew felt he was a child of God by being a citizen of Israel and a circumcised member of Judaism. Many Jews felt that God's promise to Abraham meant that every citizen of the nation of Israel was a child of God as long as he was circumcised and half-way practiced the religion of Judaism.

**Thought 1.** The same thoughts have always prevailed among peoples of the world. Many believe they are Christians because they are citizens of a so-called Christian nation or Christian institution. They think they are acceptable to God because they profess belief in God and have been baptized, becoming a full fledged member of some church. Such, of course, is just not so. A person *does not* become a child of God by being...

- a citizen of a particular nation, no matter what nation it is nor how good and benevolent the nation is.
- a member of a particular religion or institution, no matter how true and godly the religion or institution may be.

**Thought 2.** Being a citizen of a great Christian nation and being a member of a great church does not make a person a child of God. It is not an earthly nation or a material church that makes a person acceptable to God.

**“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood [heritage], nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (Jn.1:12-13).**

**“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).**

**“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).**

**“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezk.33:31).**

**3** (9:7) **Salvation:** the true children of God are not of any particular parentage or heritage: “Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.” As stated, many Jews felt they were children of God because they were children of Abraham, one of the great servants of God (cp. Mt.3:9; Jn.8:38-39). They rested...

- in the godliness of Abraham, feeling that his godliness would cover them.
- in the promises made to Abraham, thinking that the promises made to him would include them.

Many Jews believed that they were children of God because of their godly heritage. They trusted in the fact that their parents and so many others in their roots (genealogies) worshipped the God of Judaism. They considered themselves to be children of godly forefathers; therefore, they professed to believe in God no matter what kind of lives they lived.

**Thought 1.** Some are trusting their godly heritage to save them. Too many are trusting godliness to rub off on them—to rub off from...

- their godly parents
- their godly spouse
- their godly brothers & sisters
- their godly friends
- the godly minister

Few think that God will really reject them. They think that in *the final analysis* God will accept them. They think that enough godliness will rub off on them from some godly heritage, person, or institution for God to accept them.

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).**

**“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham [or some other Christian parent] to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Lk.3:8).**

**“For he is not a Jew [Christian], which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Ro.2:28-29).**

**“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one” (Job 14:4).**

**“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).**

**“There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up” (Pr.30:12).**

**4** (9:7-13) **Salvation—Promise—Abraham—Isaac—Ishmael—Hagar:** the children of God are the *believers of God's promise*. Note two proofs.

1. There is the proof of Scripture, of God's Word and promise to Abraham: “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” (v.7; cp. Gen.21:12). When God gave this promise to Abraham, Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael had been born through a slave-girl, Hagar. For decades Abraham's wife, Sarah, had been unable to bear a child. Sometime after her childbearing years had passed, Sarah insisted Abraham attempt to have a son for her through her personal slave, Hagar. It was from this physical union that Ishmael was born. However, it was only a few years later that God appeared to Abraham and told him that Sarah was to bear the child of promise, the very child whom God had promised to Abraham when He first called Abraham (cp. Gen.18:1f).

The point is twofold.

- a. The children of the flesh are not the children of God's promise. The birth of Ishmael was due to man's effort. He was born because Sarah and Abraham were trying to secure the "promise" by their own works. Ishmael was entirely the product of natural, human, carnal, and fleshly plans. Abraham and Sarah were trying to bring about the promise of God by their own efforts and works. God had absolutely nothing to do with Ishmael's birth.

**Thought 1.** Ishmael represents all who seek the promise of God—that is, to become children of God—by their own fleshly works and efforts.

**“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood [heritage], nor of the will of the flesh [sexual desire], nor of the will of man [a human father], but of God” (Jn.1:12-13).**

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:5).**

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

- b. The children of the promise are counted for the seed. Isaac was the child whom God had promised to Abraham (v.8-9). This means three things.
  - ⇒ The promised child is the “seed” through whom the promise was to be fulfilled.
  - ⇒ The promised child was born miraculously by the grace of God. Abraham and Sarah were about one hundred years old, well beyond child-bearing years, when Isaac was born (Ro.4:19).
  - ⇒ The child of promise was born through faith (Heb.11:11).

**Thought 1.** A person becomes a child of God through faith in the promises of God. A child of the promise is a person who believes the promise of God, a person who...

- does not seek to secure the promise by his own efforts and works.
- follows through on his belief, waiting upon God to fulfill His promise.

**“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal.3:26-29).**

**“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder [fulfills His promise] of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).**

**“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, [they shall receive] eternal life” (Ro.2:7).**

**“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (Jas.5:7-8).**

2. There is the proof of Scripture, of God's Word and promise to Rebecca: “The elder shall serve the younger” (Gen.25:23). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Ro.9:10-13 for discussion.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(9:10-13) **Election—Predestination—God, Grace of—Jacob—Esau:** a striking and decisive proof of God's election is seen in the choice of Jacob over Esau. Also, a striking proof that salvation is solely by the grace of God and not by the works and goodness of men is seen in the two sons. Note three facts.

1. The promise to Rebecca was given before Jacob and Esau were born. Jacob's character, behavior, ability, works, and parents had nothing to do with God choosing him. God and God alone chose Jacob to be the child of promise. Jacob's choice was not by his own personal efforts but by the grace of God.

2. The promise was by election, not because of “any good or evil” of the children (v.11). Unquestionably, when we accept Scripture for what it says, our minds stagger at this argument. But there is one great truth that must always be remembered: neither Jacob nor Esau *deserved* mercy. Neither one *deserved* being chosen by God for anything. No man *deserves* mercy or purpose from God. God does not have mercy on a man because a man deserves or merits mercy nor because a man wills or runs after God (cp. Jn.1:12; Ro.9:16). God has mercy upon a man because He is a merciful God.

3. Election, being children of the promise, is *not of works, but of God who calls men to salvation*. The point is this. Paul is using the two children to get across the same point he stressed with Isaac: a true child of God is not a person who...

- belongs to a particular race or institution.
- belongs to a particular family or heritage.
- works to secure the promise through his own plans and efforts.

God is merciful and He is love—absolutely so. Therefore, God has predestined a line of people to receive His promise of glory. Back in antiquity God chose Jacob, showing His mercy to Jacob. He chose Jacob to continue the line through

whom He could send the Savior into the world and through whom He could fulfill all the promises of God to man. The fact that God chose Jacob for the line does not mean in any sense of the word that He condemned Esau for hell.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (Jn.6:29).**

**“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).**

**“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 Jn.5:1).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

9:11-13) **God—Purpose—Predestination:** “Esau I hated.” This does not mean to hate in the sense of despising. It is merely a deliberate decision on the part of God for Jacob to be the child of promise instead of Esau. There is *no personal feeling* involved. Esau had done no wrong to merit God’s disapproval. Neither had Jacob done any good to merit God’s approval. It is merely the right of God to choose Jacob over Esau. It is critical to note that God was always choosing the younger son over the oldest son throughout the Old Testament. He did so for a specific purpose: God was illustrating that man was to receive His promises by grace. Man’s law and efforts gave the inheritance to the oldest son; therefore, God chose the younger son over the oldest. God overruled man’s law and efforts by giving the promise and inheritance to the younger son, for the younger son was not appointed by men to receive it nor did he deserve it. He received the promise and the inheritance *only by the mercy and grace of God*. Note this also: God’s choice of Jacob was not a question of personal salvation, but of *God’s purpose* being settled before they were born (cp. Mal.1:2-3. Also cp. Gen.29:33; Mt.6:24; Lk.14:26; Jn.12:25.)

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|  | <p><b>C. The Rejection of Israel: God's Right to Show Mercy and Justice as He Will, 9:14-33</b></p>  | <p>he had afore prepared unto glory,<br/>24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?</p>  | <p>2) To prepare some for glory<br/>3) The subjects of His glory: Both Jews &amp; Gentiles</p>   |
| <p><b>1 Is God righteous, that is, just?</b></p>   | <p>14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.</p>   | <p>25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.</p>  | <p><b>5 God has identified the chosen long ago in prophecy</b></p>   |
| <p><b>2 God has the right to be merciful &amp; just</b><br/>a. He shows mercy as He wills</p>  | <p>15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.<br/>16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.</p>   | <p>26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.<br/>27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:<br/>28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.<br/>29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.</p>  | <p>a. They are from other nations as well as from Israel</p>   |
| <p>b. He shows justice as He wills</p>   | <p>17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.<br/>18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.</p> | <p>30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.<br/>31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.<br/>32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;<br/>33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.</p>   | <p>b. They are the small remnant of Israel<br/>1) God will finish the work—fulfill His promise to Israel</p>   |
| <p><b>3 God has the right to do as He wills</b></p>  | <p>19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?</p>  | <p>20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?</p>  | <p>2) God will leave a seed of believers in Israel</p>   |
| <p>a. Man has no right to reply against God<br/>b. God's right is as the potter's right over clay</p>  | <p>21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?</p>  | <p>22 What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:<br/>23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which</p>   | <p>c. They are the pursuers of righteousness by faith</p>  |
| <p><b>4 God has the right to put up with evil (unbel.) men in order to share His glory with some (bel.) men</b><br/>a. God is willing to suffer long with evil<br/>b. God's purpose<br/>1) To make known His glory</p> | <p>24 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which</p>  | <p>25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.<br/>26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.<br/>27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:<br/>28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.<br/>29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.<br/>30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.<br/>31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.<br/>32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;<br/>33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.</p> | <p>d. They are not the pursuers of righteousness by the works of the law—as Israel was<br/>e. They are not those who stumble over the Stone (Jesus Christ) as Israel did<br/>f. They are the persons who believe in Christ</p> |

**DIVISION VII**

**ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 9:1-11:36**

**C. The Rejection of Israel: God's Right to Show Mercy and Justice as He Will, 9:14-33**

(9:14-33) **Introduction:** this passage discusses two major questions: Is God righteous (v.14-24), and why has Israel been rejected by God as His primary mission force to the world (v.25-33)?

1. Is God righteous, that is, just (v.14)?
2. God has the right to be merciful and just (v.15-18).
3. God has the right to do as He wills (v.19-21).
4. God has the right to put up with evil (unbelieving) men in order to share His glory with some (believing) men (v.22-24).
5. God has identified the chosen long ago in prophecy (v.25-33).

**1** (9:14) **God, Nature:** Is God righteous, that is, just? Paul's question is shocking: Is there unrighteousness with God? Remember what it was that caused this question. God went against all the laws of men in the ancient world, the laws governing the inheritance left to children. According to man's law, the oldest son was to receive the inheritance; however, in dealing with Isaac's children, God announced that the oldest son, Esau, would serve the younger son, Jacob. Jacob was God's choice to inherit the promise made to Abraham and Isaac, and note: God chose Jacob even before the children were born (Ro.9:10-13).

The question is this: Can God elect men, favor and disfavor men, and still be righteous and just? Can God choose and reject men even before they are born and still be righteous and just? Is there unrighteousness with God?

God forbid! It could never be! It is utterly impossible for God to be unrighteous and unjust. *Glance quickly* at the five points of the outline and the answer to the question is immediately seen.

**2** (9:15-18) **God, Election:** God has the right to be merciful and just.

1. God shows mercy as He wills. He has mercy and compassion upon whom He wills. Therefore, if God chooses to show mercy to men, He has the right to do so, even when men do not deserve it. Again, if God chooses to show compassion to men, He has the right to do so even when men do not deserve it.

Note when it was that God spoke these words to Moses (Ex.33:19). Israel had just been worshipping the golden calf, committing the most serious offense, that of idolatry; and Moses had just interceded for Israel, asking God to forgive their sin (Ex.32:32). The people did not deserve God's forgiveness. They deserved annihilation in the face of God's holiness. A quick glance at the idolatrous and licentious event will show why. The event demonstrates just how depraved the heart of men can be (Ex.32:1-6). God answered Moses by saying He would not destroy the people, but He would have mercy and compassion. He is God; therefore, if He chooses to be merciful He can be merciful.

**"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (v.15).**

Now note: God had mercy and compassion upon Israel *not* because they...

- willed to receive His mercy (human resolve).
- ran after God (human works, effort, energy).
- deserved God's mercy.

Israel received the forgiveness and mercy of God because God willed to be merciful to them. The point is clear: God is not unrighteous if He has mercy upon men. Men do not deserve mercy; they deserve judgment. Therefore, when God gives the unrighteous a gift, it is not unjust or unrighteous; it is being merciful and compassionate.

2. God shows justice as He wills. The historical event of Pharaoh is an example. Note five points.

- a. Scripture says that God "raised up" (exegeiro) Pharaoh. This means that God allowed Pharaoh to appear, brought him forth upon the scene of world history. We must always remember the teaching of Scripture:

**"There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Ro.13:1).**

- b. Pharaoh was evil, very evil. He was an unbeliever: a harsh, stubborn, obstinate man who stood against and cursed God as though face to face. Scripture declares that God does not tempt men with evil (Jas.1:13). Therefore, Pharaoh would have been evil, stubborn, harsh, and unbelieving even if he had been a small town vendor in southern Egypt. God did not make Pharaoh sinful and evil. Pharaoh would have been sinful and evil no matter where he had lived.
- c. Pharaoh had a unique opportunity; he had something many never receive: Pharaoh heard the truth from one of God's greatest servants, Moses. He had opportunity after opportunity to repent, but he refused. Scripture says time and again that Pharaoh himself hardened his heart (Ex.8:15, 32; 9:34).
- d. Scripture also says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex.4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10). What does this mean? On the basis of Scripture...
  - it does not mean that God caused Pharaoh to sin and to be stubborn. God never tempts men to sin (Jas.1:13).
  - it means that God judged Pharaoh the same as He judges all men. Pharaoh hardened his heart; therefore, he was judged and condemned to have a hardened heart. Pharaoh "sowed" a hardened heart; therefore, he "reaped" a hardened heart (Gal.6:7-8); Pharaoh "measured" out a hardened heart; therefore, he was "measured" out a hardened heart (Mt.7:2).

Very simply stated, God's law and nature of justice, of *judicial equity*, took effect upon Pharaoh just as it does upon all men. Pharaoh reaped exactly what he sowed. (See notes—Mt.13:13-15; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.12:39-41; note—Ro.1:24 for detailed discussion.)

- e. God overruled Pharaoh's evil and used it for the good of His people (Ro.8:28). God used Pharaoh's evil to demonstrate His sovereign power and to declare the name of God throughout all the earth.

The point is this: Pharaoh was a very sinful and evil man; therefore, God demonstrated His justice in Pharaoh. God acted righteously toward Pharaoh. Just as men execute justice upon evil men, God executed justice upon Pharaoh because of his evil. God is God; therefore, He has the right to execute justice as He wills.

The conclusion is clearly stated:

**"Therefore hath...[God] mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (v.18).**

**Thought 1.** A man desperately needs to do two things.

1) A man needs to seek the face of God for mercy.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).

“It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not” (Lam.3:22).

“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy” (Mic.7:18).

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph.2:4-5).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:5).

“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb.8:12).

2) A man needs to guard ever so diligently against becoming hard toward God.

“Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness” (Ps.95:8).

“He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Pr.29:1).

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Ro.2:5).

“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb.3:13).

**3** (9:19-21) **Election—God, Sovereignty:** God has the right to do as He wills. Men object to God’s sovereignty, to His right to run the world as He wills. The reason men object to God’s right to rule and reign is clearly stated. Men want the right to determine their own fate, to live as they wish while on earth and still be assured of a good life in the next world. They do not want God or anyone else determining their fate. It is this spirit of self-centeredness and pride that causes men to object to God’s sovereignty. Note how the present objection is worded. If God has mercy upon some and hardens others...

- why does He find fault and blame the sinner?
- who has resisted His will? For God is choosing to forgive some and choosing not to forgive others.

Paul gives three answers to this objection, answers that establish the sovereignty of God beyond question. Note that the third answer is set off by itself as a major point because of its significance to the whole subject (pt.4, v.22-24).

1. Man has no right to reply against God, no right to accuse God of being unrighteous and unjust. Any man who replies against God has too low a view of God and too high a view of man. How can a creature who has been formed by God say to God, why have You made me like this? How can a creature question God, a creature...

- who owes his life, all that he is and has to God?
- who is so frail and so easily subject to destruction?
- who knows so little of the universe and its truth?
- who is so morally undisciplined and sinful?
- who is so limited to the material world and the physical dimension of being?
- who lives only for a few short years?

How can man dare question the Supreme Being who made the universe and all that is therein? Who is man that he thinks he can accuse the God of the universe with being unrighteous and unjust? Who does man think he is in accusing God with being immoral and with showing partiality and favoritism?

The point is this: God is God; therefore, He can do as He wills. As God, He sees the overall view; therefore, He knows what should be done, and He does it. Man is foolish to question and charge God with wickedness, with being unrighteous and unjust. In fact, when man questions and charges God, man only shows...

- how *finite and foolish* he really is.
- how *wicked and depraved* he really is.

2. God’s right over man is as the potter’s right over clay. Now note a crucial point that must not be missed if we are to correctly understand this passage.

- The clay already exists. This passage is not dealing with creation, but with God’s government and rule over creation. God is not creating the clay; He is taking a lump that is already existing and using it for His purposes.

Paul is not speaking of God creating some men to be sinners. God does not purpose to condemn men to hell. The fact is, God wills no man to perish; He longs for every man to be saved (2 Pt.3:9). What, then, is this verse saying?

Very simply, God uses the clay as He finds it. He takes the clay (man) and moulds it, using it for His purposes. All men are sinful, being born into a sinful and depraved world. God knows the hearts of all men even when they are born. He knows a heart is subject to be an honorable vessel or to be a dishonorable vessel.

- ⇒ All hearts that are subject to honor, God takes and moulds into vessels of honor.
- ⇒ All hearts that are subject to dishonor, God takes and moulds into vessels of dishonor.

God is God; therefore, He knows the heart of every man. He knows if the heart is subject to be tender, loving, and responsive to Him. If the heart is responsive to the things of God, then God gets the gospel to that person and quickens it to the person's heart, saving him and beginning the process of making him a vessel of honor.

God also knows if a person's heart is subject to hardness, selfishness, and rejection of God. This person is made into a vessel of dishonor; that is, God uses even the sinner and his rejection to His glory. How the sinner's rejection is used to glorify God is seen in the next major point (see note, pt.6—Ro.9:22).

The point is this: God has the *right* to make and use both honorable and dishonorable men to work all things out for good. He has the right to use both good and evil men to work out His purposes, purposes which are always good. His right is no different than the potter's.

**“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren” (Ro.8:28-29).**

**“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph.1:4-5).**

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

**“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim.1:9).**

**“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Tit.1:2).**

**“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever” (Rev.1:6).**

**“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev.4:11).**

**“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev.13:8).**

**“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Rev.19:6).**

**4** (9:22-24) **Election—Predestination—God, Sovereignty—Grace:** God has the right to put up with evil and unbelieving men in order to share His glory with some believing men. The outline gives an overview of what is said.

God is willing to suffer (tolerate, put up with, endure) evil men for a long time. Why? Why does God not go ahead and do away with evil and with evil men? There is one very powerful reason: God is fulfilling His purpose in the world.

- ⇒ God is making known the riches of His glory upon believers, the subjects of mercy.
- ⇒ God is preparing still others for glory (cp. 2 Pt.3:9).
- ⇒ The ones being prepared for glory include both Jews and Gentiles. (Note how even this fact points toward God's showing no partiality toward any people or person, Jew or Gentile. God does not pick some for sin and hell and some for righteousness and heaven.)

Several significant things need to be noted in these verses.

1. Note the difference between the word “fitted” and the word “prepared.” The vessels of wrath are “fitted” for destruction, but the vessels of mercy are “prepared” for glory. The agent that “fitted” the vessels for wrath *is not identified*. Scripture simply says that they are “fitted” for destruction. This allows the interpretation that they fitted themselves for destruction; whereas God is said to *prepare* the vessels of mercy for glory. A different word entirely is used.

**Thought 1.** Scripture is clear about this fact. Men do *fit* themselves for wrath; God does not tempt or lead men into sin (Jas.1:13). The very opposite is true. God saves men and wants all men to be saved; and He prepares all those who come to Him for glory.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (Jn.3:16-18).**

**“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Jn.7:37).**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).**

**“[God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:4).**

**“[God] is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pt.3:9).**

**“[Christ] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:2).**

**“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).**

**“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else” (Is.45:22).**

**“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is.55:1).**

2. Note the whole passage has to do with proving that God is just and righteous. If God actually created men to be sinful so that He could condemn them to wrath, He would not be righteous and just. Even in our finite world, to make something evil is considered unrighteous and unjust. How much more is this so in the infinite world of heaven? God just does not *fit* men to wrath; men fit themselves to wrath.

3. The whole world is sinful and depraved. “There is none righteous, no not one” (Ro.3:10). “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Ro.3:23). Cp. Ro.10:9-18 for a descriptive picture of man’s sinful condition.) God knows the heart of every man, even before he is born. He even knows who will be saved and who will not be saved. Why, then, does He not stop the world instead of letting it go on, when He knows some men are going to doom themselves? There is one primary reason: if God stopped the world then there would be...

- no more vessels of mercy, no more believers.
- no more believers to be brought and offered as brothers and sisters to Christ (Ro.8:29).
- no more people upon whom God could demonstrate His glorious mercy and love (Ro.9:23; Eph.2:7).

Note what Scripture says, for it clearly states why God does not end the world and keep any more evil men from being doomed: God is willing to put up with evil men in order to shower “the riches of His glory” upon those who believe on His Son (v.23; cp. v.33). God has only one Son, and He loves His Son so much that He wants Him to be glorified and honored beyond imagination.

4. The one thing to be remembered is this: there is nothing inconsistent with God showing mercy to some while condemning others. God punishes the *wicked* only for their sins. Human experience as well as the Bible prove beyond doubt that all men are sinful. None deserve mercy. No man deserves to be chosen by God for anything (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Election*—Ro.9:10-13). All men stand under the wrath of God. Therefore, there is no injustice done to a wicked man if God chooses to show mercy to another. One thing will happen, however. The vessel of mercy will fall upon his face in utter adoration and praise, and he will become a willing servant, willingly owned and possessed by his Savior (Ro.9:22-23; cp. Ro.11:33-36).

**Thought 1.** When we truly realize that God has had mercy upon us, it causes us to fall upon our faces before Him. He has loved us, truly loved us to the point of forgiving our sins through the Lord Jesus Christ. Seeing His love for us breaks us in humble adoration and worship. It is the love of Christ for us that constrains us to love God.

**“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).**

**“We love him, because he first loved us” (1 Jn.4:19).**

**“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 21).**

5. Another point brought out in this passage is this: the “riches of God’s glory” are more clearly seen in the lives of the chosen because of the wickedness of all others. The highest good is said to be accomplished in both the wicked and the chosen vessels. The glory of God’s love is much more clearly seen by the contrast of a fallen and depraved universe (cp. v.22-23).

6. Still another point to be kept foremost in mind is this: there is nothing inconsistent or unjust if God looks at two undeserving men and chooses to have mercy upon one. There is no injustice done to a wicked man if God chooses to forgive another.

Some people say this: there must be something in a man or something done by a man to cause God to choose him. But this just is not so, for it says that man earns salvation. Such says that salvation is by works, and this is totally against the teaching of Scripture. Salvation is by God’s grace alone; it is “not of works lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9). Therefore, as is taught by this passage, God chooses the vessels of mercy out of the depth of His own justice and mercy.

The mind staggers at this whole passage. We can only ponder it and stand in amazement at the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

**“How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord?” (Ro.11:33-34).**

**“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever” (1 Tim.1:17).**

We will understand God's providence and our freedom of choice in the Day of Redemption. Until then, we can only accept the doctrine as two parallel lines that will find their union and explanation in Him. In that day, He will explain them to us face to face. (What a glorious day that will be!)

A final point of paramount importance is the conclusion drawn in verses 25-33. Paul's point is to give weight to this fact: God has judged the rejection of Israel as a nation by choosing persons from the Gentile nations as well. God's people are persons from *all nations* who pursue His righteousness as found in Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22). The conclusion of the whole passage is, "whosoever believes on him [Christ] shall not be ashamed" (Ro.10:11). This conclusion, that the one who believes is the one truly saved, gives balance to the whole argument.

**5** (9:25-33) **Chosen, The—Election—Israel vs. Gentiles:** God has identified *the chosen* long ago in prophecy. "Salvation is of the Jews" (Jn.4:22). Israel was the chosen people of God, chosen to be God's witnesses to carry the message of salvation to the world (see note—Jn.4:22 for the reasons that God chose Israel). However, Israel failed and kept the message to itself and excluded all other peoples. Israel even took the lead in killing God's Son, Jesus Christ. This is the whole point of these verses, to point out how *the chosen* people of God come from all nations of the earth. This fact is clearly seen even in the Jewish prophets. "The chosen" are identified in six different statements which are irrefutable to the open and honest mind. (See DEEPER STUDY # 8, *Israel*—Mt.21:43 for more discussion of this point.)

1. The chosen people of God are from other nations as well as from Israel. The Jewish prophet Hosea predicted this fact. Note the three things Hosea said about the Gentiles. The Gentiles...

- will be called "God's people." They are the very ones who were not called God's "people" (Hos.2:23).
- will be called "beloved." They are the very ones who were not called "beloved" (Hos.2:23).
- were in a place where it was said that they were not God's people. The Gentiles were in the very place where they were to be called the children of God (Hos.1:10).

**Thought 1.** History has always proven that the Gentiles are as morally depraved and self-righteous as people can be. But despite all, God in His glorious mercy has thrown open the door of salvation to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. No matter how self-righteous or morally evil a person has been, God reaches out to that person. Neither the most depraved corruption nor the most humanistic self-righteousness can keep God from forgiving a person if that person truly believes in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (v.33).

**"To him [Jesus Christ] give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).**

**"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Ro.1:16).**

**"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Ro.10:13).**

**"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:26-28).**

**"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (1 Jn.5:1).**

2. The chosen are the small remnant of Israel. The great prophet Isaiah predicted this.
- a. Isaiah predicted that only a few among Israel would truly believe and love God supremely. The nation would be a great people whose numbers would be as the sand of the sea, but only a *remnant* would be saved (v.27). Note that God would have to fulfill His Word by cutting short His dealings with Israel. That is, so many in Israel would be so sinful, they would be a threat to destroying everyone. Therefore, God would have to cut His work short in dealing with Israel in order to assure a remnant of believers and to fulfill His word to Abraham (cp. Is.10:22-23).
  - b. Isaiah also predicted that God would leave a seed of believers in Israel (Is.1:9). Note that Israel's wickedness is compared to Sodom and Gomorrha. Israel has suffered a fate just as terrible as Sodom and Gomorrha, perhaps worse because the nation's sufferings have been the epitome of severity down through the centuries. But note: God has saved a remnant through it all. There are Jews who have trusted God's Son, even Jesus Christ of Nazareth (cp. Ro.11:27-29).

**"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin....But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (Ro.11:1, 4).**

3. The chosen are the pursuers of righteousness by faith (see note, *Righteousness*—Ro.1:17). Note the contrast between this point and the next. The most unlikely thing happened.

- ⇒ The Gentiles who have always been so base and self-righteous have all of a sudden turned to God for righteousness, even the righteousness of faith.
- ⇒ The Jews who have always been so God-centered and religious have missed God's righteousness, even the righteousness of faith in Christ.

**"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mk.7:6).**

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:3-4).

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor.1:30).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim.3:5).

4. The chosen are not pursuers of righteousness by the works of the law—as Israel was (v.31-32). Note that this begins to answer why God had to turn away from Israel as the primary mission force of His grace. Israel was zealous to secure righteousness, but failed because she sought righteousness by the law.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:22-23).

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).

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

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:4-5).

5. The chosen are not those who stumble over the Stone, Christ Himself, as Israel has done (cp. Is.8:14; 28:16). (See DEEPER STUDY # 7, *Jesus Christ, Cornerstone*—Mt.21:42 for discussion.)

“And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me” (Mt.11:6).

“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Cor.1:23).

“Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Pt.2:7-8).

6. The chosen are the persons who believe in Christ. (See note, *Believe*—Ro.10:16-17 for discussion.)

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn.3:15).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn.11:25).

“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (Jn.12:46).

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).

| CHAPTER 10   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 Paul's desire &amp; Israel's mistake</b><br/>                     a. Paul's desire for Israel's salvation<br/>                     b. Israel's mistake: They have zeal, but it is not based on complete knowledge<br/>                     1) They seek their own righteousness<br/>                     2) They do not submit to God's righteousness</p> <p><b>2 God's righteousness is Jesus Christ</b></p> <p><b>3 God's righteousness is opposed to man's righteousness, to man's way for reaching God</b></p> | <p><b>D. The Tragic Mistake of Israel: Missing God's Righteousness, 10:1-11</b></p> <p><b>B</b>rethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.<br/>                     2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.<br/>                     3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.<br/>                     4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.<br/>                     5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.</p> <p>6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)<br/>                     7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)<br/>                     8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;<br/>                     9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.<br/>                     10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.<br/>                     11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed</p> | <p><b>4 God's righteousness does not have to seek out a Messiah or a Deliverer (utopia)</b><br/>                     a. Rgt. is not achieved by trying to climb up to heaven<br/>                     b. Rgt. is not achieved by descending into the depths to conquer death &amp; hell</p> <p><b>5 God's righteousness &amp; salvation are right before a person</b><br/>                     a. By confessing Jesus to be the Lord (from heaven, cp. v.6)<br/>                     b. By believing God raised Jesus from the dead (from the depths, cp. v.7)<br/>                     c. By believing with the heart &amp; confessing with the mouth</p> <p><b>6 God's righteousness &amp; salvation deliver a person from shame</b></p> |

## DIVISION VII

### ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 9:1-11:36

#### D. The Tragic Mistake of Israel: Missing God's Righteousness, 10:1-11

(10:1-11) **Introduction:** this passage has two powerful points. It shows the tragic mistake of Israel, and it proclaims the great danger of missing God's righteousness. It is an excellent study on God's righteousness. It shows man exactly what has to be done in order to receive his utopia upon earth, exactly what has to be done to make all things right. It reveals how a man can receive righteousness and be saved from death and judgment and live forever.

1. Paul's desire and Israel's mistake (v.1-3).
2. God's righteousness is Jesus Christ (v.4).
3. God's righteousness is opposed to man's righteousness, to man's way for reaching God (v.5).
4. God's righteousness does not have to seek out a Messiah or a Deliverer (utopia) (v.6-7).
5. God's righteousness and salvation are right before a person (v.8-10).
6. God's righteousness and salvation deliver a person from shame (v.11).

- 1** (10:1-3) **Israel, Errors of:** Paul's desire and Israel's mistake. Paul had a burning desire for Israel's salvation. He loved his people and loved them deeply.
- ⇒ The word "desire" (eudokia) means longing, willing, yearning, craving. He craved and yearned to see the salvation of his people. If he saw their salvation, his desire would be fulfilled.
  - ⇒ Note that Paul prayed for Israel's salvation. They could be saved; their rejection of Christ was not hopeless. The door of salvation is open to all men, the Jew as well as the Gentile.

**Thought 1.** The fact that Paul prayed for the salvation of the Jews is a lesson to all believers. We, too, need to be praying for the salvation of the Jews. Why? Because so much of the world's heritage that is good and decent has come from the Jews:

- |            |                |                                |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| ⇒ morality | ⇒ the Bible    | ⇒ the Son of God, Jesus Christ |
| ⇒ law      | ⇒ the Prophets | ⇒ the true religion            |

**"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews"**  
**(Jn.4:22).**

Now note Israel's great mistake: they had a zeal for God, but it was not based on complete knowledge.

- ⇒ The Jews had a great deal of knowledge about God (Ro.2:17f).
- ⇒ But the Jews did not have a complete knowledge of God, not full and perfect. They did not have an *experiential knowledge* of the truth.

The point is, the Jews knew some things about God, but their knowledge was only partial. What they knew was incomplete; it was not enough. Therefore, their knowledge was incorrect. As a result they did not know God personally.

Why did Israel have an incomplete and incorrect knowledge of God? There are three reasons.

1. Israel was ignorant of God's righteousness. They failed to understand...
  - God's true nature: His holiness and perfection, and the utter necessity to be perfect in order to be acceptable to Him and given the right to live in His presence.
  - Man's true nature: his sin and desperate need for *perfect* righteousness in order to be acceptable to God and given the right to live in God's presence.
  - God's love: His love in sending His Son to save man by providing a perfect righteousness for him.

Very simply, Israel was ignorant of God's method of justification, ignorant as to how a man really becomes acceptable to God.

**“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).**

**“Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God” (Jer.5:4).**

**“But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel” (Mic.4:12).**

2. Israel went about establishing its own way of righteousness. They sought to make themselves acceptable to God through...
  - rituals
  - ceremonies
  - laws
  - works

They sought to save themselves by being as religious as they could. They felt God would never reject them if they did the best they could. Therefore, they drew up every rule and regulation they could to make themselves *religiously good* and acceptable, and they worked and worked to follow the rules and regulations. They sought to build their own way and route to God.

**“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).**

**“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Cor.10:12).**

**“If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse” (Job 9:20).**

**“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).**

**“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).**

3. Israel refused to submit themselves to the righteousness of God. Very simply, they refused to accept Jesus Christ, who is God's righteousness.

**Thought 1.** Note a crucial point. Zeal and sincerity are not enough in seeking God. No person or group of people could be any more zealous or sincere in seeking God than the Jews. But something else is always needed; zeal and sincerity always require one other ingredient: accurate, and complete knowledge. Zeal and sincerity by themselves cannot reach a destination. A person can be as zealous and sincere as possible and still be on the wrong road and never reach his destination. To reach his destination, he must know the right road.

**“Who [God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:4-5).**

**2** (10:4) **Righteousness—Jesus Christ, The Righteousness of God:** God's righteousness is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the One who puts an end (telos) to man having to seek righteousness through the law. Man no longer has to work and work to be acceptable to God, to work and work knowing full well that he is coming up ever so short of God's glory and demand. Man no longer has to live under the enslaving power of sin, under its guilt and shame and punishment. Man no longer has to live under the weight and pressure of failing and of being ever so unworthy, hopeless, lonely, and alienated. Man can now be set free and know full well that he is acceptable to God. Man can now have a heart that swells with assurance and confidence, the perfect knowledge that he is God's and God is his. Man can know that he is accepted as righteous before God. How? Through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” This means at least three things.

1. Christ *ended* the law in that He is the object toward which the law pointed. All the ceremonies, sacrifices, offerings, and purifications—they all led and pointed toward Christ.

⇒ The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Gal.3:24-25).**

## ROMANS 10:1-11

Very simply, the law was never intended to be the way to become righteous and acceptable to God. The law was given to point and lead men to Christ, who is the righteousness of God.

⇒ The law was but a shadow of the real substance that was to come.

**“[The law and its ceremonies] are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Col.2:17; cp. Heb.9:9).**

2. Christ *ended* the law in that He fulfilled and completed the law perfectly. He lived under the law and kept it perfectly. He was sinless, obeying every rule and requirement of the law. By fulfilling the law, Jesus Christ has become...

- the Ideal Man.
- the Perfect Man.
- the Representative Man.

The law finds its perfection in Jesus Christ. He is the very embodiment of all that God wants man to be. Therefore, man no longer looks to the law for his righteousness. Man no longer looks to the law as the way to reach God and to secure God's favor. Man now looks to Jesus Christ and approaches God through Jesus Christ.

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).**

3. Christ *ended* the law in that he destroyed the penalty and condemnation of the law against man. Christ took the sin of man upon Himself and bore the condemnation for man. Christ died for man; He bore the execution of being separated from God for man.

**“Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances” (Eph.2:15).**

**“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col.2:14).**

However, note a critical point: Christ ends the law for righteousness *only to those who believe*. A man is justified, that is, counted righteous by God, only if he truly believes that Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God. (See notes—Ro.5:1; DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.5:17. Also see outline and notes—Ro.3:21-22; 8:2-4; DEEPER STUDY # 2—8:3.)

**Thought 1.** Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God; He is the very embodiment of God's righteousness.

**“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:4).**

**“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor.1:30).**

**“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).**

**3** (10:5) **Righteousness:** God's righteousness is opposed to man's righteousness, that is, opposed to man's way for reaching God. Man tries to reach God by law and works, by simply doing the very best he can. However, there is a terrible flaw in this approach. Moses was the first to point out the flaw: the man who lives by the law must keep the law, and keep it perfectly (cp. Lev.18:5).

**“The man which doeth those things shall live by them” (Ro.10:5).**

**“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal.3:10).**

**“And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them” (Gal.3:12).**

The point is this. There are only two ways to become righteous. A person can become righteous...

- by keeping the law perfectly, by never sinning in act, word, or thought. If a person could keep the law perfectly—never sinning even once—he could be declared righteous.
- by trusting in the righteousness of a Person who has lived a sinless life and who stands before us as the Ideal Man, the Ideal Man who can represent us before God. (See note, *Justification*—Ro.5:1 for more discussion.)

**4** (10:6-7) **Righteousness—Utopia:** God's righteousness does not have to seek out a Messiah or a Deliverer (utopia). Note the contrast between heaven and the deep or abyss. This is a picture of the summit and the pit, of the very best and the very worst. Men search...

- for the height of heaven: for life and joy and pleasure, for the very best, for their utopia.
- for the answer to death and hell: for the release and freedom from death and the sense of judgment—for their utopia.

Another way to say the same thing is this: men search for righteousness, that is, for everything to be right. If they can achieve righteousness and make everything right, then they will have their utopia.

The point is this. Man's search for life or for utopia is *really* a search for a deliverer who can do two things: ascend into heaven to bring utopia down to earth and descend into the depths to conquer sin, death, and hell (cp. Dt.30:11-13. Cp. Ps.139:6-9; Pr.24:7; Amos 9:2.) Men are really searching for a true Messiah, for Christ Himself.

**Thought 1.** A person does not have to scale heaven nor fathom the deep to be saved. If he did, he would be lost eternally, for no man can penetrate heaven to secure righteousness or go into the depths to conquer death and hell. No man can work hard enough to climb up into heaven or labor enough to conquer death and hell. No man or combination of men can penetrate the spiritual world and dimension or transform man into a perfect being so that he never has to die and face judgment. Righteousness—man being right and perfect—is beyond the grasp of man's efforts.

**“Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?” (Pr.30:4).**

**“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (Jn.3:13).**

**5** (10:8-10) **Righteousness:** God's righteousness and salvation (utopia) are right before a person (cp. Dt.30:14). Jesus Christ is the Deliverer who has ascended into heaven and brought utopia down to man, and He is the Savior who has descended into the depths to conquer death and hell (Ro.10:9).

**“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)” (Eph.4:8-10).**

Since Christ has come, the gospel does not require man to scale the heavens nor to fathom the great abyss. Such requirements would be impossible. The gospel only demands faith and open confession that Christ has done both. Why would God commission His Son to go to such limits for man? Simply because God loves man that much (Jn.3:16; Ro.5:8).

The means to have all that a man desires—righteousness, salvation, and utopia—are found within man's mouth and heart. Man has to do three simple things to be counted righteous and acceptable by God. He has to do three simple things to be saved from sin, death, and hell, and to receive utopia:

1. Man must confess with his mouth the *Lord Jesus*. He must confess that Jesus Christ is the *Lord from heaven* (cp. v.6. See DEEPER STUDY # 1, “*From Above*”—Jn.3:31.)

**“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (Jn.3:13).**

**“He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all” (Jn.3:31).**

**“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world” (Jn.6:33).**

**“This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (Jn.6:50-51).**

**“What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” (Jn.6:62).**

**“Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me” (Jn.8:42).**

**“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (Jn.17:5).**

2. Man must believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. He must believe that Jesus Christ...

- died for man.
- was raised up from the dead because He perfectly satisfied God's demand for justice.

God's holiness and justice were perfectly satisfied with the death of Jesus Christ. God was perfectly satisfied with Christ taking man's sin upon Himself and bearing the punishment of sin for man. God was perfectly satisfied with Christ's dying for man; therefore, God raised up Jesus Christ from the dead.

**“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:25).**

**“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).**

**“And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee” (Acts 13:32-33).**

**“He hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).**

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pt.1:3-4).

3. Man must believe with the heart and then confess with the mouth. A man believes unto righteousness; that is, a man believes in Jesus Christ, and God takes that man's faith and counts it *as righteousness*. Then the man confesses Christ to salvation; that is, he is saved by openly confessing Christ. No man can deny God's Son and expect God to save him.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Mt.10:32-33).

"Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God" (Lk.12:8).

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Ro.10:9).

"Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (1 Jn.2:23).

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 Jn.4:15).

**6** (10:11) **Righteousness:** God's righteousness and salvation deliver a person from shame (cp. Is.28:16). Note two points.

1. Whoever believes in Christ is saved. The gospel is available to all, both Jew and Gentile. The gospel is the message of God's righteousness and salvation to the whole world. The gospel is universal.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (Jn.7:37).

"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim.2:4).

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (1 Jn.5:1).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev.22:17).

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Is.45:22).

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Is.55:1).

2. The true believer is not ashamed.

a. He is not ashamed to face God, for he is covered with the righteousness of Christ.

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Ro.13:14).

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal.3:27).

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph.4:24).

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col.3:10).

b. He is not ashamed to confess Christ before men. He readily confesses the glorious life and assurance God has given him in Christ Jesus the Lord.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (2 Tim.1:8).

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pt.3:15).

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| <p><b>1 Proof 1: The Lord treats all men just alike</b><br/> a. He makes no distinction between men<br/> b. He is rich to all</p> <p><b>2 Proof 2: All men are saved by the same promise</b></p> <p><b>3 Proof 3: The world cannot be saved apart from the gospel</b><br/> a. The world cannot call, nor believe, nor hear without a preacher, cp. Is.52:7<br/> b. The preacher cannot preach unless he is sent</p> <p><b>4 Proof 4: Scripture says</b></p> | <p><b>E. The Gospel (Righteousness by Faith) is Not for Israel Alone—It is Universal, 10:12-21</b></p> <p>12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.</p> <p>13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.</p> <p>14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?</p> <p>15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!</p> <p>16 But they have not all</p> | <p>obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?<br/> 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.<br/> 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.<br/> 19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.<br/> 20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.<br/> 21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.</p> | <p><b>the gospel is universal<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> a. Proves some Jews did not believe<br/> b. Proves “believing the report” is the method of salvation for all</p> <p><b>5 Proof 5: Israel’s disobedience proves the gospel is universal</b><br/> a. Not because they did not hear, cp. Ps.19:4<br/> b. Not because they did not know, cp. Dt.32:21; Is.65:1<br/> c. Because they were disobedient &amp; obstinate (unbelieving), cp. Ro.9:33; Is.65:2</p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 9:1-11:36**

**E. The Gospel (Righteousness by Faith) is Not for Israel Alone—It is Universal, 10:12-21**

(10:12-21) **Introduction:** God loves the whole world and every person in the world. His love is not limited to any one nation or people or type of person. The gospel is universal; it is for the world.

1. Proof 1: the Lord treats all men just alike (v.12).
2. Proof 2: all men are saved by the same promise (v.13).
3. Proof 3: the world cannot be saved apart from the gospel (v.14-15).
4. Proof 4: Scripture says the gospel is universal (v.16-17).
5. Proof 5: Israel’s disobedience proves the gospel is universal (v.18-21).

**1** (10:12) **Partiality—Israel vs. Gentiles:** the gospel is universal—the Lord God treats all men just alike.

1. There is no distinction between men, not in God’s eyes. All men are related to God in the very same way. In God’s eyes, all men...

- are His creatures.
- are sinful and alienated from Him.
- are loved by Him.
- are saved only through the righteousness provided by His Son.

God does not save one man a certain way and another man some other way; neither does God reject a man because he is a Jew or a Greek. God does not show partiality; He has no favorites. No person is favored over another person in being saved or condemned.

“But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things” (Ro.2:2).

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

“Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly? How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? For they all are the work of his hands” (Job 34:18-19).

2. The Lord God is “rich to all that call upon Him.” Scripture clearly declares:

“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Ex.34:6; cp. 2 Chron.30:9; Ps.103:8; 116:5; 145:8; Joel 2:13).

The Lord God is rich in mercy and grace and in all else that is good and beneficial. He is so wealthy that every good gift and every perfect gift that exists in the world has flowed from His mercy and grace (Jas.1:17). Note two significant points.

- a. God has enough supply to richly bless all who call upon Him. There is no limit to the riches of His grace.

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph.1:18).**

**“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:4-7).**

**“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).**

- b. A man must call upon God to receive the riches of God’s mercy and grace. (See note—Ro.10:13 for discussion.)

**2** (10:13) **Salvation:** all men are saved by the same promise. Note that this promise was foretold in the Old Testament (Joel 2:32). This verse is one of the great promises of God. God loves every person, no matter his nationality or race. God is not willing that any person should perish; He wants every person to be saved (2 Pt.3:9). In fact, God promises salvation to every man if the man will do but one thing: “Call upon the name of the Lord.” Note what God says.

1. **“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”** The word “whosoever” means anyone and everyone, no matter who they are.

⇒ It means any person, any nationality, any race, any color.

⇒ It means any person from any environment, condition, background, country, government, or family.

⇒ It means any person, whether immoral or moral, unjust or just, bad or good, poor or wealthy, mean or nice, lonely or befriended, unpopular or popular, deformed or attractive, diseased or healthy, needful or without need.

“Whosoever” means that any person can be saved, no matter who he is. No matter how terrible a person and his circumstances may be, he can be saved. He may be in the depths of the inner city or in the depths of the jungle, and he may be enslaved by the most terrible spirit of sin and evil imaginable—God can still save him.

**“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (Jn.7:37).**

**“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:4).**

**“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn.5:1).**

**“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).**

**“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Is.45:22).**

**“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is.55:1).**

2. **“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.** To “call upon the name of the Lord” means at least two things.

- a. It means that a person *calls* upon the name of Lord Jesus Christ: he believes Jesus Christ can and will save him. It means that the person looks upon and believes that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that He is the Son of God who came to earth to save men. Very simply, it means that a person believes the message of John 3:16.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

- b. It means that a person calls Jesus Christ *Lord*, that he looks upon Jesus as the Lord God of the universe and upon himself as His servant. It means that a person surrenders and dedicates himself to serve Jesus Christ throughout life—in everything and through everything, no matter the cost. To “call upon the name of the *Lord*” means total surrender and dedication of all one is and has. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.9:23; DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 2:36 for more discussion.)

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).**

**“And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Ph.2:11).**

**“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God” (1 Jn.4:15).**

3. **“Whosoever shall call...shall be saved.” (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Salvation*—Ro.1:16 for discussion.)**

**3** (10:14-15) **Gospel—Missions:** the world cannot be saved apart from the gospel. Remember what has just been said: **“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”** “Whosoever” refers to the whole world. But note the critical point: a person has to “call” in order to be saved. A person cannot “call upon the name of the Lord” unless he has heard about the Lord. Therefore, the gospel has to be carried to the whole world. This is the point of the present two verses.

1. The world cannot call or believe or hear without a preacher. To prove the point, Scripture reverses the order of what actually happens.

a. How can a person call on Jesus Christ if he has not believed in Him? It is impossible. Even in dealing with secular purposes, a person has to really believe in the purpose before he will give his life to it. Imagine giving all one is and has! No person is going to do that unless he really believes in something. The same is true in dealing with the Lord. No person is going to call upon the *Lord* to save him, nor is any person going to surrender and dedicate all he is and has to the Lord, unless he truly believes in the Lord.

b. How can a person believe in Christ if he has not heard about Christ? How can a person know that Jesus Christ came to earth and died for his sins, and that Jesus Christ arose from the dead conquering death so that he might live eternally? Is a person born with the knowledge about Jesus Christ?

⇒ Picture the native in the depths of the jungle. Does he know that God’s Son died for his sins? Was he born with knowledge of Jesus Christ? The answer is obvious: No! The native in the depths of the jungle has to hear before he can believe and call upon the Lord to save him.

⇒ Picture the man in the depths of the inner city, the city dweller who has never been exposed to the gospel, who has interest only in the things of the city and the world. Does he know that God’s Son died for his sins? The answer is obvious: No! Not if he has never heard. The city dweller has to hear before he can believe and call upon the Lord to save him.

⇒ Picture the religionist in the depths of religion, the religionist who has never been exposed to the clear-cut presentation of the gospel, who has only heard about the life of Jesus and the form, ceremony, and ritual of religion. Does the religionist know that God’s Son died to set him free from sin, death, and hell so that he might not serve sin any more? The answer is obvious: No! Not if he has never heard a clear-cut presentation of the gospel. Even the religionist has to hear before he can truly believe and truly call upon the Lord to save him. (What an indictment and warning to Christian ministers and teachers—a warning to present the gospel in simple, clear-cut terms.)

c. How can a person hear without a preacher? How can a person hear that Jesus Christ died for him if a preacher or some Christian does not tell him? To hear anything requires a person who either speaks or writes. To receive communication requires a communicator. To hear a message requires a messenger. The message of the Lord Jesus Christ must be carried to the world, but in order to be carried, a messenger is needed. Christian believers must preach the message if people are to hear the message.

2. Now note that the basis of missions and evangelism is the preacher or witness himself. In the present context the word “preacher” means any believer who bears witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. It takes a preacher to proclaim the message of the Lord Jesus so that people can hear and believe and call upon Him. However, note what this verse says: the preacher cannot preach unless he is sent.

a. God is the One who sends forth preachers and witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is the One who commissions, qualifies, and instructs the preachers and witnesses of the gospel.

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20).**

**“I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Eph.3:7).**

**“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).**

**“I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim.1:11).**

**“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pt.5:2-3).**

b. Christian believers have a part in sending forth laborers as well as God. We are to pray for laborers (Mt.9:37).

⇒ We are to go forth ourselves.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

⇒ We are to pray for laborers.

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Mt.9:37-38).

c. We are to give to meet the needs of the world.

“Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace [giving] also” (2 Cor.8:7).

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (2 Cor.9:6).

“Let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).

“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 Jn.3:17).

3. The gospel is the message of peace and “glad tidings of good things.” Note three points.

a. The message of the gospel is peace (see notes, *Peace*—Ro.5:1; Jn.14:27 for discussion).

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn.14:27).

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).

b. The message of the gospel is “glad tidings of *good things*” (see note, *Inheritance*—Ro.8:17. Also see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Salvation*—Ro.1:16; outlines and notes—Ro.8:1-39 for discussion.)

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (Jn.5:24).

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn.10:10).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).

c. The feet of the preacher and witness are beautiful; that is, they are a welcome sight to the world. The world desperately needs the message of peace and the glad tidings of good things. (Note: this verse is a quotation from Is.52:7.)

**4** (10:16-17) **Salvation—Belief—Hearing:** Scripture says the gospel is universal. Isaiah says that many Jews did not “believe the report [message] of God” (cp. Is.53:1). Therefore, they prove that salvation is not by race, heritage, tradition, religion, institution, nor by works established by the Jewish nation or any other people.

Note a second thing: Isaiah used the phrase, “believing our report.” Isaiah was saying that *believing the message* is the way of salvation. The message was to stir faith.

There are three steps involved in faith. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.2:24.)

1. The step of hearing. A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ.

“But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Mt.13:16).

“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Mt.13:23).

“And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word” (Lk.10:39).

“And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them” (Lk.18:15).

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn.1:12).

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th.2:13).

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jas.1:19).

“Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors” (Pr.8:34).

“The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise” (Pr.15:31).

“The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge” (Pr.18:15).

2. The step of mental assent. A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behavior to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He is a double-minded man: he agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.

“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (Jas.1:18).

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (Jas.4:8).

“And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?” (Lk.16:12).

“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils” (1 Cor.10:21).

“Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty” (Hos.10:2).

3. The step of commitment. When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment*, a personal commitment to the truth. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behavior and life.

Saving faith is believing in the name of Jesus Christ and committing one’s life to Him. It is trusting Jesus Christ, completely putting one’s trust in Him, who He is and what He has done. It is casting one’s life into His hands, believing He will take care of one’s past (sins), present (looking after), and future (delivering from death unto life eternal).

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn.3:15).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (Jn.6:28-29).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn.11:25).

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37).

“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Ro.10:9).

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (Jas.2:17).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(10:16) **Faith—Obedience:** note that the gospel is to be obeyed. Obedience and belief are synonymous terms when dealing with the gospel. To believe in Christ is to obey Him, and to obey Him is to believe Him. A person who truly believes in Jesus Christ will obey Him. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Believe—Jn.2:24* for more discussion.) There is no such thing...

- as belief without obedience.

- as believing in Jesus Christ and not following Him.
- as believing Jesus Christ has forgiven one's sin and living in sin.
- as believing the gospel and living like the world.

**“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).**

**“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb.5:9).**

**5** (10:18-21) **Israel vs. Gentiles:** Israel's disobedience proves the gospel is universal. Why did Israel not obey the gospel?

1. Israel's disobedience was not because they did not hear the Word of God (v.18). The very opposite is true. Israel was the very custodian of the Scriptures, the very people whom God had chosen to bring salvation to the world (see note—Jn.4:2 for discussion). No matter where the Jewish people were scattered, they had the Word of God and heard it. (Note that Paul quotes Ps.19:4 as Scriptural proof of what he says.)

2. Israel's disobedience was not because the people did not know the truth (v.19). They knew the truth, and they had a dynamic example and demonstration of the truth. They had the example of the Gentiles who turned to the gospel in great numbers.

Note how Scripture words this: “I will provoke you to jealousy.” Israel had the stirrings of jealousy and envy to help them turn to the gospel. They heard and knew. Their disobedience to the gospel was not because they were ignorant of the gospel. The gospel was actually lived out before their faces in the person of Jesus Christ and in the Gentiles turning to Christ for salvation. (Again, Paul supports his point from the Old Testament, Dt.32:21; Is.65:1.)

3. Israel's rejection was because they were a disobedient and obstinate people. Note how good God had been to Israel.
- a. God “stretched forth His hands”: inviting, offering forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation, pleading and begging for Israel to return to Him.
  - b. “All day long”: being patient, longsuffering, and forbearing, bearing for a long time, waiting until the last moment to turn away.

**“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezk.33:11).**

**“Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up” (Hos.6:1).**

**“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20).**

**“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).**

However, Israel refused and rejected God's gracious invitations. Israel chose to remain disobedient and obstinate. They closed their minds despite the clear evidence and refused to consider the truth of Christ as the true Savior of the world (see DEEPER STUDY # 3,4—Mt.12:24; 21:33-46; 22:1-14 for discussion).

**“Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness” (Ps.95:8).**

**“Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief” (Pr.28:14).**

**“He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Pr.29:1).**

**“But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Ro.2:5).**

**“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb.3:13).**

| CHAPTER 11   |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | <b>F. The Callous on Israel's Heart is Not Total—There is a Remnant, 11:1-10</b>  |   |
| <p><b>1 Israel was disobedient (10:21)</b><br/>                     a. Is all Israel rejected?<br/>                     b. God forbid!</p> <p><b>2 Proof 1: Paul himself was part of the remnant</b></p> <p><b>3 Proof 2: God's foreknowledge guarantees a remnant</b></p> <p><b>4 Proof 3: Elijah foresaw the remnant<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/>                     a. Elijah's mistake: He felt he was the only faithful believer in all Israel<br/>                     b. God's assurance to Elijah: There is a godly remnant</p> | <p><b>I</b> say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.</p> <p>2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,</p> <p>3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.</p> <p>4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image</p> | <p>of Baal.</p> <p>5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.</p> <p>6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.</p> <p>7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded</p> <p>8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.</p> <p>9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:</p> <p>10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always.</p> |
|  |   | <p><b>5 Proof 4: There is a remnant at this present time—a strong assertion</b></p> <p><b>6 Proof 5: God's grace assures a remnant</b></p> <p>a. Israel did not obtain righteousness, but the chosen few did<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>b. Israel is accused by Scripture<br/>                     1) Of being drowsy<br/>                     2) Of being worthy of judgment<br/>                     3) Of being blinded</p>  |

**DIVISION VII**

**ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 9:1-11:36**

**F. The Callous on Israel's Heart is Not Total—There is a Remnant, 11:1-10**

(11:1-10) **Introduction:** there is a glorious hope both for Israel and for the world. God's promises are always fulfilled. The callous on *Israel's heart* is not total—there is a remnant. The callous on *any people's heart* is not total—there can be a remnant. God will have His witnesses among all people. People everywhere can be saved if they will turn to God's Son, Jesus Christ.

1. Israel was disobedient (v.1).
2. Proof 1: Paul himself was part of the remnant (v.1).
3. Proof 2: God's foreknowledge guarantees a remnant (v.2).
4. Proof 3: Elijah foresaw the remnant (v.2-4).
5. Proof 4: there is a remnant at this present time—a strong assertion (v.5).
6. Proof 5: God's grace assures a remnant (v.6-10).

**1** (11:1) **Israel, Remnant:** Israel was disobedient to God, gripped by an obstinate unbelief (cp. Ro.10:21). The nation as a whole did not believe or obey God. They even rejected God's own Son (Jn.1:11). How can this fact be reconciled with the fact that Israel is *God's people*? Note that even in this verse they are called "His people" (v.1).  
 ⇒ God had given birth to Israel through Abraham and had made some great promises to the nation through Abraham (see notes—Ro.9:6; DEEPER STUDY # 1—4:1-25 for discussion).  
 ⇒ God had even promised that He would never cast off His people: "For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance" (Ps.94:14).

In light of this, is it not inconsistent and is it not denying God's Word to teach that Israel is not saved, that Israel is no longer the people of God? To ask the question as Paul words it: "Has God cast away His people?" The words "cast away" (a posato) mean to push away, to thrust away, to repel, to repudiate. The idea is to *utterly and totally and finally* cast away. Has God utterly cast away the Jews? Paul shouts: "God forbid" (me genoito). It is impossible! It must never be! It can never be! God has not broken and violated His Word to Israel. God's promises to Israel did not mean that all Jews were *locked in* to salvation no matter how sinful and disobedient they were. It did not mean that an unbelieving and disobedient Jew was acceptable to God simply because he had been *born* a Jew. God's promises were intended for those who *believed and obeyed Him*. The people who believed and obeyed Him have always been "His people." Paul gives five proofs to show that God has not rejected every Jew. God accepts and fulfills His promises to all those who believe and obey Him.

**2** (11:1) **Israel, Remnant:** proof one is that Paul himself was part of God's remnant. God had not totally rejected Israel. There was a remnant of godly and obedient believers in Israel. Paul himself is proof of the glorious fact.  
 1. Paul was a pure Jew, a true descendant of Abraham, not a mere proselyte; and he was of the elite, of the Benjamite aristocracy.

2. Paul was part of the remnant of God. He was claiming to be a true child of God, a true son of Abraham, one of the sons whom God had not cast away. Therefore, he himself was proof that God had not cast away His people. (Cp. Acts 9:1-19; 22:1-6; 26:12-18 for Paul's conversion.)

“And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:5-6).

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:7-9; cp. v.3-16).

**3** (11:2) **Israel, Remnant—God, Foreknowledge:** proof two is that God's foreknowledge guarantees a remnant (see note, *Foreknowledge*, pt.3—Ro.8:29 for discussion. Also see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 2:23 for more detailed discussion.) Very simply stated, God Himself guarantees a remnant; He saves those whom He foreknows.

“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18).

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).

“God hath not cast away his people [Israel] whom he foreknew” (Ro.11:2).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained [foreknown] before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Pt.1:18-20).

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1 Pt.1:2).

**4** (11:2-4) **Israel, Remnant:** proof three is that Elijah foresaw the remnant (1 Ki.19:9-18). This is proof from the very highest authority among men: the authority of Scripture itself. From the very beginning Scripture very clearly says that not all Israel was saved, but only a remnant truly followed God. This is clearly seen in Elijah's experience. His day was a terrible day of sin and apostasy, and he himself was being marked for death because he refused to stop his preaching of righteousness. In a moment of extreme pressure and uncertainty, he cried out to God in prayer wondering if he was the only godly person left in Israel. God assured Elijah by telling him there were still seven thousand godly believers in the nation. The point is this. In Elijah's day the vast majority of people were as they are today: disobedient and disloyal to God, rejecting and denying God, controlling their own lives and following after the man-made and humanistic gods of this earth. But there *was* a remnant, a few who were loyal and obedient to God. There were only seven thousand; nevertheless there was a remnant, a few who were trusting God to fulfill His promises to them.

**Thought 1.** Note two revealing facts:

- ⇒ how many stray away from God and reject Him—how many within a nation, a state, a city, a neighborhood, a family, a religious body!
- ⇒ how God always has His few, His promised remnant who do obey and remain loyal to Him!

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb.12:1).

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.1:13).

“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy” (Rev.3:4).

“Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev.3:11).

“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Mal.2:6).

**Thought 2.** Note how the image of a nation is determined by the lifestyle of the majority. The wickedness of the majority in Israel overshadowed the godliness of the few. Even Elijah, the great prophet of God, was unaware of the seven thousand godly scattered throughout the nation. Yet they were there. God will never leave Himself without a witness, nor will He ever leave His people without fellow laborers throughout the world. We may not know about each other, but we can rest assured there are other witnesses scattered around, witnesses who are bearing testimony for the Lord Jesus. God has His remnant, His faithful few.

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pr.14:34).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(11:2) **Israel, Remnant:** Elijah foresaw the remnant in 1 Ki.19:9-18. Other prophets also saw the remnant: Isaiah (Is.1:9; 4:3; 11:16; 37:4), Jeremiah (Jer.6:9; 23:3; 3:7), Ezekiel (Ezk.14:14, 20, 22), Amos (Amos 9:8-12), Micah (Mic.2:12; 5:3), Zephaniah (Zeph.2:9; 3:12-13).

**5** (11:5) **Israel, Remnant:** proof four is that there is a remnant at this present time. This is a strong assertion: “There is a remnant.” There is no question about the fact. Note why: because of the “election of grace.” If there were a remnant in Israel in the day of Elijah, there is bound to be a remnant of believers today. Why? Because of grace: the grace of God in Jesus Christ has now come to earth, and the Spirit of God is actively at work making God’s grace known.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:11-14).

“Esaiahs also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved” (Ro.9:27).

**6** (11:6-10) **Israel, Remnant—God, Grace of:** proof five is that God’s grace assures a remnant. A person is not saved because he merits or works for salvation. No man deserves God’s grace. No one deserves being chosen by God for anything. God does not bestow His grace upon a man because a man deserves or earns grace. A man does not secure God’s acceptance because he wills or runs after God (Jn.1:12). God has mercy upon a man because He is a gracious God. If a man was saved because of works, then salvation...

- would not be by grace (of God) but by works (of man).
- would remove grace (God) from the picture and put works (man) in the forefront.

Very simply, God would no longer be necessary, for man would be saving himself. If by some figment of the imagination and scientific work man could save himself by figuring out how to live eternally, then God Himself would not be needed. In fact, neither grace nor work would be necessary, for man would have reached perfection. (The absurdity of such a possibility is clearly seen in the thought.) (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Election—Ro.9:10-13* for more discussion.)

The point is this: it is God’s grace that saves men. Therefore, God will see to it that there is always a remnant of believers in Israel. The vast majority of Jews stumbled and fell at the snare of works (v.6), but the callous on Israel’s heart is not total. There is a remnant. Note two points.

1. The vast majority of Israel did not obtain righteousness, but the chosen few did.
  - ⇒ Most sought after righteousness, but they failed to secure it because they sought it by works (see note, *Israel—Ro.10:1-3* for more discussion).
  - ⇒ However, the elect have obtained righteousness (see note—*Ro.10:4* for more discussion).
2. Israel is accused and condemned by Scripture of three terrible things.
  - ⇒ Of being drowsy and condemned to drowsiness (Is.29:10; 6:9).
  - ⇒ Of being worthy of judgment and condemned to judgment (Ps.69:22).
  - ⇒ Of being blind and condemned to blindness (Ps.69:23).

The picture is that of men sitting and feasting comfortably at a banquet table. They are at ease, secure, and possessed with a sense of safety. In fact they are so comfortable that their safety becomes their ruin. The enemy sneaks upon them unaware.

Note this: God is said to be the One who made Israel drowsy, blind, and worthy of judgment. This is Scripture’s way of stressing what can be called the *judicial blindness and rejection of men* (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—*Ro.11:7-10* for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(11:7-10) **Judgement—Judicial Blindness and Rejection—Spiritual Abandonment:** note the words “were blinded” and “God hath given them the spirit of slumber” (cp. Is.39:10; 6:9; Ps.69:22-23). The idea is that God is the One who blinded Israel. However, Scripture clearly says that God does not tempt men, much less cause them to sin (Jas.1:13). What does this mean then? It means at least two things.

1. The unbeliever’s rejection is wilful, always deliberate. The unbeliever does see and hear, yet he refuses to really open his eyes and ears. He refuses to understand. But why does a person act so illogically by rebelling and refusing to understand? Christ answers this question by saying, “This people’s heart is waxed gross” (Mt.13:15). The Greek is “this people’s heart has grown fat [overweight].” Being fat indicates sensuality and senselessness. To eat and eat, adding weight upon weight, is living after the flesh; and living after the flesh makes no sense at all. It is sensual and senseless. Christ is therefore saying that the unbeliever has become so sensual and senseless that he rebels and refuses to understand the gospel of God.

⇒ His sensuality is due to worldliness and the lust for the things of the world.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not

subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Ro.8:5-8).

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 Jn.2:15-16).

⇒ His senselessness is due to being deceived by the evil one.

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor.4:3-4).

2. The unbeliever experiences a judicial blindness and rejection by God. A person who *deliberately chooses* to be blind to the gospel and to reject Christ is given over to a *just punishment*. God offers His love and salvation of eternal life to a man, but a man has to choose to receive God's offer.

⇒ Man's unbelief is allowed to roam in the sphere of unbelief and to become obstinate unbelief—if the man continues to blind himself to the truth. God will not violate the will of a man.

⇒ Man's sin is allowed to roam in the sphere of sin and to become constant sin—if the man continues to blind himself to the truth. God does not violate the will of a man.

A person's rejection leads to *judicial blindness* and to being rejected by God. (See notes—Ro.1:24; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.12:39-41 for more discussion.)

"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mt.7:2).

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness....For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections....God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Ro.1:24, 26, 28).

"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Ro.2:5-6).

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal.6:7-8).

"My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen.6:3).

"But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would [have] none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels" (Ps.81:11-12).

"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Pr.29:1).

"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hos.4:17).

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| <p><b>1 Proof 1: God has overruled Israel's stumbling over Christ</b></p> <p>a. God opens salvation to the Gentiles</p> <p>b. God stirs the Jews to be restored</p> <p>c. God assures the glorious restoration of Israel &amp; a rich blessing for the whole earth</p> | <p><b>G. The Callous on Israel's Heart is Not Final—There is to be a Restoration, 11:11-16</b></p> <p>11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.</p> <p>12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?</p> | <p>13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:</p> <p>14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.</p> <p>15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?</p> <p>16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.</p> | <p><b>2 Proof 2: Paul tries to stir the Jews to be saved</b></p> <p>a. By magnifying his ministry to the Gentiles</p> <p>b. Paul's purpose</p> <p>1) To stir some to be saved</p> <p>2) To bring about the restoration, the great climax of history</p> <p><b>3 Proof 3: The forefathers, that is, the patriarchs, give a heritage of holiness</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 9:1-11:36**

**G. The Callous on Israel's Heart is Not Final—There is to be a Restoration, 11:11-16**

(11:11-16) **Introduction:** the callous on a man's heart does not have to be final. Every man can repent and turn to Christ and be restored to God. This is the message of this passage. The callous on Israel's heart is not final. There is to be a restoration of Israel. Many in Israel are going to return to God and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

1. Proof 1: God has overruled Israel's stumbling over Christ (v.11-12).
2. Proof 2: Paul tries to stir the Jews to be saved (v.13-15).
3. Proof 3: the forefathers, that is, the patriarchs, give a heritage of holiness (v.16).

**1** (11:11-12) **Israel, Restoration—God, Sovereignty:** proof one is that God has overruled Israel's stumbling over Christ.

- ⇒ Israel has stumbled over Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 9,10—Mt.21:44 for discussion).
- ⇒ Has Israel stumbled that they should fall?

The contrast between stumble and fall is devastating. The idea is that of a permanent and final fall—spiritually. Is Israel's problem with Christ permanent and final? Will Israel never accept God's Son, Jesus Christ, as the true Messiah? Is the spiritual fall of Israel to be forever?

Paul's response is forceful: God forbid! Perish the thought! Let it never be! Such a thing is impossible in God's plan for the world. God has overruled Israel's stumble over Christ in three glorious ways.

1. God has opened the door of salvation to the whole world. The Lord's messengers went to Israel first, but Israel did not want to hear that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God Himself. Very few received the gospel. In fact, so many rejected the message that it can be said that Israel, the nation as a whole, has stumbled over Christ. Israel, the Jews...

- have shut their eyes, lest they should see Christ (v.8).
- have closed their ears, lest they should hear Christ (v.8).
- have set themselves to bitterly oppose Christ (1 Th.2:15-16).

God had no other choice but to do the logical thing. The glorious message of His love and of His Son was at stake; therefore, God sent His messengers throughout the world (the Gentile world) in search of any person who would receive the message of His Son. God did what the Jews had always failed to do: God threw open the door of salvation to the whole world. (See DEEPER STUDY # 8, *Israel*—Mt.21:43 for more detailed discussion.)

**“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46).**

**“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it” (Acts 28:27-28).**

**“Then saith he to his [God] servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage” (Mt.22:8-9).**

**“Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper” (Lk.14:21-24).**

**Thought 1.** Note two provoking thoughts.

- 1) Think how wonderful it would have been if the Jews had accepted Jesus Christ and had become God's missionary force to carry the message of Christ to the world! Would the world have been reached by now? It has been two thousand years since Christ came to earth, and the world still has not been reached with the gospel. If the Jews had accepted Christ, would the task now be complete? How many more people would have been saved?
- 2) Think how wonderful it would be if more of us (the Gentiles) would accept Christ! If we would dedicate our lives more sacrificially to carrying God's message of salvation to the world, how many more people would be saved and delivered from death?

**Thought 2.** Note how God "worked all things out for good." He took Israel's rejection of His Son and *enriched* the world. Why? Because God has determined that His Son Jesus Christ shall have many *brothers* who will worship and serve Him throughout all eternity. Therefore, if a people rejects the message of His Son, God will work it out to send the message to another people. (Cp. Ro.8:28-29.)

2. God stirs the Jews to be restored. God has not forsaken the Jews. The door of salvation is open to them as well as to the Gentiles. The Jews can look at true Christian believers and see the holiness, love, joy, and peace of their lives; and the Jews can be stirred to receive Christ. In fact, this is the very point of the present passage. God sees to it that some Jews are "provoked," that is, stirred to receive Christ and the glorious life of salvation which He offers.

**"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world [both Jew and Gentile] of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (Jn.16:7-11).**

**"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk.24:47).**

**"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Ro.1:16).**

**"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:27-28).**

3. God assures the glorious restoration of Israel and a rich period for the whole earth. Note the sharp contrast...
  - between "fall" and "riches."
  - between "diminishing" and "riches."

The word "diminishing" (hettema) means loss, defeat, injury. It means that Israel became impoverished spiritually. Israel was spiritually injured and defeated; the Jewish people lost the blessings of salvation. Now...

- if the spiritual fall of Israel led to the riches of salvation being carried to the world...
- if the spiritual diminishing of Israel led to the riches of salvation being carried to the Gentiles...

...how much more shall the fulness (the restoration of Israel) bring the blessings of God to earth?

Note the word "fulness" (pleroma), which means completion or that which is filled. The idea is that the day is coming when God's plan and purpose for Israel will be completed and perfectly fulfilled. That day, the day of Israel's restoration, will cause even a greater blessing to spread out across the world.

**Thought 1.** The spread of the gospel has had an enormous impact upon the world.

- ⇒ It has liberated millions from sin and shame.
- ⇒ It has saved millions from death and hell.
- ⇒ It has assured millions of life eternal with God.
- ⇒ It has liberated women and children from slavery.
- ⇒ It has proclaimed morality and purity world-wide.
- ⇒ It has stirred justice and the enactment of just laws among men.

However, when Israel is restored and large numbers of Jews begin to turn to Christ, then the world will experience unprecedented blessings from the hand of God. God promises such blessings to the world.

The point is clear: God has overruled and is going to continue overruling Israel's stumble and fall over Christ.

- ⇒ More and more Gentiles are going to be saved. The uttermost part of the earth is going to hear the gospel.

**"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Mt.24:14).**

- ⇒ More and more Jews are going to be stirred to accept Christ and to be restored to God.
- ⇒ A glorious restoration of Israel is going to take place. Jews by the thousands are going to turn to Christ someday in the future. So many will turn to Christ that it can be said that the nation Israel has been restored. And when that day comes, the whole earth will be greatly blessed, blessed more fully than ever before.

**"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness**

of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Ro.11:25-26).

“And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart” (Jer.24:7).

**2** (11:13-15) **Israel, Restoration—Paul, Love for His People:** proof two is Paul’s attempt to stir the Jews to be saved. Paul was God’s primary minister to the Gentiles in the first century. Paul magnified the ministry and gloried in God’s call. He stressed the fact every chance he could. Why? Paul had two purposes.

1. He wanted to arouse the Jews to envy; that is, he wanted to stir them to look at Christ, and to see what Christ had done for the Gentiles. He wanted to stir men to look at the lives of believers and to see the wonderful change Christ had wrought. Thereby, Paul hoped that some Jews would be saved.

2. Paul wanted to hasten the day for Israel’s restoration. He knew there was to be a restoration; therefore, he knew that every time he was able to reach a Jew for Christ, the callous on Israel’s heart would soften a little more. The more he could soften the callous, the sooner the restoration would take place. Note the question of Paul:

**“If the casting away [that is, the rejection] of Israel led to the reconciliation of the world [to God], what shall the receiving [the restoration] of them be, but life from the dead?”**

a. The *reconciliation* of the world has a twofold meaning. It means...

- that *all* men, both Jew and Gentile, can now be reconciled to God. All men can now have *peace with God* and possess the *peace of God* (see notes, *Peace—Ro.5:1; DEEPER STUDY # 1—5:10; Jn.14:27*).

**“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:10).**

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor.5:17-18).**

**“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).**

- that *all* men, both Jew and Gentile, can now be reconciled to each other (see outline and notes—Eph.2:13-18 for discussion).

**“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph.2:16).**

b. Paul believed strongly in the restoration of Israel. The very fact that he asked the question indicates his belief. He firmly expected Israel to be restored, and he expected their restoration to bring such a great revival to earth that it would be like the world moving to “life from the dead.”

c. The phrase “life from the dead” is interpreted several ways.

- ⇒ Some say it refers to the resurrection of the dead, to the climax of human history when Jesus Christ shall return to deliver the whole creation from corruption and to rule and reign over the world (cp. Ro.8:21). This, of course, would mean that believers are not resurrected until the restoration of the Jews to God.
- ⇒ Others say it is merely figurative language. When the Jews are restored, it will be like a resurrection, like gaining life from the dead.

Whatever the interpretation, the restoration of Israel will be a most glorious event, an event so glorious that it will be like a true resurrection. It will lead to a new world, a world of righteousness that will benefit all involved. The scene is that the most glorious blessings will be poured out upon the whole world and everyone in it.

**“And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart” (Jer.24:7).**

**“So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army” (Ezk.37:10).**

**“For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry” (Lk.15:24).**

**“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11).**

**“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph.1:18).**

**“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:4-7).**

“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.1:14).

**3** (11:16) **Israel, Restoration—Remnant—Parents:** proof three is that Israel’s forefathers, that is, the patriarchs, give a heritage of holiness. This is an extremely important verse in dealing with the restoration of Israel. God gives two pictures to show that Israel can never be totally or finally rejected. Both pictures have to do with the firstfruits.

- ⇒ The Jew always dedicated the first fruit of his harvest to God. He gave the first part to God and by giving the first part, the man was saying to God that he was dedicating all of his food to God. It was not necessary to offer every mouthful to God. The offering of the first part sanctified the whole.
- ⇒ The second picture is that of a little tree being planted and the sapling being offered to God. Every branch thereafter was looked upon as being sacred to God. It was not necessary to dedicate each branch separately.

What Paul is saying is that the root, the first part, refers to the patriarchs, that is, the fathers of Israel. Israel, by merit of its patriarchs, its fathers, holds a very special place in God’s heart. The whole nation benefits from the dedicated lives of Abraham and the other godly fathers. The whole nation (masses of them) will be restored and saved, brought back to God because of the godliness of the forefathers and because of God’s promise to the forefathers (cp. v.25).

Note this: to call Israel a holy nation does not mean that the Jewish people live holy lives in the sight of God. Scripture is not talking about practical, day-to-day holiness. There have been few Jews—just as there have always been few Gentiles—who have lived holy lives. But Israel was *initially* chosen by God to be His witness upon earth: chosen to be His *federal nation* or His *representative nation* to bear testimony for Him. The first fathers of the nation believed God and lived lives of faith, and a few Jews have continued to serve God down through the generations of every century. God very clearly says that because of the holiness of these few, He cares for the nation as a whole—for the whole lump. What this means is this: because of the holy lives of the few, God looks with favor upon the nation. It does not mean that He saves everyone in the nation, but rather, He blesses the nation (all those who live around the followers of God). Those who live holy lives bring godly blessings upon all who surround them and who succeed from them. Many of Israel will be blessed by God and restored because of the nation’s godly patriarchs.

**Thought 1.** Note the influence of godly parents, forefathers, and nations upon children and succeeding generations. It is important for every parent and generation to live godly lives.

“The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Ex.34:6-7; cp. Lev.14:18).

“And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them” (2 Ki.17:15).

“God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it” (Job 21:19).

“Thou showest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name, great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jer.32:18-19).

“Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities” (Lam.5:7).

“Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise” (Dt.12:30).

“All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” (Mt.23:3).

**Thought 2.** Note the influence of godly men upon nations.

“And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel” (Ex.19:6).

“They are beloved for their father’s sakes” (Ro.11:28).

“And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt” (Dt.4:37).

However, we must always remember that the people of a nation can be restored to God only through repentance, only by turning from sin back to God.

“If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land” (Lev.26:40-42).

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| <p><b>1 A parable of the olive tree</b><br/> a. Some branches are broken off: Jews<br/> b. Some wild branches are grafted in: Gentiles</p> <p><b>2 Warning 1: Do not be arrogant</b><br/> a. Are wild &amp; grafted in<br/> b. Are not the root</p> <p><b>3 Warning 2: Fear complacency &amp; unbelief</b><br/> a. Israel was not rejected for the Gentiles, but because of unbelief<br/> b. The Gentiles stand by faith—not by any merit</p> | <p><b>H. The Callous on Israel's Heart is a Warning to Other Nations, 11:17-24</b></p> <p>17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;<br/> 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.<br/> 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.<br/> 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:</p> | <p>21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.<br/> 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.<br/> 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.<br/> 24 For it thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?</p> | <p>c. God is less likely to spare unnatural branches</p> <p><b>4 Warning 3: Take a sharp look at the goodness &amp; severity of God</b><br/> a. God was severe to those who fell<br/> b. God is good to the steadfast</p> <p><b>5 Warning 4: The restoration is a probable event</b><br/> a. If unbelief is removed<br/> b. "God is able..."<br/> c. The grafting of a natural branch (the Jews) is more likely than the calling of the Gentiles</p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 9:1-11:36**

**H. The Callous on Israel's Heart is a Warning to Other Nations, 11:17-24**

(11:17-24) **Introduction:** men can harden their hearts against God. Men can become so callous against God that the conviction of the Holy Spirit is never felt. Hardness of heart can doom men to an eternity of separation from God. The callous on Israel's heart is a warning to all men everywhere, a warning to the nations of the world.

1. A parable of the olive tree (v.17).
2. Warning 1: do not be arrogant (v.18).
3. Warning 2: fear complacency and unbelief (v.19-21).
4. Warning 3: take a sharp look at the goodness and severity of God (v.22).
5. Warning 4: the restoration is a probable event (v.23-24).

**1** (11:17) **Israel vs. Gentiles:** this is a parable of the olive tree. The olive tree was the most useful, productive, and valuable tree in Israel; therefore, it was precious to the economy and welfare of the nation. Because of this, the nation's relationship to God was sometimes pictured as an olive tree (cp. Ps.52:8; Jer.11:16; Hos.14:6).

Now note the exact picture given. The natural branches refer to Israel, and the wild olive branches refer to Gentile believers. The olive tree refers to God and a right relationship with Him.

1. Some natural branches are broken off and rejected. Some Jews did not and do not believe in Christ; therefore, they are not attached to God. They do not have a right relationship with God. But note: only some of the branches were broken off. Some Jews did accept Christ as the Messiah and did maintain a right relationship with God.

**"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Mt.21:43).**

**"I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (Lk.14:24).**

**"He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid" (Lk.20:16).**

**"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree" (Ro.11:17).**

**"My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations" (Hos.9:17).**

2. Some wild olive branches were grafted into the tree. Note that the words "and thou" or "you" (kai su) is singular. Paul is not speaking to Gentiles as a whole, but to the individual Gentile. Note two things.

- a. The Gentile believer is said to have been a *wild olive branch*. The word "wild" means that the Gentile was not part of the olive tree (God); he was outside and estranged and alienated from the olive tree (God). Therefore, he was...
  - part of the wilderness, desert, and uncultivated world.
  - growing loose and uncontrolled.
  - useless and worthless.
  - uncared for and unprotected.
  - insect-infested, sour, and inferior.

- b. The Gentile believer is now said to have been grafted into the olive tree. He is now attached to God, that is, in a right relationship with God; therefore, he now partakes of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Very simply, this means that the believer is fed and nourished by God.

**Thought 1.** The glorious privilege of being nourished by God becomes as much the right of the Gentile as it is of the Jews.

“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Gen.22:18).

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee” (Ps.22:27).

“All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name” (Ps.86:9).

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (Is.9:2).

“And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (Is.49:6).

“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Is.60:3).

“And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan.7:14).

“And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God” (Hos.2:23).

“And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God” (Acts 11:1).

“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

“And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe” (Acts 15:7).

“And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles” (Acts 18:6).

“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it” (Acts 28:28).

“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name” (Ro.15:9).

“That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Eph.3:6).

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev.11:15).

- c. Note the words “with them.” The Gentile believer is grafted into the olive tree *with the natural branches*. This is important to note, for it means there is *only* one family of God, not two. Both the natural branches and the wild branches are part of the same olive tree. The only difference is that the natural branches were the first branches that grew on the olive tree. The wild branches had to be brought or grafted into the tree.

**Thought 1.** Note that some natural branches are broken off because they did not bear fruit.

“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (Jn.15:6).

**2** (11:18) **Arrogance—Pride—Gentile vs. Jew:** there is the first warning. The Gentile believer must not be arrogant and prideful over the Jews. The idea is that...

- we must not treat them as inferior beings because they deny Christ.
- we must not insult and ridicule them because they differ from us as Christian believers.
- we must not trample them underfoot because they refuse to believe and be like us.
- we must not boast that we know the truth about the Messiah and they do not.
- we must not glory in our knowledge of Christ, conveying the idea that we are better than the Jews.

The Gentile believer has no right to elevate himself over the Jews nor over anyone else. The reason is clearly seen. We were wild branches, very wild. We did not bear the root (Judaism); the root bore us (Christianity). If it had not been for Judaism, there would be no Christianity. If it had not been for Jewish believers, there would be no Christian believers. If Peter and Paul and the others had not surrendered their lives to preach Christ, then the message of Christ would have never reached us. We must never forget that “salvation is of the Jews” (Jn.4:22).

**Thought 1.** Every Gentile believer owes a debt to Jewish people. We must carry the gospel to the Jews even as some of the earliest Christian Jews brought the gospel to us.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Ro.1:16).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Mt.28:19).

**Thought 2.** All boasting, arrogance, pride, and conceit against the Jews is wrong. It is wrong to elevate ourselves above others; in fact, it is even wrong to think that we are *better* or *higher* than anyone else.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).

“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Ro.12:16).

“And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness” (Ro.2:19).

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Jas.4:10).

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil” (Pr.3:7).

“Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right” (Pr.16:8).

“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Is.5:21).

**3** (11:19-21) **Unbelief—Complacency—Gentile vs. Jew:** there is the second warning. The Gentile believer must fear complacency and unbelief. (See outline and notes—Heb.3:7-19 for more discussion.) There is the danger of Gentile believers thinking...

- that they are more *acceptable* to God because they have replaced the Jews as the true followers of God.
- that they are safe and secure in Christianity because Christianity is the religion that acknowledges God’s Son.

However, we must always remember what this Scripture is saying. Israel was not rejected by God so that we, the Gentiles, might be saved. Israel was rejected by God because of unbelief. God did not and does not reject one people in order to save another people. God reaches out to every nation of people longing for all to be grafted into Him.

God accepts a person because the person believes in His Son Jesus Christ. The Jews did not believe; some Gentiles did believe. A Gentile believer stands attached to the olive tree by faith, not because of any goodness or merit or value within himself.

Now note: the Gentile believer must guard against complacency, against feeling safe, secure, and more acceptable because he stands in Christianity, the religion that acknowledges God’s Son. The Gentile believer must not be highminded, but rather fear. He must fear, for God is less likely to spare the unnatural branches than He was the natural branches. The warning is strong: “Take heed lest He also spare thee not” (v.21).

**Thought 1.** If God spared not the Jews because of their unbelief, how much more will He not spare us. The Jews were the natural branches; we are the unnatural branches.

- ⇒ The Jews had the godly heritage; we had the wild, ungodly heritage.
- ⇒ The Jews had the fathers, the followers of the only living and true God; we had heathen, polytheistic fathers, fathers who created humanistic gods to suit their own fancies.
- ⇒ The Jews had the Word of God and the Savior; we had neither.
- ⇒ the Jews had the prophets of God; we had the false humanistic priests of the world.

In light of this and of so much more depravity, we must guard against self-complacency and conceit. We must walk in humility and the fear of God, fearing unbelief lest we too be *broken off* (v.17).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb.3:12).

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Heb.4:11).

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).

“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Dt.10:12).

“Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Is.8:13).

**4** (11:22) **Judgment—God, Goodness of:** there is the third warning. The Gentile believer must take a sharp look at the goodness and severity of God.

1. The severity of God is seen in the spiritual fall of Israel. The word “severity” (apotomia) means abrupt, sharp, rough, cut off. The Jews had committed the very sins the Gentiles are being warned about in this passage. The Jews...

- had developed an attitude of arrogance and boasting toward other people, refusing to carry the Word of God to them.
- had felt highminded and complacent, feeling safe and secure, thinking themselves to be more acceptable to God than other people.

In addition to these gross sins, the Jews had rejected God's prophets down through the centuries until they eventually killed God's very own Son. In one brief word, their sin was *unbelief*. The vast majority of the Jews never did believe God, not to the point that they loved God supremely. As a result, the judgment and severity of God fell upon them (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Judgment*—Ro.11:7-10 for more discussion).

**“You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2).**

**“And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes” (Lk.12:47).**

**“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (Jn.15:6).**

**“And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin” (Ro.3:8-9).**

**“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb.10:29).**

**“And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible” (Is.13:11).**

**“But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it” (Jer.21:14).**

**“And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil” (Zeph.1:12).**

2. The goodness of God is seen in the grafting in and acceptance of the Gentiles by God. But note the stress of this point: the goodness of God is given only to those who continue in God's goodness. A person who knows about the love of God must walk and live in God's goodness. The word “continue” (epimeno) means to remain, be steadfast, abide, persevere, endure. The idea is both *position* and *relationship*. The believer...

- is positioned in the goodness of God.
- is related to the goodness of God.

It is the picture of a person who is remaining and abiding in the house of God's goodness. A Gentile believer must continue and abide, endure and persevere in the goodness of God, or else he too will be cut off (ekkopesei) just as the Jews were cut off (v.17).

**“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Ro.2:4).**

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace [goodness]” (Eph.1:7).**

**“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 Jn.9).**

**5** (11:23-24) **Israel, Restoration:** there is the fourth warning. The Gentile believer must know that Israel's restoration is a probable event.

1. The restoration of Israel is conditional. Note the word “if”—“if they abide not still in unbelief.” Genuine belief is the condition for salvation. A person has to run from his unbelief to belief in order to be grafted in and accepted by God. No person comes to God unless he believes in His Son Jesus Christ.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**

**“Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God” (Jer.3:22).**

2. God is able to graft the Jews back into the olive tree. Two things are meant by this.
- a. God is able because of His enormous love. God loves everyone and will forgive any person for any thing if that man will turn from his life of sin and unbelief. God will accept any person who approaches Him through His Son Jesus Christ.

“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy” (Mic. 7:18).

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:4-7).

- b. God is able because of His enormous knowledge and power. God is God; therefore, He has unlimited knowledge and power. He knows when a man’s heart is subject to Him and moving toward Him. He knows just when to move upon a person’s heart, and He can arrange circumstances that will cause the person to turn to Him. Therefore, when the time comes, He has the power to stir Jewish hearts to turn to Him in large numbers. The valley of dry bones can be resurrected by the power of God (Ezk.37:1f).

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Ro.16:25).

“For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Lk.1:37).

“That ye may know....what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:18-20).

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.2:1).

“Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all” (1 Chron.29:12).

3. The grafting in of the natural branches (the Jews) is much more likely than the calling of the Gentiles was. Note the words “much more.” Paul is confident that God is not only able, but God will graft the Jews back into the olive tree. Paul proclaims that the Jews will turn to Christ and be restored into a right relationship with God (see notes—Ro.11:16 for discussion).

“Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved” (Ro.9:27).

“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (Ro.11:5).

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Ro.11:25-26).

“That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee” (Dt.30:3).

“Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah” (Is.1:9).

“And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase” (Jer.23:3).

“For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart” (Jer.24:6-7).

“For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither” (Jer.31:7-8).

“Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it” (Ezk.14:22).

“So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army” (Ezk.37:10).

“I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel” (Mic.2:12).

“Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them” (Zeph.2:9).

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| <p><b>1 Surety 1: God's great revelation about the Jews<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> a. Was a mystery<br/> b. Israel's blindness is only partial: "In part"<br/> c. Israel's blindness is only temporary<br/> 1) Until the fulness of the Gentiles is come<br/> 2) All Israel shall be saved</p> <p><b>2 Surety 2: The Promise of Scripture—God's Deliverer, Jesus Christ, shall turn Israel</b></p> <p><b>3 Surety 3: God's pleasure with Israel's forefathers</b><br/> a. God loves Israel because of the great faith of their forefathers<br/> b. God is unchangeable: He shall fulfill His will</p> | <p><b>I. The Restoration of Israel and Its Surety, 11:25-36</b></p> <p>25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.<br/> 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:<br/> 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.<br/> 28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.<br/> 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance</p> | <p>30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:<br/> 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.<br/> 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.<br/> 33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!<br/> 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?<br/> 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?<br/> 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.</p> | <p>for Israel</p> <p><b>4 Surety 4: The believer's mercy &amp; witness to the Jews</b></p> <p><b>5 Surety 5: God's holiness and mercy</b></p> <p><b>6 Surety 6: God's glorious plan for the world</b><br/> a. His plan includes His wisdom &amp; knowledge, His judgments &amp; ways<br/> b. No man can grasp God's plan<br/> c. No man can earn God's gift<br/> d. God alone is the source, the channel, &amp; the end of all things</p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 9:1-11:36**

**I. The Restoration of Israel and Its Surety, 11:25-36**

(11:25-36) **Introduction:** Israel's history is a surety. God loves man with an infinite love, and God's love is unchangeable. Therefore, any person can be restored to God if the person will call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and ask Christ to save him. This is clearly seen in the history of Israel. Israel's restoration is a surety, and as such, Israel stands as a prime example of the unchangeable love of God toward man.

1. Surety 1: God's great revelation about the Jews (v.25-26).
2. Surety 2: the promise of Scripture—God's Deliverer, Jesus Christ, shall turn Israel (v.26-27).
3. Surety 3: God's pleasure with Israel's forefathers (v.28-29).
4. Surety 4: the believer's mercy and witness to the Jews (v.30-31).
5. Surety 5: God's holiness and mercy (v.32).
6. Surety 6: God's glorious plan for the world (v.33-36).

**[1]** (11:25-26) **Israel, Restoration—Blindness:** the first surety is God's great revelation about Israel. The revelation comes from Paul. Note three significant facts.

1. The revelation had been an unknown mystery until Paul. The word "mystery" (mysterion) in the Bible is not used as most men use the word, as something mysterious or difficult to understand. *A Biblical mystery means that...*
  - something that was unknown is now revealed.
  - something that was hidden is now made known.
  - something that was a secret is now told.

The future of Israel is now revealed and made known to men. Note exactly why God revealed the future of Israel: that we not be ignorant of Israel's future, and that we not be wise in our own conceits or imaginations. This last reason can mean two things.

- ⇒ Gentiles become guilty of looking down upon the Jews because the Jews are so different from the rest of us. They have rejected Jesus Christ and are opposed to Christianity to such a degree that they remain almost exclusively among themselves. Gentiles face the danger of becoming puffed up, of thinking that they are more acceptable to God because they look with favor upon Jesus Christ and are more open in professing Him. There is the danger of being prideful and arrogant, of lording it over the Jews.
- ⇒ A Gentile, especially a Gentile believer, can begin to think that his idea of Israel's destiny is the correct idea and that he and the followers of his position are the persons who have a full understanding of the truth. All other understandings are incorrect. There is the danger of becoming "wise in [our] own conceits."

2. Israel's blindness is only partial, only "in part." There were Jewish believers who followed Christ in His day and there have been Jewish believers who have followed Christ down through the centuries. The blindness and hardness of Israel to the gospel is not total; it is only partial. Granted, just as Scripture says, so many Jews have rejected and still do reject Christ that it is as though *all Israel as a nation* has stumbled and fallen over Him (cp. v.8-9). However, there have been and always will be some Jews who believe. Israel's blindness is only partial.

3. Israel's blindness is only temporary. Two statements clearly show this.
- a. Israel's blindness is only "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Note a significant point. *It does not matter how a person interprets this clause*, when the fulness of the Gentiles is completed, *Israel's blindness will be removed* according to Scripture. Just what "the fulness of the Gentiles" means is open to different interpretations, but it does not change what is to happen to Israel. It only affects *when* the blindness is to be removed from Israel. Israel's blindness is to continue *only* until the fulness of the Gentiles comes. Now what does this event mean? The fulness of the Gentiles can mean...
    - a certain number of Gentile converts are to be saved, to fill up the "cut off branches of Israel" (v.17-21).
    - the end of the Gentile age, a time when the emphasis of salvation will no longer be upon the Gentiles, but upon the Jews.
    - the end of the Gentile age, a time when God will rapture the church (all believers) and cause a revival among the Jews who will then become the primary witnesses for Him.

The point is worth repeating. No matter what the phrase "the fulness of the Gentiles" means, it does not change the event of Israel's revival. The blindness of Israel will be removed.
  - b. "All Israel shall be saved." The fact could be stated no clearer:
    - ⇒ Israel's blindness is only temporary.
    - ⇒ The restoration of Israel is a surety.
    - ⇒ Israel shall experience a revival.
    - ⇒ Israel shall turn to God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Thought 1.** There is hope for every person. Note two critical facts:

- 1) A person's blindness to the Lord Jesus Christ is only partial. As long as a person is alive, he can still turn to Christ.
- 2) A person's blindness is temporary *only* if the person turns to the Lord Jesus Christ. Unless a person believes and commits his life to Christ, his blindness becomes permanent, and he is lost forever.

**"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (Jn.3:19).**

**"[God] who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col.1:13-14).**

**"Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim.1:10).**

**"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn.1:5-7).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(11:25-26) **Israel, Restoration:** there are many reasons for taking this passage at its face value, that is, as a prediction of the Jewish people's conversion as a nation.

1. The whole context favors this view. The conversion of the Jews as a probable event has been described in the plainest and simplest of terms.
2. The nation was rejected, not as individuals but as a community or nation. Therefore, it is only natural to say that when God speaks of a restoration, He is speaking not only of individuals being restored, but of the community or nation as being restored (v.11, 15).
3. Paul speaks of a great event, something that will attract universal attention.
4. Paul says this is a "mystery." The gradual conversion of a few Jews would be no mystery. When speaking of the mystery of the Gentiles (Eph.1:9; 3:4), Paul is speaking of the Gentiles as a community being admitted into the church of God. Therefore, it is only natural to assume that when Paul speaks of the mystery of the Jews, he is speaking of a great event, of a great movement of Jews toward Christ.
5. The words "all Israel" (v.26) cannot mean the spiritual Israel. Such an interpretation would do violence to the use of the word "Israel" throughout this whole context. It simply means Israel as a nation, as a community of people. This is also clear from the warnings that are given throughout this passage to both Gentile and Jew.

However, "all Israel" looks at the nation en masse. It does not necessarily have to mean every single individual. Note a very significant fact: when the nation became hardened, Scripture speaks of the nation, that is, of all Israel, being rejected. However, not every single person was rejected. There were a few individuals who still believed and who comprised a remnant (cp. Ro.11:1-10). Every single individual was not lost, so the same is probably true when the nation is restored. There will be a large number of Jews who will become open and tender to the gospel, but not necessarily every individual. In one simple statement: Israel will be open to the gospel just as the Gentiles are open to the gospel. Many Jews will begin to be saved just as many Gentiles are now saved.

**"That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee" (Dt.30:3).**

**"And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Is.1:26).**

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Is.11:12).

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem” (Is.27:13).

“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken” (Is.33:20).

“Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins” (Is.40:2).

“Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders” (Is.49:22).

“And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee” (Is.60:10).

“And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase” (Jer.23:3).

“For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart” (Jer.24:6-7; cp. Jer.31:7-8).

“Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it” (Ezk.14:22).

“For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things” (Ezk.20:40).

“But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come” (Ezk.36:8).

“So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army” (Ezk.37:10).

“I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel” (Mic.2:12).

“Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them” (Zeph.2:9).

“Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem” (Zech.1:17).

“And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them” (Zech.10:6).

“And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited” (Zech.14:11).

“Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years” (Mal.3:4).

**2** (11:26-27) **Israel, Restoration—Forgiveness of Sin:** the second surety is the promise of Scripture. God’s great Deliverer, Jesus Christ Himself, shall turn Israel. Scripture gives a glimpse into the future of Israel’s restoration in this verse, but note that it is only a glimpse. Just how Israel will be restored is not discussed in this passage. Only two major things are given.

1. Some great manifestation of Christ the Deliverer will cause Israel to turn to the gospel.

“For I say unto you [Israel], Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Mt.23:39).

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you [Israel]: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).

“Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Ro.11:25).

“But their minds [Israel] were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it [Israel] shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away” (2 Cor.3:14-16).

“Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad” (Ps.14:7).

“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds’ seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever” (Is.59:20-21).

“By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged” (literally to take away their sin) (Is.27:9).

“I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer.31:31-34).

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days” (Hos.3:4-5).

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born” (Zech.12:10).

2. The great Deliverer, Jesus Christ, will do two things for Israel.
  - a. Jesus Christ will turn away ungodliness from Israel (cp. Is.27:9).
  - b. Jesus Christ will fulfill God’s covenant with Israel: He will take away their sins (cp. Is.59:21; 27:9).

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 13:38).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).

“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Is.43:25).

“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee” (Is.44:22).

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).

### 3 (11:28-29) Israel, Restoration: the third surety is God’s pleasure with Israel’s forefathers.

1. The statement “they [the Jews] are enemies for your sakes” sounds as though God predestinated Israel’s rejection. However, God does not cause sin (Jas.1:13-14); God does not cause people to reject His Son and His will. What the statement means is this: the word “enemy” (echthroi) has both an active and passive meaning. It means either hostile or hated by, and it means either hating or being hated. It is possible that in this particular passage it is to be read both ways. The Jews were hostile to God; they had refused the offer of God’s righteousness in Jesus Christ, and they had refused to be the missionary force for God’s Son. Therefore, they had aroused God’s displeasure. They hated God; consequently, God was displeased with them.

Note that God did what He had to do. He turned to the Gentiles. Israel had refused to be the missionary force for God’s Son, so God had to turn to the Gentiles. Among the Gentiles, God found a receptive people. The Gentiles accepted the offer of God’s righteousness in Jesus Christ, and they have become the missionary force for Christ to the world. It is critical to remember something, however: this does not mean that every Gentile is saved. Most are not, but a fair number of them have accepted and still do accept Jesus Christ. We must remember this: in this passage God is speaking *nationally*, *not individually*.

⇒ A few Jews do accept Christ as the Messiah, but the number is small. The number is so small that God can say that Israel as a nation has rejected Christ.

⇒ A far greater number of Gentiles accept Christ as their Savior. However, as is clearly evidenced by the unholy lives of most Gentiles, the majority reject Christ; but the number who do accept Him is fairly large. It is large enough for God to say that the Gentiles as a *community* do accept His offer of salvation in Christ.

**Thought 1.** The point is that God is speaking *nationally*, *not individually*. And we must remember this, for it is absolutely essential for everyone to make a *personal decision* to receive Christ and to follow Him by living a pure life.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:11-14).

2. The statement “they [the Jews] are beloved for the fathers’ sakes” shows that God still loves Israel. As a people, they are still very precious to Him. How can this be when they have been so hostile to God’s Son, Jesus Christ, and toward the missionary force of God’s Son? There are two reasons why God still loves Israel:

- a. The forefathers of Israel were a godly people, a people of unusual faith in God. (See note—Ro.11:16; also see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Abraham*—Ro.4:1-25 for more discussion.) There were people such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, Ruth, Elijah—the list could go on and on. As Scripture says:

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (Heb.11:32-38).

Such godly men and women knew God—knew Him personally and intimately—and God would never forget a people who loved Him so greatly. Keep this in mind as well: godly people are a praying people, a people who pray for their families and neighbors, for their nation and world. And God hears and answers the prayers of His people. God would never turn His back upon Israel for this reason alone.

- b. There is a second reason why God still loves Israel: God Himself is *unchangeable in His gifts and calling*. God called and promised some very special gifts to the forefathers of Israel, and God is unchangeable; therefore...
- every purpose for which God called Israel shall be fulfilled in the lives of many Jews.
  - every gift God promised Israel shall be given to many Jews.

The point is striking. God does not change His mind. He is constant, immutable, unchangeable. He shall perfectly fulfill His calling and gifts to Israel.

“The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations” (Ps.33:11).

“But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end” (Ps.102:27).

“Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations” (Ps.135:13).

“Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations” (Ps.145:13).

“For I am the LORD, I change not” (Mal.3:6).

“Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Heb.1:12).

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb.13:8).

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas.1:17).

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Rev.1:8).

(11:30-36) **Another Outline:** God’s World-Wide Plan for All Men.

1. God had chosen the Jews (v.30).
2. God moved the Gentiles: from unbelief to mercy (v.30).
3. God is to move the Jews again: from unbelief to mercy (v.31).
4. God’s purpose is to move all men: from unbelief to mercy (v.32).
5. God’s world-wide plan rests in the depth of the richness of His wisdom and knowledge (v.33).
  - a. No man can grasp God’s plan (v.34).
  - b. No man can earn God’s gift (v.35).
  - c. God is all in all (v.36).

**4** (11:30-31) **Israel, Restoration:** the fourth surety is the believer’s mercy and witness to the Jews. These two verses are speaking historically. Very simply, history shall be repeated.

- ⇒ In times past—before Christ ever came—the Gentiles did not know and obey God, but the Jews did.
- ⇒ Eventually, the Jews rejected God which is ultimately seen in their killing God’s Son, Jesus Christ. They, too, failed to believe (obey God).
- ⇒ Therefore, God turned to the Gentiles.

Now note: if we came to know God through the unbelief of the Jews, how much more shall the Jews be shown mercy through the mercy of the Gentiles! To word the matter another way...

- if mercy resulted from unbelief, how much more shall mercy result from mercy?
- if mercy to the Gentiles came through the unbelief of the Jews, how much more shall mercy to the Jews come through the mercy of the Gentiles?

The point seems to be this: we truly know the mercy of God through Jesus Christ our Lord; therefore, we want the world to experience the same mercy and forgiveness of sins. In particular, we feel indebted to the Jews, the people through whom God gave us His Word, His Son, and His promises. Therefore, Scripture predicts that the evangelistic efforts to

reach the Jews will someday bear fruit. The Jews will be reached by the mercy of God; they shall believe and obey Jesus Christ as Lord. The Jews shall be restored into the favor of God.

**Thought 1.** Every believer who knows the mercy of God should share the mercy of God. God hates exclusiveness, prejudice, partiality. The world desperately needs the gospel, the Jew as well as the Gentile, and God demands that His mercy be shared with the world.

**“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21).**

**“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:19-20).**

**“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn.1:3).**

**5** (11:32) **Israel, Restoration:** the fifth surety is God’s holiness and mercy. The word “concluded” (sunekleisen) means to shut up in a place, to close up, to lock up. This is an unusual idea: God has taken men, both Jews and Gentiles, and shut them up to unbelief (apeitheian) or disobedience. This is the judicial judgment of God (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Ro.11:7-10; note—1:24; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.12:39-41). It is the picture of God using sin and events for good. God takes sin and works it out for the good of the world. Man has chosen sin, choosing to go his own way in life, so God allows man to do his own thing. God locks man up in his own world of selfishness, allowing man to roam around in his world of sin. Why? So that man’s true nature of sinfulness will be clearly seen, and thereby cause the honest and thinking man to seek God. God wishes and will have mercy upon all, both Jew and Gentile; but before men can come to God, they must confess two things:

⇒ that they are sinful and dying creatures in desperate need of God.

⇒ that God exists and that He will have mercy upon the person who diligently seeks Him.

Now note: all men, both Jew and Gentile, are shut up in their world of sin. Why? That God may have mercy upon both. The holiness and love of God assure that the Jews will be saved and restored to the mercy of God. All that is needed is for the Jews to begin seeking God. God will have mercy upon any who genuinely seek Him.

**“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).**

**“But if from thence [the world] thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Dt.4:29).**

**“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron.7:14).**

**“But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children” (Ps.103:17).**

**“For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips” (Pr.8:7).**

**“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer.29:13).**

**“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not” (Lam.3:22).**

**“And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil” (Joel 2:13).**

**“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy” (Mic.7:18).**

**6** (11:33-36) **Israel, Restoration:** the sixth surety is God’s glorious plan for the world. Note four points.

1. God’s glorious plan for the world involves four great acts of God.

a. His infinite wisdom and knowledge: knowing how to do everything perfectly; knowing how to create and arrange, order, and govern everything so that all things work out perfectly. Note how God’s wisdom and knowledge are said to be deep and rich: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” God’s wisdom and knowledge are so deep and rich...

• that angels desire to look into them (1 Pt.1:13).

• that they are infinite (Eph.3:18).

• that they are too wonderful for man (Ps.139:6. This one verse alone shows just how great God’s mercy is toward us.)

• that they include thoughts more numerous than the grains of sand in the world (Ps.139:17-18).

b. His infinite judgments and ways: His judgment in planning and deciding everything, and His ways in executing His purposes and decisions. Note that His judgment and ways are said to be unsearchable and past finding out.

⇒ Secret things belong to God (Dt.29:29).

⇒ God is glorified by His infinite judgments and ways (Pr.25:2).

⇒ The great things of God are unsearchable and without number (Job 5:9; 9:10).

⇒ Man cannot discover God by searching (Job 11:7).

⇒ There is no searching of God’s understanding (Is.40:28).

2. No man can grasp God's plan. No man can know the mind of the Lord; no man can be a counsellor to God. Note two significant points.

a. No man can grasp God's plan. Scripture makes this abundantly clear.

"[Jesus Christ] who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting" (1 Tim.6:16).

"Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job 11:7).

"He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end" (Eccl.3:11).

b. Believers do, however, have *the mind of Christ*. This does not mean that believers understand God and His ways perfectly, but it does mean that God reveals Himself and the truth to believers—enough of Himself and His ways to save them from sin, death, judgment, and hell.

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor.2:16).

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor.2:12).

"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (Jn.7:16-17).

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn.8:31-32).

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (Jn.17:3).

"We...pray for you....that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col.1:9-10).

"Then shall we know; if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hos.6:3).

3. No man can earn God's gift. Note two facts about this verse.

a. No man can put God in debt to him. No man can give anything to God and claim that God owes him something in return. God owes man nothing. Man has rejected and rebelled against following God, choosing to go his own way. Man is committing high treason against God. Man does not deserve nor can he earn any favor from God. If man is to receive a favor from God, God has to freely give the favor.

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Mt.7:22-23).

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Ro.3:20).

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

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph.2:8-9).

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit.3:4-5).

b. Man's depravity should silence his boasting. It does not, but it should (see note—Ro.3:19-20. Cp. Ro.3:9-20 for discussion.)

4. God alone is the source, the means, and the end of all things. Therefore, God is to be glorified forever and ever.  
 ⇒ All things are *of God*: all things were created by and find their source in God.  
 ⇒ All things are *through God*: all things come through His wisdom and knowledge, His judgments and ways.  
 ⇒ All things are *to God*: all things exist for God, for His goodness and pleasure.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev.4:11).

"Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel" (Ps.22:23).

"All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee" (Ps.145:10).

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor.6:20).

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (Jn.15:8).

## CHAPTER 12

## VIII. THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR, 12:1-15:13

## A. The Believer and God, 12:1-2

- 1 Devotion urged
- 2 Present your bodies to God<sup>DS1</sup>
  - a. As a living sacrifice, holy
  - b. The reason: Is acceptable & reasonable
- 3 Do not be conformed to this world
- 4 Be transformed
  - a. By the renewing of your mind
  - b. The reason: To prove the will of God

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

## DIVISION VIII

## THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR, 12:1-15:13

## A. The Believer and God, 12:1-2

(12:1-2) **Introduction:** the believer is to be devoted to God. Everything he is and has is to be dedicated to the worship and service of God. Anything less than total devotion is short of God's glory: it is sin. Therefore, when discussing the believer's relationship to God, Scripture is strong in its exhortation. Without equivocation, Scripture urges total devotion.

1. Devotion urged (v.1).
2. Present your bodies to God (v.1).
3. Be not conformed to this world (v.2).
4. Be transformed (v.2).

**1** (12:1) **Dedication—Commitment:** devotion is strongly urged. The word “therefore” launches a new subject for discussion. It connects what is about to be said to what has been said. What has been said is this:

- ⇒ The world desperately needs to get right with God (Ro.1:18-3:20).
- ⇒ The way for the world to get right with God is now clearly revealed through God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The way is *justification*: believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and having God *count* one's faith as righteousness (Ro.3:21-5:21).
- ⇒ The believer in Christ can now be *sanctified*, that is, set apart to God and set free from sin to life eternal by the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit (Ro.6:1-8:39).
- ⇒ The believer or the church, not Israel, is now God's choice to carry the gospel of His Son to the whole world (Ro.9:1-11:36).

This is the glorious message of how much God loves us and of what God has done for us. This is what is meant by “the mercies of God.” The mercies of God are overflowing; they are beyond anything any person could ever desire. Just think about what God has done for us. God has...

- met our desperate need to get right with Him.
- provided the power to be set free from the terrible bondages of this life and to live eternally.
- given the most glorious purpose to life: that of proclaiming the news of God's Son, of how to be set free from sin and death and to live eternally.

*Therefore*, in light of the mercies of God, of all this that God has done for us, we must devote ourselves to God. We must dedicate and commit ourselves to Him.

Note the words “I beseech you” (*parakaleo*)—implore you, urge you, beg you—devote yourselves to God. Note a significant point: what is about to be said is not being said to the world, that is, to the lost. It is being directed to *brothers in Christ*: “I beseech you therefore, *brethren*.” Devotion to God is strongly urged. The believer is to do the things covered in the next three points of the outline.

**2** (12:1) **Body—Dedication:** the believer is to present his body to God. The importance of the human body cannot be overstated. The one thing upon earth that is abused more than anything else is man's body. Man abuses, neglects, and ignores his body...

- by overeating
- by becoming inactive
- by being too active
- by cursing, fighting, and killing
- by partaking of harmful substances
- by caring for the external abusing the internal
- by getting too much or too little rest

The list could go on and on, but just the mention of these few *sins* clearly strikes the point home. If there is an exhortation in Scripture that must be heeded by Christian believers, it is the exhortation of these two verses.

1. The believer is to present his body as a *living* sacrifice to God. Note three facts.
  - a. God demands the *believer's body*. God is not only interested in man's spirit; He is vitally interested in man's body. His interest could not be any stronger nor made any clearer. This is clearly seen by contrasting the world's view of the body with God's view (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Body*—Ro.12:1 for discussion).
  - b. The believer is to present his body *to God*. The dedication...
    - is not to be made to *self*: living as one wishes; doing one's own thing.
    - is not to be made to *others*: living for family, wife, husband, child, parent, mistress, companion, sexual partner, or employer.
    - is not to be to *something else*: houses, lands, property, money, cars, possessions, profession, recreation, retirement, luxury, power, recognition, fame.

The body is to be offered to God and to God alone. God demands the body, demands that it be presented to Him. God wants the body to be sacrificially living for Him.

- c. The believer is to present his body to God as a *living sacrifice*. Note the believer's offering of his body is to be *sacrificial*. This is the picture of Old Testament believers taking animals and offering them to God as sacrifices. The believer is to make the same kind of sacrificial offering to God, but note the profound difference. The believer's offering is not to be the sacrifice of an animal's flesh and blood. The offering and sacrifice of the believer is to be his body: he is to offer his body as a *living sacrifice*. A living sacrifice means at least four things.
  - ⇒ A *living sacrifice* means a constant, continuous sacrifice, not just an occasional dedication of one's body. A person does not sacrifice his body to God today, and then take his body back into his own hands and do his own thing tomorrow. A *living sacrifice* means that a person dedicates his body *to live for God and to keep on living for God*.
  - ⇒ A *living sacrifice* means a sacrifice of a person's body wherever the body is. A particular place is not needed. The sacrifice of the body is a living sacrifice; it can be made while the body is living right where it is. And the offering of a living sacrifice is to be made *right now* while the body is living.
  - ⇒ A *living sacrifice* means that the body sacrifices its own desires and lives for God. The body lives a holy, righteous, pure, clean, and moral life for God. The body does not pollute, dirty, nor contaminate itself with the sins and corruptions of the world: neither the lust of the flesh, nor the lust of the eyes, nor the pride of life. The believer's body is sacrificed for God and dedicated to live as He commands.
  - ⇒ A *living sacrifice* means that the body lives for God by serving God. It means that the body sacrifices and gives up its own ambitions and desires, and it serves God while upon this earth. The body gives itself to the work of proclaiming the love of God and of ministering to a world reeling in desperate needs. The body sacrifices itself to serve God and Him alone. The body is dedicated to God as a living sacrifice.

In summary, the believer is to dedicate his body to God as a living sacrifice in the home, church, school, office, plant, field, restaurant, club, plane, car or bus. No matter where the believer's body is, his body is to be sacrificed for God. Sacrificing to God is not something that is transacted in a church. Sacrificing to God is transacted in every act of the human body. The world, that is, the whole universe, is the sanctuary of God; and the believer's body is the temple of God. Therefore, every act of the believer's body is to be an act of service to God.

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor.6:20).**

2. The reasons why the believer is to present his body to God are twofold.
  - a. The dedication of the body to God is *acceptable* (euareston) to God. The word means well-pleasing, approving, and extremely satisfying to God. God accepts, joys, and rejoices over a body that is dedicated and living for Him.

**Thought 1.** This is the very thing for which believers should seek: to be acceptable and well-pleasing to God. We should seek to cause Him to joy and to rejoice in our bodies. Our bodies should be so dedicated—so pure, holy, and clean, so committed, and involved in helping people—that God's heart is just flooded with joy and rejoicing.

**Thought 2.** Note: the believer's body is either causing God's heart to feel pain and hurt or joy and rejoicing.

**“Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him” (2 Cor.5:9).**

- b. The dedication of the body to God is the believer's reasonable service.
  - ⇒ The word “reasonable” (logiken) means rational, intelligent, logical. It is an act of the mind thinking and figuring out what and how to do something.
  - ⇒ the word “service” (latpeian) means worship, ministry.

The idea is that the believer is to use his mind in dedicating his body to the service of God. He is to study the Scriptures, and intelligently think about how to best serve God as he walks through life day by day.

**Thought 1.** Note how this indicates a worship time in God's Word and in prayer every day. The believer must be constantly seeking to know what is allowed and what is not allowed for his body. The believer's body must know what it can eat, drink, and do; therefore, rational and intelligent study and decisions must be made about what to allow the body to do. (What an enormous difference from the way most of us conduct our lives and treat our bodies in this life!)

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(12:1) **Body:** the world's view of the human body differs radically from God's view. This is clearly seen by contrasting the two views.

1. Some persons treat the body as though it is all that matters in this world. They believe the body—its physical, mental, and social development—is what life is all about. Therefore, they declare that man must take care of his body to the ultimate degree, developing and getting the most out of it. The developing process may range all the way from *body-building through weight-lifting to mental apprehension through concentrated study*. Some just view the body—its development, life, and contribution to society—as the very purpose for the existence of man, as the very reason lying behind the evolutionary process of man's being. (Note: this view is most often held by the humanist, the disciplined, and the stoics of society; however, there are *few persons* who hold to a *pure* view of the human body. Most persons cross this view with the next view so as to live as they choose when they choose.)

2. Other persons treat the body as though it matters little. It is reasonably or moderately important, but not of supreme importance. The supreme significance in life is the *spirit of living* and getting the most out of life. What a person does with the body matters little just so he takes reasonable care of it. *What matters is the enjoyment and pleasure of life, the spirit of living*, of really experiencing the most enjoyment possible. The attitude is “care for the body, yes, but be reasonable about its care. The body is not going to last forever, so do not let its care interfere with the enjoyment and pleasure of life. *Eat, drink, and be merry*—just do not kill yourself. A few hours or months taken off a person's life for over-indulging here and there do not matter that much. Do not take the fun out of life by over-stressing the body.” (Note: this view is most often held by the carnal, the undisciplined, and the Epicureans of society. However, remember the statement above: there are few persons who hold to a *pure* view of either position.)

3. God's view of the human body differs radically from man's view. God's view of the body is *higher and more supreme* than man's view. Scripture reveals several significant things about the human body.

a. When God created man, He created him in His own image (Gen.1:27). That image rested in the human body. No matter what the *image* is, or what a person thinks the image is, it rested in the human body. An image is only a shadow. It is like the picture on a stamp: the picture is not the person; it is only an image of the person. However, it is an image, and it is a likeness. Just what is meant by the “image” may be disputed, but the arguments do not matter. Whatever the image is...

- it was given to man by God.
- it was a part of man, of his being, of his person, of his body.

The point is this: man's body is of supreme importance to God. God gave the body the stamp of His very own image.

b. When God sent His Son into the world, He chose to send Him in a human body.

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).**

c. When God's Son was put to death and His body buried, God raised His body up from the grave and took His resurrected body into the spiritual world.

d. Scripture teaches that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, that the body actually *houses* the presence of God's Spirit.

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

e. Scripture teaches that the body has been created to exist eternally and that the body of man will actually be resurrected from the dust of the ground and recreated into a perfect body (1 Cor.15:1-58; 1 Th.4:14-18).

f. Scripture teaches that the body is to be cared for to the ultimate degree, being developed and disciplined to the fullest.

⇒ The ultimate degree of physical discipline.

**“Neither yield ye your members [bodily parts] as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead [perfection], and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Ro.6:13).**

⇒ The ultimate degree of mental discipline.

**“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).**

⇒ The ultimate degree of social discipline.

**“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mt.22:39).**

**“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Mt.7:12).**

g. Scripture teaches that the body is to enjoy life to the fullest.

**“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn.10:10).**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

In summary, Scripture teaches that the human body is of supreme importance to God; therefore, man should take care of his body as well as is humanly possible. The body does not exist for this life alone; it has a far more supreme purpose than to just exist for a few years and then cease to be. The body of man has been created by God to be resurrected and to live eternally.

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Ro.12:1).**

**3** (12:2) **Conformed—World—Worldliness:** the believer is not to be conformed to this world.

1. The word “conformed” (sunschematizo) comes from the root word *schema* which means fashion, the outward form, the appearance of a man. It is the appearance of a person that changes from day to day and year to year. A man dresses differently for work than he does for an evening out. A man looks different as a young man than he does as an older man. His schema, his fashion, his outward appearance differs.

2. The word “world” (aion) in the simplest of terms means the world itself and everything in it, for it is all corruptible. The world, including the heavens and earth and all therein, is aging, deteriorating and dying; and it will pass away. The world is not perfect: not in being, order, morality, or justice.

3. The believer is not to be conformed to this world. Now note something: the world, the very fashion and appearance of the world...

- seems to be lasting, permanent, and unending.
- seems to offer the very best of everything: pleasure, enjoyment, happiness, fulfillment, satisfaction, completeness.

However, the fashion and appearance of the world is a lie, a mask, a masquerade. Even the very *spirit of the world* has within it the seed of corruption. The seed of corruption is seen in the acts of the world and its nature, in the terrible spirit of...

- |               |                 |            |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| • selfishness | • division      | • death    |
| • greed       | • war           | • sickness |
| • anger       | • deceitfulness | • disease  |
| • hatred      | • suffering     | • cursing  |
| • bitterness  | • conflict      | • pride    |
| • ungodliness | • ignorance     | • disorder |
| • savagery    | • deterioration | • decay    |

Note two significant facts, facts that desperately need to be heeded by the world as well as by believers.

a. The world itself and everything in it shall pass away.

**“The fashion of this world passeth away” (1 Cor.7:31).**

**“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor.4:18).**

**“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:10-14; cp. v.3-14).**

**“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jn.2:17).**

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Rev.21:1).

“The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish” (Is.24:4).

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb.9:27).

“But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away” (Jas.1:10).

“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jas.4:14).

“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away” (1 Pt.1:24).

“For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding” (1 Chron.29:15).

“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope” (Job 7:6).

“Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good” (Job 9:25).

“Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity” (Ps.39:5).

“Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish” (Ps.49:12).

“For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again” (Ps.78:39).

“Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed” (Ps.102:25-26).

“For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Ps.103:14).

“As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more” (Ps.103:15-16).

“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?” (Is.2:22).

“The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass” (Is.40:6-7).

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Is.64:6).

- b. The believer is not to conform, that is, fashion himself after the world...
- not to follow the fellowship of the world.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas.4:4).

“And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against” (Lk.2:34).

- not to follow the fashion and lusts of the world.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance” (1 Pt.1:14).

- not to follow the course of this world.

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph.2:2).

- not to follow the god of this world, Satan.

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).

- not to follow the leaders of this world.

“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor.2:6-8).

- not to follow the false security of the world.

“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Mt.24:38-39).

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Th.5:2-3).

- not to follow after the deceitful riches of this world.

“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he become unfruitful” (Mt.13:22).

- not to live in pleasure on earth.

“Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter” (Jas.5:5).

- not to follow the crowd of the world.

“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil” (Ex.23:2).

**4** (12:2) **Transformed—Mind:** the believer is to be transformed (metamorphousthe). The Greek root of the word is *morphe*. *Morphe* means the real being of a man. It is the very nature and essence, the inseparable part, the unchanging shape of a man. The man in evening clothes looks different than he does in work clothes, but he is still the same man inwardly. The elderly man is the same man inwardly that he was as a young man.

What the Bible is saying is clearly evident: the believer must undergo a radical change within his inner being in order to escape the world and its doom. The believer must be transformed and changed inwardly. His real self—his very nature, essence, personality, inner being, his inner man—must be changed.

1. How is a man transformed within his inner person? The Bible declares as simply as can be stated, “by the renewing of your mind.” The believer’s mind is to be renewed (anakainosis), which means to be made new, readjusted, changed, turned around, regenerated.

- a. The mind of man has been affected by sin. It desperately needs to be renewed. The mind is far from perfect. It is *basically worldly*, that is...
  - selfish
  - self-centered
  - self-seeking
  - centered on this world
  - centered on the flesh
  - centered on this life

Scripture is clear about the corruption of man’s mind. The human mind has been tragically corrupted by man’s selfishness and sin.

⇒ Man’s mind has become *vain*, empty, and futile in its *imaginations*.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Ro.1:21).

⇒ Man’s mind has become *reprobate*.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Ro.1:28).

⇒ Man’s mind has become carnal and full of enmity against God.

“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Ro.8:7).

⇒ Man’s mind has become blinded by Satan lest it believe the glorious gospel of Christ.

**“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).**

⇒ Man’s mind has become *full* of vanity, futility, emptiness.

**“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of the mind” (Eph.4:17).**

⇒ Man’s mind has become focused upon earthly things.

**“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Ph.3:18-19).**

⇒ Man’s mind has become alienated from God and an enemy to God.

**“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col.1:21).**

⇒ Man’s mind has become fleshly.

**“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Col.2:18).**

⇒ Man’s mind has become defiled.

**“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled” (Tit.1:15).**

b. The mind is renewed by the *presence and the image* of Christ in the life of the believer. When a person receives the Lord Jesus Christ as His Lord, the man is *spiritually*...

- born again (Jn.3:3-8; 1 Pt.1:23).
- made into a new man (Eph.4:24; Col.3:10).
- made into a new creature (2 Cor.5:17).
- given the mind of Christ (1 Cor.2:16; cp. v.9-15).
- changed into the image of Christ (2 Cor.3:18; cp. Ro.8:29; 1 Cor.15:49; Col.3:10; 1 Jn.3:2).

What this means is a most wonderful truth, and it is easily seen. When a person receives Jesus Christ into his life, he receives the *mind and the image* of Christ as well. Christ places His mind into the believer’s mind; that is, Christ changes the believer’s mind to focus upon God. In addition, He stamps His image upon the person. Whereas the believer’s mind and image used to be centered upon the world, they are now centered upon spiritual matters. The believer’s mind and image are renewed, changed, turned around, and regenerated to focus upon God. However, it is critical to remember that only Christ can renew the human mind and image. Only Christ can implant *the mind and image of Christ* within a person. Only Christ can give His thoughts and the spirit to *live out* His thoughts to a person.

c. The believer is to live a transformed life; that is, he is to walk day by day *renewing his mind more and more*. He is to allow the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) to focus his mind more and more upon God and spiritual things.

⇒ The believer is to love the Lord with all his mind.

**“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Mt.22:37).**

⇒ The believer is to keep his mind upon spiritual things, not carnal things.

**“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:5-6).**

⇒ The believer is to cast down imaginations and every thought that interrupts his knowledge of God and to captivate every thought for Christ.

**“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:3-5).**

⇒ The believer is not to let his mind be corrupted.

**“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor.11:3).**

⇒ The believer is not to fulfill the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

**“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph.2:3).**

⇒ The believer is not to walk as the world walks, in the vanity of their mind.

**“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind” (Eph.4:17).**

⇒ The believer is to be renewed in the spirit of his mind.

**“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph.4:23).**

⇒ The believer is to let the mind of Christ be in him by walking humbly before God and men.

**“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Ph.2:5).**

⇒ The believer is to think only upon the things of praise and virtue.

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Ph.4:8).**

⇒ The believer is to live by the laws of God which God has put into his mind.

**“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Heb.8:10).**

⇒ The believer is to arm himself with the same mind as Christ in bearing suffering.

**“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (1 Pt.4:1).**

2. The reason why the believer is to be transformed is extremely significant. The believer must prove (dokimazo) the will of God. The word “prove” means both to *find* and to *follow* God’s will. This is certainly understandable. If a person’s mind is not renewed and focused upon God...

- how can the person ever find or discover or know the will of God?
- how can the person ever follow or obey or do the will of God?

The only conceivable way a person can ever *find* and *follow* God’s will is to focus and keep his mind upon God and upon the things of God.

Note also how the will of God is described. Meditating upon the threefold description stirs a person to crave after God’s will. God’s will is said to be...

- good (agathon): beneficial, rich, bountiful, suitable, moral.
- acceptable (euareston): pleasing, satisfactory, welcomed.
- perfect (teleion): without error or mistake, flawless, complete, absolute, free from any need, short of nothing, completely fulfilled.

In summary, victory over the world is gained by the believer renewing his mind more and more. The believer must focus his mind upon God and the things of God. He must...

- focus His mind upon living and moving and having his being in God.
- learn to concentrate upon God and the things of God.
- mentally practice the presence of God.

Very practically, the believer must do exactly what Scripture says. Note the clarity and life-changing instructions in these passages. What an enormous impact is made upon lives when they actually follow the Word of God in these instructions!

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Ph.4:8).**

**“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).**

**“Attend upon the Lord without distraction” (1 Cor.7:35).**

**“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Is.26:3).**

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).**

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Think highly of oneself, but not too highly</b><br/> a. Think soberly: Sanelly, accurately<br/> b. The reasons<br/> 1) What we have come from God<br/> 2) God gifts every person<br/> 3) We are all one body in Christ</p> | <p><b>B. The Believer and Himself, 12:3-8</b><br/> 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.<br/> 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:<br/> 5 So we, being many, are one</p> | <p>body in Christ, and every one members one of another.<br/> 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;<br/> 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;<br/> 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; He that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.</p> | <p><b>2 Use the gifts God has given</b><br/> a. The gift of prophecy<br/><br/> b. The gift of ministry<br/> c. The gift of teaching<br/><br/> d. The gift of exhortation<br/> e. The gift of giving<br/><br/> f. The gift of ruling<br/> g. The gift of mercy</p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR, 12:1-15:13**

**B. The Believer and Himself, 12:3-8**

(12:3-8) **Introduction:** after looking at the subject of the believer and God, the believer needs to look at the subject of himself. He needs to see what the exhortation of God is to him personally. God directs two forceful charges to the believer personally.

1. Think highly of oneself, but not too highly (v.3-5).
2. Use the gifts God has given (v.6-8).

**1** (12:3-5) **Humility—Gifts, Spiritual—Church—Body of Christ:** the believer is to think of himself, but not too highly. The exhortation is directed to “*every man* that is among you.” Every believer needs to work at humility. There is a tendency within many persons to think too highly of themselves. Too many become conceited, prideful, and arrogant. They become *puffed up* with their own...

- importance
- looks
- popularity
- position
- ability
- performance
- wealth
- possessions
- opinions
- education
- goodness
- title

There are too many who esteem themselves too highly and who think of themselves as *better* than others. God stands against such *puffed up* attitudes.

1. Think of yourself, but think soberly (sophronein). The word means to be balanced, sane, in one’s right mind. Therefore, the exhortation is to think of oneself wisely and accurately, making a sane and well-balanced evaluation of one’s person and abilities. An evaluation of oneself should be made, but it should be a sober and sane judgment, not an insane, imbalanced judgment. Note how strong this is: thinking too highly of oneself is an insane thought. Thinking that one is more important than someone else is insane behavior. Every person is important to God; every person is meaningful and significant to God’s kingdom, no matter who the person is.

2. The reasons why we are to walk humbly before others are clearly spelled out.
  - a. What we are and have has come from God. It is God who has “dealt to every man the measure of faith.” The word “faith” in the context of these verses means a *working faith*. It includes both...
    - the gifts and abilities God gives to a person.
    - the faith and drive or confidence to use the gifts.

Very simply, a *working faith* is the ability and drive within a person to get to it and to serve God, to make his contribution to life and society. Another way to say the same thing is this: the measure of faith (v.3) and the proportion of faith (v.6) mean the spiritual gift and power which God gives to each believer for his special task on earth. Very simply, everything a person is and has comes from God. Nothing comes from man himself. Therefore, no person has reason to think too highly of himself.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas.1:17).

“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor.4:7).

Note another fact as well: what we have received from God is *only a measure*. No person has a full measure of anything. No person is perfect in any area. We all age, deteriorate, and decay. We all have to move aside eventually for others, no matter what our abilities and contributions. We have no reason to think too highly of ourselves.

**“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Eph.4:7).**

- b. God gifts *every person*, not just one person nor just a few persons. Note that God deals to *every man* a measure of faith. No person or persons have a monopoly on any gift or ability. Every single believer has been gifted by God; not a single believer has been omitted by God. One believer is as important to God as any other believer, no matter who the believer may be. There is no room for pride and arrogance in the Kingdom of God, no place for thinking that one is more important than others. Such thoughts are insane.
- c. Genuine believers are *one body* in Christ. This is the most beautiful picture of the body of Christ in Scripture, and because of its effectiveness it is often used (cp. 1 Cor.10:17; 12:12f; 12:27; Eph.1:22-23; 2:16; 4:4, 15-16; 5:22f; Col.1:18, 24).

Believers can be compared to the human body. The human body has many parts or members, and no two members have the same function. So it is with believers. Believers are many, yet they are one body *in Christ*. Every single believer has a distinct function to fulfill in the world, yet he is a member of all other believers. It should be noted that the believer's union is not organizational. It is not the same kind of unity that exists in a civic or social club, which is a unity based upon such things as friendship, preference, neighborhood, profession, human need, opinion, or organization. The union between genuine believers is born of the Spirit of God, of a true *spiritual birth and union*. It is a union that is in constant and intimate fellowship with God and that draws its life and purpose and meaning and significance from God. The union between genuine believers is a union that is *quicken and made alive* by a common Spirit, a Spirit that truly lives, the Holy Spirit of God Himself.

The point is clearly stated: all members do not have the same office (praxis) or function. God has set the believer in the world for a specific purpose, and God has gifted the believer with whatever measure of faith is needed to fulfill his function. The believer is a member or a part of the whole body, with each member having his task to perform. There is no room for self-elevation, pride, or arrogance—no room for thinking too highly of oneself. The believer does not stand alone in the world. Every believer has a measure of faith to do his task, and every member is needed to get the task done. Therefore, no believer has the right to think of himself more highly than any other believer. Every single believer is important to the *body of Christ*. Every believer is needed to complete, fulfill, and perfect the body. The body becomes handicapped without the active functioning of every member. Every member is very important.

The point is this: believers are to evaluate and know themselves well. They are to know who they are and the gifts which God has given them. They are to evaluate the measure of faith God has given and they are to be honest and accurate in their evaluation. They are not to over-evaluate nor to under-evaluate. A believer's judgment about himself must be accurate and wise in order to accomplish his task upon earth.

**Thought 1.** Only as we know ourselves—accurately, honestly, and truthfully—can we make the contribution we should to our families, jobs, society, church, and the world. Only as we serve to our full capacity can we fulfill our task on earth.

⇒ If we think too highly of ourselves, we attempt too much and end up failing.

⇒ If we think too little of ourselves, we never do as much as we could nor make the contributions that we could have made.

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**“But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee” (Lk.14:10).**

**“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Lk.22:26).**

**“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Jas.4:10).**

**“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pt.5:5).**

**“By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honor, and life” (Pr.22:4).**

**“A man's pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Pr.29:23).**

**Thought 2.** God gifts the believer with a certain measure of spiritual gifts; therefore, the believer is to use whatever measure of faith he has to use his gifts for God. However, the believer should always be praying for more and more faith.

**“Lord, increase our faith” (Lk.17:5).**

**“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mk.9:24).**

**“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Ro.10:17).**

**2** (12:6-8) **Gifts, Spiritual:** the believer is to use the gifts God has given him. The word “gift” (charisma) means the very special ability given to the believer by God. Note that the gift is from God; it is not a natural talent. The believer

could not have attained nor secured the ability himself. It is a spiritual gift; that is, it is given by the Spirit of God for spiritual purposes. It is given to the believer so that he can fulfill his task on earth.

Note also that the gifts are said to be given “according to the grace that is given to us.” This means that the gifts are given after we come to know the *grace* of God. This is part of our *heritage in Christ*, the glorious privilege...

- of being given a very special task upon earth.
- of being given purpose, meaning, and significance in life.
- of being given a very special gift or gifts to fulfill our task on earth.

Now, what are the gifts? Several are singled out in this passage. (See outline and notes—1 Cor.12:4-11; 12:12-31; 13:1-13; Eph.4:7-16 for more discussion.)

1. There is the *gift of prophecy*. In the Old Testament the gift of prophecy was the gift to proclaim and explain the will of God. The proclamation dealt with past, present, and future events. However, in the New Testament, the gift of prophecy changes dramatically. The prophet is seldom seen predicting the future. Instead, he is seen proclaiming what has taken place in the Lord Jesus Christ and what has been *revealed by Christ* concerning future events. His function is to edify, exhort, and comfort. The Scripture is clear about this.

**“He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort”  
(1 Cor.14:3).**

The prophet is the man who proclaims and explains the Word of God...

- the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.
- the written Word, the Holy Scripture.

Having said this, it should be noted that prophecy is the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God’s Spirit. It includes both prediction and proclamation, and neither one should be minimized despite the abuse of the gift.

There is no question, the gift to predict events has been abused to the point of the ridiculous. However, the abuse of a gift does not eliminate the gift: the Spirit of God does sometimes give believers a glimpse into coming events in order to prepare and strengthen them to face the events.

However, the major function of prophecy is clearly stated by Scripture, and the fact should be learned by all believers:

**“He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort”  
(1 Cor.14:3).**

**Thought 1.** Note a crucial point. A prophet of the Lord Jesus Christ must first know Jesus Christ before he can proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ. How can a man tell the world about Someone when he does not know the person himself?

2. There is the *gift of ministry* (diakonia). The word is often used of a servant or of a person who serves and ministers to others in the most practical ways. Therefore, the meaning would be the very special ability to serve, minister, aid, help and assist others—to assist them in such a way that they are *built up* and truly helped. It is the most practical of gifts. Most of us know a few people who are always willing and who are unusually gifted to help others when help is needed. All of us can help, and all of us can develop our willingness and ability to help, but there are some believers who are unusually gifted with the very special gift of ministry.

**“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Mt.10:42).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Ph.2:5-7).**

**“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jas.1:27).**

3. There is the *gift of teaching* (didaskon). Teaching is the ability to explain, root, and ground people in the truth. The Word of God not only needs to be proclaimed by the prophet, but it must also be explained by the teacher. People must be guided and rooted in all the truths of the Word day by day, week by week, and year by year. This is the teacher’s task.

**Thought 1.** How desperately the church needs good, solid teaching. People are walking out the back door of the church almost as fast as they are coming in the front door, all because they are not rooted and grounded in Christ.

**“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Cor.12:28).**

**“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph.4:11).**

**“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:20).**

4. There is the gift of exhortation (parakalesei). This is the very special ability to excite, motivate, advise, encourage, comfort, and warn people. The dominant factor would be the motivation and encouragement of people, the ability to stir people to make a decision for Christ and to grow in Him. It is the gift that arouses people to get up and get busy fulfilling their task for the Lord.

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

**“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Tit.1:9).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:11-15).**

5. There is the *gift of giving* (metadidomi). This simply means the giving of one's earthly possessions such as money, clothing, and food. Note that in listing this particular gift, Scripture adds a point: it tells how the person is to give. He is to give with “simplicity” (haplotetes). The word has several ideas. It means...

- to give with sincerity and in simplicity.
- to give with singleness of heart and without show.
- to give liberally and generously.

The point is this: God gives some persons the special gift to make money in order to have plenty to help others and to spread the gospel around the world. These persons...

- must give and give generously. God gave them the gift of making money in order to have enough to fulfill the will of God for the world. Therefore, they must give liberally.
- must not hoard and bank and misuse their gift of wealth.
- must not give grudgingly and complainingly about having to give.
- must not give to attract attention or to heap honor upon themselves.
- must not give to boost their own egos and pride.

**“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth” (Mt.6:3).**

**“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor.16:2).**

**“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor.9:7).**

6. There is the gift of *ruling* (proistemi). This means the ability of leadership, authority, administration, government. Note that this person is to lead with diligence (spoude): with haste, zeal, desire, and concentrated attention. There is no room for laziness, complacency, and irresponsibility in the Kingdom of God and His church. The leaders are the ones who are to blaze the path for the flock of God, and they are to do it with zeal, hard work, and iron determination.

**“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Ro.12:11).**

**“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pt.5:2-3).**

7. There is the *gift of mercy* (eleon). This is a person who is full of forgiveness and compassion, pity and kindness toward others. Note that the merciful person is to show mercy with a cheerful (hilarotes) heart. The word means kind, cheerful, joyful. The person with the gift of mercy...

- is not to forgive grudgingly.
- is not to hesitate in forgiving others.
- is not to show mercy in an annoyed spirit.
- is not to show mercy in a spirit of criticism and rebuke toward the person who needs help. (This often happens when the person is down and out because of unemployment, lack of education, or some other unfortunate circumstance.)

The believer who has the spirit of mercy is to show mercy with a cheerful and joyful heart, doing all he can to lift up the person needing mercy.

**“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt.5:7).**

**“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Lk.6:36).**

**“Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually” (Hos.12:6).**

**“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic.6:8).**

| <b>C. The Believer &amp; Other Believers, 12:9-13</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1 Love sincerely—without hypocrisy</b><br/>                     a. By hating evil<br/>                     b. By cleaving to good<br/>                     c. By loving as brothers<br/>                     d. By giving preference</p> | <p>9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.<br/>                     10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;</p> |
| <p><b>2 Serve the Lord</b><br/>                     a. Do not lag in zeal<br/>                     b. Be fervent in spirit</p>   | <p>11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;</p>  |
| <p><b>3 Conquer trials</b><br/>                     a. By rejoicing in hope<br/>                     b. By praying constantly</p>  | <p>12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;</p>  |
| <p><b>4 Meet needs unselfishly</b><br/>                     a. By giving generously<br/>                     b. By being hospitable</p>  | <p>13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.</p>  |

**DIVISION VIII**

**THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR, 12:1-15:13**

**C. The Believer and Other Believers, 12:9-13**

(12:9-13) **Introduction:** How should the believer relate to other believers? How should he treat believers and behave toward them? This subject is of vital concern to Christ.

1. Love sincerely—without hypocrisy (v.9-10).
2. Serve the Lord (v.11).
3. Conquer trials (v.12).
4. Meet needs unselfishly (v.13).

**1** (12:9-10) **Brotherhood—Love:** the believer is to love sincerely without hypocrisy. The word “dissimulation” (anupokritos) means without hypocrisy, without play-acting. It means that a person does not just say “I love you,” but he actually loves. He sincerely loves; he honestly and truthfully loves. The love being spoken about is love for all men and not only for believers. The believer must never pretend, be hypocritical, play-act, or have an ulterior motive when dealing with others. He must show love and respect, interest and attention, care and concern; but he must not show it from an impure motive:

- |                        |                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| ⇒ to seek gain         | ⇒ to gain attention    | ⇒ to court favor |
| ⇒ to gain an advantage | ⇒ to fulfill a duty    | ⇒ to boost self  |
| ⇒ to gain position     | ⇒ to push self forward |                  |

The believer must love others with a pure and sincere love, being completely free of selfish motives. He must love others for themselves because they are fellow human beings who have the same emotional and spiritual needs which he has, needs which can only find their fulfillment in Christ. He must love them because God loves them and because they desperately need to know that Jesus Christ has come to earth to reveal God’s love to all men. The believer’s dealings with all men must be in love: a sincere love, a love without hypocrisy and double-dealing.

“Giving no offence in anything...by love unfeigned [genuine]” (2 Cor.6:3, 6).

“Prove the sincerity of your love” (2 Cor.8:8).

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn.3:18).

There are four very practical ways the believer is to demonstrate his love for other men. Remember that the love being commanded is love for all men, for the lost as well as for other believers.

1. The believer is to love by hating evil. The word “abhor” (apostugountes) is strong, very strong. It means to hate with intense feeling, to loathe, to look upon with horror. Love desires the very best for people; therefore, love hates evil, for evil destroys human life. The believer stands against evil, doing all he can to fight...

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hunger and poverty</li> <li>• hurt and pain</li> <li>• drunkenness and drugs</li> <li>• cursing and bitterness</li> <li>• suggestive and enticing dress</li> <li>• unjust and improper</li> <li>• hoarding and divisiveness</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disease and suffering</li> <li>• ignorance and godless education</li> <li>• family divisiveness and divorce</li> <li>• off-colored and dirty talk</li> <li>• immorality and destructive sex</li> <li>• selfishness and greed</li> <li>• corruption and death</li> </ul> |
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The list could go on and on. The point is that the believer must love, and he shows his love by hating and fighting against that which is evil.

**“Abhor that which is evil” (Ro.12:9).**

**“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (1 Cor.10:6).**

**“Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Th.5:22).**

**“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas.4:17).**

**“Let him eschew [turn away from] evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it” (1 Pt.3:11).**

**“And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job 28:28).**

**“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it” (Ps.34:14).**

**“Ye that love the LORD, hate evil” (Ps.97:10).**

**“Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil” (Pr.4:27).**

**“A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident” (Pr.14:16).**

**“Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart” (Zech.7:9-10).**

2. The believer is to love by cleaving to that which is good. The word “cleave” (kollomenoi) means to join or fasten together, to attach, to cement or glue together. The believer is to desire only the very best—all the good possible—for people. He is to cleave to the good and to work for everyone to know and experience the good. The believer shows that he truly loves people by holding fast and working for the good.

**“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Lk.6:35).**

**“Cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim.6:18).**

**“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).**

**“For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pt.2:15).**

3. The believer is to love by loving his brothers in Christ, by being kind and affectionate toward them. The word “affectionate” (philostorgoi) means the love existing between family members. This charge is dealing with the Christian family, the brothers and sisters within the church. We are to love each other by being kind and affectionate. We are a family of children who have actually been adopted by God as His sons and daughters (2 Cor.6:17-18; Gal.4:4-6; Ro.8:16-17). Therefore, the believer is to live as a family member with his brothers and sisters; he is to live being both kind and affectionate. Note: there is no dissension or divisiveness in love. The church is to live in love, and living in love is peace.

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).**

**“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love” (Ro.12:10).**

**“Charity suffereth long, and is kind” (1 Cor.13:4).**

**“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).**

**“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Ph.2:1-2).**

**“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Col.3:12).**

**“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pt.1:5-7).**

**“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 Jn.3:14).**

4. The believer is to love by giving preference to other believers. The word “honor” (time) means to reverence, respect, esteem. The word “preferring” (proegoumenoi) means to go before, to lead, to set an example. The charge is clear: the believer is to take the lead in esteeming and expressing respect for others. Imagine a church full of believers with each taking the lead in esteeming and honoring the other. What a picture of true love and care, of real warmth and tenderness, of great strength and manliness.

**Thought 1.** How needed this exhortation is in the church and among believers! How many are hurt—how many have launched out to stir up trouble—how much divisiveness has been caused because a brother or sister was...

- overlooked
- not honored
- not esteemed
- not thanked
- not recognized
- not given a position
- not given a right
- not given a place
- not shown appreciation

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Ro.12:10).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**“Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved” (1 Cor.10:33).**

**“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth [welfare, profit, advantage]” (1 Cor.10:24).**

**2** (12:11) **Service—Ministry:** the believer is to serve the Lord. The charge is twofold.

1. Do not lag in zeal; do not be slothful in business. The word “slothful” (okneros) means to be lazy, slow-moving, sluggish, lethargic, complacent, hesitating, delaying. The word “business” (spoude) means diligence, zeal, earnestness. The exhortation is clear: the believer must...

- not be lazy or slow-moving in zeal.
- not be sluggish or lethargic in diligence.
- not be hesitating or delaying in earnestness.

The believer just cannot approach life in a lackadaisical, easy-going, slow-moving fashion. The world is reeling in pain, with millions starving and suffering due to man’s selfishness and sin, hoarding, disease, war, death—and the list could go on and on. The believer must not give in to sluggishness and complacency. He must serve the Lord with all diligence, zeal, and earnestness. He must be enthusiastic in his service.

**“Not slothful in business” (Ro.12:11).**

**“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).**

**“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread” (2 Th.3:10-12).**

**“That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb.6:12).**

**“In all labor there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury” (Pr.14:23).**

**“Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger” (Pr.19:15).**

**“Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty: Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread” (Pr.20:13).**

**“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Eccl.9:10).**

2. Be fervent in spirit. The word “fervent” (zeo) means to be hot, to boil, to set aflame. The believer’s spirit is to be hot, that is, boiling and flaming for Christ. The believer must have a holy zeal for Christ. He must be aflame in his service for Christ. Why? The world is reeling under the weight of desperate need and dying without Christ and being doomed to an eternity separated from God.

**“Fervent in spirit” (Ro.12:11).**

**“Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” (1 Cor.14:12).**

**“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Tim.1:6).**

**“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Heb.5:11-12).**

**“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Pt.1:10).**

**“Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance” (2 Pt.1:13).**

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:14).

3. Serve the Lord. The idea is that we are to be focusing upon the Lord in all we do. It is Him whom we serve. We live in order to serve Him; that is, our very purpose for being on earth is to minister for Him and His kingdom.

“Serving the Lord” (Ro.12:11).

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col.3:23-24).

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb.12:28).

“Servants [employees], be obedient to them that are your masters [employers] according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph.6:5-7).

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor.12:9-10).

“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Dt.10:12).

“Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling” (Ps.2:11).

**3** (12:12) **Trials—Hope—Prayer:** the believer is to conquer trials. While on earth the believer will face problems, difficulties, troubles, trials, tests, tribulations, traumas, ordeals, sufferings, and pain. Nevertheless, the believer has an *overcoming resource*. He can conquer the trials of life by doing three critical things.

1. The believer is to rejoice in hope. His hope is God—God’s presence, concern, and care. The believer knows that God will do one of two things: either *remove* the trial or deliver him *through* the trial. The believer knows he does not have to face trials alone, that no situation is hopeless. The believer is the eternal optimist: his hope is in the eternal God. Therefore, he not only hopes in the delivering power of God, he joys and rejoices in the hope God has given him.

“Rejoicing in hope” (Ro.12:12).

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).

“Wherein [in your salvation] ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Pt.1:6-9).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13).

“As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Cor.6:10).

“For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance” (Heb.10:34; cp. Acts 5:41; 16:23-25).

2. The believer is to endure trials. The word “patient” (hupomenontes) means to endure, remain, persevere, abide, bear up bravely. The believer actually experiences a surge of fortitude from Christ when trials confront him.

“Patient in tribulation” (Ro.12:12).

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Ph.4:13).

“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph.3:16).

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).

“Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

3. The believer is to continue in prayer. The phrase “continuing instant” (proskartereo) means to give constant attention to; to be devoted and attentive to; to give unceasing care to; to wait steadfastly upon, to persevere. Very simply, the

believer overcomes trials by giving constant attention to God and waiting upon His delivering power. The believer stays in constant communion with his Lord, depending upon Him to supply the strength to walk through the trials of daily living.

**“Continuing instant in prayer” (Ro.12:12).**

**“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Mt.7:7-8; cp. v.9-11).**

**“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mt.26:41).**

**“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk.18:1).**

**“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).**

**“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).**

**“Pray without ceasing” (1 Th.5:17).**

**“Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually” (1 Chron.16:11).**

**4** (12:13) **Stewardship—Ministry:** the believer is to meet the needs of people unselfishly. Two very simple demands are made of believers.

1. The believer is to give generously, to share with those in need. He is to “distribute” (koinoneo), that is, to give and share in order to meet their needs.

**“Distributing to the necessity of saints” (Ro.12:13).**

**“But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things” (Ro.15:25-27).**

**“I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also” (Ro.16:1-2).**

**“Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need” (Acts 4:34-35).**

**“The disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 11:29-30).**

**“Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints” (2 Cor.8:1-4).**

**“For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: for I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many” (2 Cor.9:1-2).**

2. The believer is to be given to hospitality. He is to open the door of his home to believers who are in need.  
⇒ The bishop or minister must be given to hospitality.

**“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach” (1 Tim.3:2).**

**“But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate” (Tit.1:8).**

⇒ All believers must open their door—even to strangers in need.

**“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels un-awares” (Heb.13:2).**

⇒ All believers must use hospitality as a means to minister and use it without grumbling.

**“Given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).**

**“Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Pt.4:9)**

⇒ Widows in particular are to use hospitality as a means to minister.

**“Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints’ feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work” (1 Tim.5:10).**

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| <p><b>1 Bless those who persecute you</b></p> <p><b>2 Show genuine interest in the experiences of men</b></p> <p><b>3 Seek harmony &amp; associate with the lowly</b><br/> a. By being of one mind<br/> b. By not being snobbish<br/> c. By avoiding conceit</p> <p><b>4 Live above reproach</b><br/> a. By not reacting</p> | <p><b>D. The Believer and Unbelievers, 12:14-21</b></p> <p>14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.</p> <p>15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.</p> <p>16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.</p> <p>17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things</p> | <p>honest in the sight of all men.</p> <p>18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.</p> <p>19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.</p> <p>20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.</p> <p>21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.</p> | <p>b. By showing good behavior</p> <p><b>5 Live at peace with all</b><br/> a. If possible<br/> b. As far as possible</p> <p><b>6 Give no place to revenge</b><br/> a. Because vengeance belongs to God</p> <p>b. Because treating an enemy with kindness will shame &amp; store up wrath against him</p> <p>c. Because vengeance makes evil victorious</p> |
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### DIVISION VIII

#### THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR, 12:1-15:13

##### D. The Believer and Unbelievers, 12:14-21

(12:14-21) **Introduction:** the believer is expected to conduct himself in the most *noble fashion* when dealing with the world of unbelievers. God expects His follower to control himself and to gain complete victory over his flesh. He expects the believer to give a strong testimony to the love of God, to demonstrate the love and forgiveness of God for all men.

1. Bless those who persecute you (v.14).
2. Show genuine interest in the experiences of men (v.15).
3. Seek harmony and associate with the lowly (v.16).
4. Live above reproach (v.17).
5. Live at peace with all (v.18).
6. Give no place to revenge (v.19-21).

**1** (12:14) **Persecution:** the believer is to bless those who persecute him. The word “bless” (eulogeo) means to *speak well of*. Therefore, the believer is charged to do something that could be most difficult: to speak well of those who persecute him. Picture how difficult this is when you are verbally or physically attacked: mistreated, insulted, by-passed, overlooked, slandered, cursed, abused, injured. You are to bless the person who attacks you; you are to bless your persecutor whether he is your...

- next door neighbor
- family member
- fellow worker
- classmate
- employee
- employer
- friend
- fellow committee member
- fellow church member

What does it mean to bless and to speak well of?

1. It means to *speak well to our persecutors*. We do not react against them by cursing, speaking harshly, or striking out at them. We do not try to hurt them either verbally or physically. On the contrary, we seek to find something that is commendable about them and we commend them for it.

**“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Pt.3:9).**

**“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:31-32).**

2. It means to *speak well about our persecutors*. When speaking to others, we do not down the persecutor, but we mention some commendable trait. We praise some “good thing” about the person; we do not tear him down.
3. It means to *pray for our persecutors*. We must do as Jesus said and did.

**“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Mt.5:44).**

**“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots” (Lk.23:34).**

**Thought 1.** Think of the impact upon persecutors when an attitude of love and blessing is demonstrated toward them. Every persecutor is not won to Christ, but every persecutor does have a strong witness, a strong witness that can be used by the Holy Spirit in the persecutor’s quiet and thoughtful moments. And some persecutors are won to Christ. This is what God is after.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

4. It means to do good to our persecutors.

**“But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you” (Lk.6:27).**

**“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Lk.6:35).**

**“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head” (Ro.12:20).**

**“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men” (1 Th.5:15).**

**“If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him” (Ex.23:5).**

**“If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink” (Pr.25:21).**

**2** (12:15) **Service:** the believer is to show genuine interest in the experiences of men. Two particular acts are mentioned.

1. We are to rejoice with them that rejoice. This does not mean that we are to participate in what the world calls its *joyful moments and affairs*, that is, in the *partying affairs* of the world. Far from it, God calls the believer to separation (2 Cor.6:17-18). What it means is that we are to rejoice with our neighbors, friends, and acquaintances when something good happens to them. We are to join them in their moment of joy:

- a new baby
- some achievement
- some promotion
- some new purchase
- some recognition
- some honor

Whatever the moment of joy is, we are to rejoice with them. However, this charge is not as easy as it sounds on the surface, for it often goes against the grain of human nature. Too often it is human nature...

- to envy a person's success.
- to feel disappointment.
- to act indifferent.

Sometimes we have a difficult time in rejoicing over another person's success. This is the reason for this charge to the believer. The believer is to *feel and act* differently than the world. The believer is to conquer his nature: he is to feel joy over the success of others and to show his joy by congratulating and joining them in their moment of joy.

**Thought 1.** Note that this is the very behavior of God. God rejoices in the prosperity of His people.

**“Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant” (Ps.35:27).**

**“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Ro.12:10).**

**“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).**

**“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Col.3:12).**

2. We are to weep with them that weep. This, of course, refers to our friends and fellow men who are facing some trial or loss, some moment of suffering. It may be some personal pain, business loss, some family hurt, sorrow, or suffering. No matter what it is that causes the weeping, the Christian believer is to draw near the person and *feel with* him. The noteworthy trait of the believer is empathy, the fact that he is touched by the infirmities of men.

**Thought 1.** Note that this, too, is a trait of God.

**“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Is.63:9).**

**“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:15-16).**

**“I have showed you all things how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

**“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” (Heb.13:3).**

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jas.1:27).

“Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” (Is.58:7).

**3** (12:16) **Unity—Brotherhood:** the believer is to seek harmony and to associate with the lowly. Three very specific instructions are given.

1. The believer is to “be of the same mind” toward others. This refers primarily to our attitude and behavior toward others and their lot in life. The believer is to strive to *get into the very mind* of other men and to understand them. He is to strive to understand their lives:

- ⇒ their person and being
- ⇒ their lot and condition in life
- ⇒ their status and position
- ⇒ their needs and feelings

The believer is to understand the other person to such a degree that he can completely identify and feel with the person. It is to be said that the believer is “of the same mind” as the other person. Just think of the enormous impact such love and empathy would have upon the world in bringing peace and unity and in meeting the desperate needs of so many. How can the believer demonstrate such love and empathy? The next two points clearly answer the question.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor.1:10).

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor.13:11).

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:3).

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Pt.3:8).

2. The believer is not to mind high things, but to condescend to men of low estate. “High things” refers to seeking the things of preeminence, honor, prestige, and recognition. It means keeping one’s mind upon...

- high society
- high positions
- affluence

The believer is not to be snobbish, not to allow his mind to roam around in the *high things* of this world. On the contrary, he is to condescend to men of low estate. He is to look upon the poor and lowly and to give his life to meeting their needs. The believer is not to be *above* the lowly of this world. He is not to neglect, ignore, separate, criticize, or despise the lowly. He is to condescend and give himself to walking among them and helping them. He is to be friendly and kind, loving and gracious in helping to meet the needs of a desperate world.

“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Lk.22:26).

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).

“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?” (Jas.2:1-4).

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Jas.4:10).

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pt.5:5).

“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic.6:8).

3. The believer is not to be wise in his own conceits. He is not to have too high an opinion of himself, as though he is above and better than the lowly. Of course, many do feel above and better than others, and they choose the most foolish of things to give them superior feelings, for example, clothes.

What is it that makes people conceited, that makes them feel above or better than others? While we stir our thoughts, just note how weak and shabby these things are (and yet people base their lives upon such weak things). People feel above and better than others because of...

- |                |               |          |
|----------------|---------------|----------|
| • clothes      | • cars        | • school |
| • social group | • job         | • honor  |
| • position     | • recognition | • wealth |

The list could go on and on, but note how weak a foundation each of these provides to *human life*. Not just any one of them, but all of them could disappear or collapse overnight. The believer is not to walk through life as a *conceited fool*, thinking himself above and better than other persons. He is to walk humbly, knowing that he is a man just like all other men. He is of inestimable value, yes, but of no more value than any other man—even those who have little of this world's vanishing possessions.

Note another fact that needs to be considered. The pride of intellect or fancied superiority is probably the worst pride there is. It is more insidious and more injurious than any other pride. It leads to a contempt of the opinions of others and an extreme reliance on self (Col.1:18; 3 Jn.9).

The attitude which the gospel requires is that of a little child: simple, trusting, and humble (Pr.3:7; Is.5:21; Ro.11:25).

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor.8:2).**

**“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal.6:3).**

**“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” (Pr.3:7).**

**“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Is.5:21).**

**4** (12:17) **Believer, Life and Walk:** the believer is to live above reproach in the sight of all men. Two behaviors in particular are mentioned.

1. The believer is not to react; he is not to return evil for evil to anyone. In the world and in the course of behavior between men, everyone is mistreated and reacted against at one time or another. Therefore, the believer suffers evil and mistreatment just as everyone else does—just in the course of behavior as a man. However, the genuine believer also suffers evil and mistreatment because he is a follower of Jesus Christ. As a follower of Christ...

- the believer is living a life of righteousness and purity, honesty and truthfulness; and such behavior is often opposed by the world. Therefore, the worldly person often opposes and abuses the believer.
- the believer is bearing testimony to the corruption of the world and to man's need to escape the corruption by turning to Jesus Christ and His righteousness. Again, the worldly person often opposes the message of Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

The point is this: the believer is not to react against a person who mistreats and does evil against him. There are at least two reasons why he is not to react.

- a. Reaction will most likely lose the friendship of the person and lose all hope of ever reaching the person for Jesus Christ. The evil doer will be able to say, “A Christian did that to me.” The believer will have made Christ an *unappealing* Savior. On the other hand, if the believer returns good for evil, he opens the door for eventual friendship and bears testimony to the love of God for all men, even for those who do evil.
- b. Reaction is not the way of God or of Christ.

**“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also....That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Mt.5:39, 45).**

**“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Pt.3:9).**

**“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men” (1 Th.5:15).**

**“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD” (Lev.19:18).**

**“Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee” (Pr.20:22).**

**“Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work” (Pr.24:29).**

2. The believer is to demonstrate good behavior in the sight of all men. The word “provide” (pronoumenoi) means to think before acting. The idea is this: when someone does evil against the believer, the believer is to think before he acts. He is to think and pray through his behavior. Why? So that he can respond in the right and proper way. The believer needs to do what is right and noble, and the only way to do it is to think the situation through.

Note another point, a critical point. Scripture clearly tells the believer why he is to respond this way: so that his honest and noble response is seen by men. In essence, the believer is to love by turning the other cheek to the evil doer in “the sight of all men.” A strong testimony of God's love will then be seen by men.

**“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Ro.13:8).**

**“Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (2 Cor.8:21).**

**“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man” (Pr.3:3-4).**

- 5** (12:18) **Peace—Brotherhood—War—Divisiveness:** the believer is to live at peace with all men. However, peace is not always possible. There are two qualifications.
- ⇒ *If it is possible*, the believer is to live at peace with all men. However, it is *not always possible*. Some persons are troublemakers: grumblers, complainers, dissenters, splitters, fighters, ego-hunters, self-centered leaders, image-seekers, power-builders, warmongers. Some persons have no interest in living at peace with the believer.
  - ⇒ *As much as possible*, the believer is to live at peace with all men. The believer is to work for as much peace as possible. Some level of harmony and concord can be achieved at least some of the time. The believer is never to give up, not as long as there is hope for some degree of peace. He is to achieve as much peace as possible. However remember, peace is not always possible—not with everyone.

Now note two significant points that need to be carefully considered and thought through by every believer.

1. The cause of conflict must not arise from a believer. He is to try everything possible to bring about peace and to keep peace (Ro.12:20; cp. Mt.5:39-41). However, this may be impossible because of the wickedness of others or because the control of peace is not within his hands. It is possible that some will not live peaceably. They continue to indulge every whim and live a life of repugnant license. Such living often threatens the peace, security, preservation, and life of oneself and family and friends.

2. What is it that determines whether a believer is to turn the “other cheek” or to defend himself? For example, Jesus spent His life combating evil and wrong, and He did not always turn the other cheek (Jn.18:22-23); neither did Paul (Acts 23:2-3). Paul encouraged the believer not to give license to anyone, and he was strict in the command. For example, he said that if a man did not work because of laziness, he should not eat (2 Th.3:7, 10).

The governing principle for the believer is clear: “be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Ro.12:21). There are times when an attacker, if allowed to continue in his attack, is encouraged in his evil nature of indulgence and license. If allowed to continue, his evil overcomes the believer—either *within* through bitterness and revenge, or *without* through domination. Thus, a believer is not to sacrifice truth in order to preserve peace. Evil is not to be allowed to overcome truth.

**“If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences” (Eccl.10:4).**

**“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Ro.12:18).**

**“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Ro.14:19).**

**“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb.12:14).**

- 6** (12:19-21) **Vengeance—Revenge—Retaliation:** the believer is to give no place to revenge. There are three reasons for this charge.

1. Vengeance belongs to God. Note the words, “Dearly beloved.” The exhortation is definitely directed to believers. It would be a wonderful thing if *all men* practiced and lived by this rule, but the world never has and never will live free of vengeance. However, the *beloved* of God are given no choice. Any person who follows God is to leave vengeance up to God. Vengeance belongs to God, not to man. No man has the right to judge others, not in a private judgment nor in a personal vengeance. The right to judge and to execute vengeance is God’s and God’s alone. However, Scripture is clear: God will repay—God will execute vengeance. The day of His wrath is coming and it will be inescapable.

**“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Ro.12:19).**

**“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th.1:7-8).**

**“For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people” (Heb.10:30).**

**“To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste” (Dt.32:35).**

**“O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself” (Ps.94:1).**

2. Treating an enemy with kindness will affect him greatly. By doing good the believer heaps “coals of fire” on his enemy’s head. This means at least two things.

- a. Kindness will shame and cause anguish for an enemy. In his lonely moments, his thoughts will focus upon his evil treatment of believers and cause him to think and wonder about God. There is some chance the enemy might repent and be converted.

**“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head” (Ro.12:20).**

**“If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee” (Pr.25:21-22).**

- b. Kindness will store up wrath against the evil doer in the day of judgment. If an evil doer represses his thoughts of God and hardens himself more and more and continues in his wicked treatment of God's people, then he stores up more and more wrath against himself in the terrible day of judgment.

**“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Ro.2:5).**

3. Vengeance makes evil victorious. If the believer takes vengeance, then he allows evil to conquer him, and this he must never do. The believer is to conquer evil, never allowing evil to conquer him. Note how he conquers evil: by doing good. He overcomes evil by doing what he should do, in particular by doing good toward those who mistreat and abuse him.

**“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain” (Mt.5:39-41).**

**“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Mt.5:44).**

**“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil” (Eph.4:26-27).**

**“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men” (1 Th.5:15).**

| CHAPTER 13  |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Be subject to civil authorities</b></p> <p><b>2 Government is ordained by God</b></p> <p>a. Resistance equals resisting God's ordinance</p> <p>b. Resistance shall be condemned</p> <p><b>3 Government is ordained to promote good &amp; restrain evil</b></p> <p>a. Rulers are not ordained to be a restraint upon the good, but upon evil</p> | <p><b>E. The Believer and the State, 13:1-7</b></p> <p>Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.</p> <p>2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.</p> <p>3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:</p> | <p>4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.</p> <p>5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.</p> <p>6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.</p> <p>7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.</p> | <p>b. Rulers are the ministers of God for good: To maintain the welfare of the citizens</p> <p>1) They bear the sword against evil</p> <p>2) They execute justice</p> <p>c. The believer is to obey the state for conscience sake</p> <p><b>4 Government is ordained to provide benefits through taxes<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p>a. Rulers are to provide benefits</p> <p>b. Believers are to pay taxes</p> <p>c. Believers are to pay whatever is due: Money or respect</p> |

## DIVISION VIII

### THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR, 12:1-15:13

#### E. The Believer and the State, 13:1-7

(13:1-7) **Introduction:** What is the relationship between the believer and the state? The question has been debated down through the centuries. Which is supreme, the church or the state? God pulls no punches in dealing with the issue, and what He has to say to the genuine believer is startling to some persons. Simply stated, God expects the genuine believer to live as a testimony of righteousness (doing what is right) while a citizen of this earth.

1. Be subject to civil authorities (v.1).
2. Government is ordained of God (v.1-2).
3. Government is ordained to promote good and restrain evil (v.3-5).
4. Government is ordained to provide benefits through taxes (v.6-7).

**1** (13:1) **Government—State—Civil Authorities:** believers are to be subject to civil authorities. It does not matter how the civil authorities were appointed or by whom. It may have been by a senate, an army, or the people. The authority, whether just or unjust, whether legitimate or illegitimate, is to be obeyed.

However, the sphere of authority is to be noted. The government has authority only within the *civil realm*. The authority of the government does not extend beyond its position. For example, when Paul commands wives to obey their husbands, they are required to obey them as *husbands*, not as masters or as kings. Children are to obey their parents as *parents*, not as sovereigns. So it is in the case of government leaders.

When the laws of civil government conflict with the explicit commandments of God, then Christians must say, "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). When a ruler claims divine rights, Christian believers must answer "no," for the ruler is going beyond the civil authority delegated to him by God. The ruler is trespassing on territory which is not his (see note—Ro.12:18). But the Christian believer is to say "yes" to all civil matters not conflicting with the commandments of God. Scripture gives several reasons for this. (See outline and notes—1 Tim.2:2; Tit.3:1; 1 Pt.2:13-17 for more discussion.)

**2** (13:1-2) **Government:** government is ordained by God; that is, the existence, the authority, the position, the offices of government are ordained by God. It is God's will that government exist and that persons have the authority to rule within the state. There are three institutions ordained by God: the family, the church, and the government. All three exist because God set them up as the means by which men are to relate to each other and to Him as God. God has ordained...

- that the family exist as the means by which family members share together, and that the office of parents rule within the family.
- that the church exist as the means by which people share with God, and that the office of church leaders exercise authority within the church.
- that the government exist as the means by which citizens relate to each other, and that the office of government officials exercise authority within the state.

The institutions and their authority are ordained by God, and men are responsible for how they carry out their functions. Each of the three institutions has leaders who are faithful and do an excellent job, and each has leaders who are totally disobedient to God and do a terrible job. This includes the men who hold authority within various levels of government as well as men serving on various levels in the other two institutions. The fact to remember is that government is ordained by God, and rulers are answerable to Him: they shall give an account to God.

**"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Ro.13:1).**

**“It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness” (Pr.16:12).**

**“And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth” (Is.16:5).**

However, the *thrust* of this passage is not the rulers of government; the *thrust* is the believer and his duty to the state. Usually the believer can do little about how the authorities in government conduct their affairs, but the believer can do a great deal about his behavior as a citizen within the state; and God is very, very clear about the believer's behavior. Keep in mind that the infamous Nero was ruling as the emperor when God led Paul to give these instructions.

1. The believer is not to resist the government because resistance equals resisting the ordinance of God. Note three points.

- a. Christianity must not become confused with a political movement nor with a national government. Christ has nothing to do with insurrection, rebellion, or civil disobedience. Christians are not to be identified with murder and assassination; nor are they to be known as terrorists. They are not to cause havoc upon people nor wreck communities.
- b. There is one exception to resisting government that is allowed the believer. When rulers begin to exercise personal and immoral mastery over human life, then the believer is to obey God and not man. The believer is always to follow after righteousness, that is, morality and justice. However, note a crucial point: the morality and justice pursued must be the morality and justice of Scripture and not of man's making. (See note—Ro.13:1 for more discussion.)
- c. World leaders are in the hands of God and are playing their part under His sovereign administration. This is a great comfort to the heart of the Christian believer (although it may not be to the unbeliever), for it means that God is working in the affairs of world leaders. He holds the world in His hands. He is taking the failure and evil of nations and leaders and working “all things out for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose” (Ro.8:28).

2. The believer who resists the authorities will be condemned. The word “damnation” (krima) means judgment. The idea is that the disobedient believer will have to face the judgment of God if he disobeys the just laws of government. Some commentators think this refers to the judgment of the civil authorities. There is no question, if the believer is caught breaking the laws of the state, he will be punished. However, the civil authorities may never catch the believer; but God knows every law broken by the believer, and by resisting the laws of the state the believer has broken the law of God. Therefore, the believer stands guilty before God, and he shall be judged by God.

**“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” (1 Pt.2:13-14).**

**“And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment” (Ezra 7:26).**

**“My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change: for their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?” (Pr.24:21-22).**

**3** (13:3-5) **Government:** government is ordained to promote good and to restrain evil. Note three points.

1. Rulers are not ordained to be a restraint upon good works, but upon evil. Civil authorities and laws exist to restrain evil; therefore, any believer who breaks the law can expect to be punished by the state. For this reason, the believer should...

- fear the state enough to obey its laws.
- do that which is good and lawful.

By fearing and doing that which is good and lawful, the believer has the *praise* of the state. The idea is that the believer contributes to the good and to the praise of the state. He helps to build up righteousness and truth within the state, and thereby he is able to be the citizen of a good and praiseworthy state. The believer has the praise of the state; he is allowed to live in peace as a citizen of the state.

**“Thou shalt not revile the gods [God, R.S.V.], nor curse the ruler of thy people” (Ex.22:28).**

**“I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God” (Eccl.8:2).**

**“They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's” (Mt.22:21).**

**“Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people” (Acts 23:5).**

**“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Ro.13:1).**

**“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work” (Tit.3:1).**

**“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake” (1 Pt.2:13).**

**“Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king” (1 Pt.2:17).**

**Thought 1.** Note that civil government and law are a *restraint* upon evil. The power of evil and corruption is so strong that when men are without law, they go on a rampage of selfishness and sin. History and the breakdown of law within communities, cities, societies, and even families provide ample evidence. When law does not exist or when law is not enforced, evil runs rampant. Society desperately needs to heed this fact.

**“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Tim.1:9-10).**

2. Rulers are the ministers of God for good: to maintain the welfare of its citizens. Note that the civil authority rules for the citizens’ good. This verse is merely reviewing what has already been said in the preceding three verses.

a. The office of ruler is ordained by God for good; it is for the welfare and the good of the citizens.

**“The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God” (2 Sam.23:3).**

**“And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment” (2 Chron.19:6).**

**“Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling” (Ps.2:10-11).**

**“Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy” (Pr.20:28).**

**“The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it” (Pr.29:4).**

**“The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever” (Pr.29:14).**

b. The believer is to fear breaking the laws of the state because the civil authority exists to maintain order by punishing evil-doers or lawbreakers.

**“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” (1 Pt.2:13-14).**

3. The believer is to obey the state for conscience’ sake as well as out of fear of punishment. There are two reasons for obeying civil laws:

⇒ For wrath’s sake, that is, fearing the punishment of the state.

⇒ For conscience’s sake, that is, fearing the punishment of God.

There are two ways in which conscience is involved. First, the Christian believer is told that God ordains government and that to resist government equals resisting God’s ordinance. Therefore, the believer has a principle to govern his conscience: to abuse his citizenship is to resist God’s will and to violate his conscience.

Second, conscience determines a man’s state of being. A restful conscience brings peace to a man; a disturbed conscience brings restlessness and pain. The man in rebellion against his government disturbs his conscience and lives under the restless fear of being caught and punished.

**“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16).**

**“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation [citizenship] in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (2 Cor.1:12).**

**“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim.1:5).**

**“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1 Tim.1:19).**

**“Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (1 Tim.3:9).**

**“Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly” (Heb.13:18).**

**“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully” (1 Pt.2:19).**

**“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pt.3:16).**

**4** (13:6-7) **Government:** government is ordained to provide benefits *through taxes*. Note three points.

1. Rulers are God’s ministers who are appointed for this “*very thing*”; that is, *God appoints rulers as ministers to minister to the people*. The rulers are to minister by providing certain benefits for the citizens.

a. The government provides justice, protection, and services for its citizens. It is the agreement between the law and the people to live by the law that keeps the strong from dominating the weak. It keeps life from becoming the law of the jungle. It is also the state that often provides services such as roads, public transportation, and electricity.

b. The government keeps the world from diving into chaos. Whatever peace is known within a country, it is known through the government that exists. It is not perfect peace, but usually within its boundaries there is a semblance of peace. Therefore, man is to work for worldwide peace through the framework of government.

2. The believer is, therefore, to pay taxes. Every citizen is obligated to the government for the benefits which he receives from the state. Certain benefits come from the cooperative effort of people within a state. A man could not receive

these benefits acting as an individual. These benefits and privileges are his because the government has brought them about. Therefore, the man is obligated to the state to pay his share.

**“And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?...Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee” (Mt.17:24, 27).**

**“They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Mt.22:21).**

**“For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing” (Ro.13:6).**

3. The believer is not only to pay taxes, but he is to pay whatever is due to *every man*. The word “pay” (teleo) means to fulfill or to complete. The believer is to fulfill his obligations no matter what they are.

- ⇒ If a nation is due tribute (taxes), he is to pay his tribute.
- ⇒ If a civil authority is due custom (taxes), he is to pay his custom.
- ⇒ If an authority or person is due fear, he is to reverence the authority or person.
- ⇒ If an authority or person is due honor, he is to honor the authority or person.

Very simply, the believer is to live above reproach before all men, and this includes being a *good citizen* of his government.

**“By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked” (Pr.11:11).**

**“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pr.14:34).**

**“Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness” (Pr.25:5).**

**“For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged” (Pr.28:2).**

**“In righteousness shall thou be established” (Is.54:14).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

13:6) **Tribute—Taxes:** this was a difficult command. For most believers, the command caused anything but pleasure, for the taxes levied by the Roman government against its conquered nations were heavy to bear (see note—Mt.9:9).

1. There was the income tax: one percent of a man’s income.
2. There was the ground tax: a man had to pay one-tenth or one-fifth of the crops produced by his ground. He could make payment in money or in the actual crops harvested.
3. There was a poll tax: paid by everyone between the ages of twelve or fourteen and sixty-five. It amounted to about one day’s wage. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Mt.22:17.)

There were also local taxes that had to be paid. There were import and export taxes, and there were custom duties including taxes for using main roads, crossing bridges, entering markets and harbors, transferring animals, and driving carts or wagons.

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| <p><b>1 The basic law</b><br/> a. Owe no man anything<br/> b. Owe no man anything <i>but love</i></p> <p><b>2 Love forbids adultery</b></p> <p><b>3 Love forbids killing</b></p> <p><b>4 Love forbids stealing</b></p> | <p><b>F. The Believer and His Fellow Citizens, 13:8-10</b></p> <p>8 Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.</p> <p>9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal,</p> | <p>Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.</p> <p>10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.</p> | <p><b>5 Love forbids a false witness</b></p> <p><b>6 Love forbids covetousness</b></p> <p><b>7 Love sums up all the commandments</b></p> <p><b>8 Love works no wrong to a neighbor</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR, 12:1-15:13**

**F. The Believer and His Fellow Citizens, 13:1-7**

(13:8-10) **Introduction:** the commandments of God to believers are clear and forceful—especially when dealing with their neighbors, that is, with the fellow-citizens of the world. God’s laws are few, but they are striking.

1. The basic law (v.8).
2. Love forbids adultery (v.9).
3. Love forbids killing (v.9).
4. Love forbids stealing (v.9).
5. Love forbids a false witness (v.9).
6. Love forbids covetousness (v.9).
7. Love sums up all the commandments (v.9).
8. Love works no wrong to a neighbor (v.10).

**1** (13:8) **Love—Debts:** there is one very basic law that sums up all the other laws of men. It is amazing to think that all the laws of human life can be summed up into one law, yet they can. The one law that embraces all others is *love*. Scripture clearly declares: “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath *fulfilled* the law” (v.8). Note two significant points.

1. The believer is to owe no man anything. At first glance, the verse seems to be saying that the believer is not to borrow and become indebted to any man. In light of what has just been taught this is true, and it is both God’s will and a *must* for Christian believers to practice. A believer is to *set the example* in paying men honor when honor is due as well as in paying debts when debts are due (v.7).

How does this commandment work out in day to day practice? Does this commandment mean that a believer should never borrow money or purchase things on an installment plan, for example, a house or a car? There are, of course, different interpretations as to how this commandment should be related to various societies and monetary practices. Three things can be clearly said and should be diligently practiced by all believers.

- a. Nothing should ever be purchased by a believer that is not really needed. The money should be used to meet the needs of a world that is reeling under the weight of starving, diseased, and dying masses every day.
- b. Nothing should ever be purchased unless a believer can meet the obligation of paying for it.
- c. If the believer *has to purchase* an expensive item such as a car or house and make periodic payments, he *must be able to make his payments* or else not purchase the item. In reality, he does not owe the money until the payment is due, but he does owe it *when it is due*. If he does not pay when it is due, he is definitely disobeying God.

The point is this: a believer is to owe no man anything. The reason is clearly seen. The people of the world live for the world and its money and possessions. It is all they have; therefore, they judge men by how much they have. It does not matter who the person is, Christian or non-Christian, he is judged by how well off he is financially. If a believer is not prompt in paying what he owes and in meeting his obligations, he is considered unethical and dishonest, a crook and a thief. And he is, for he has taken something that belongs to someone else. Moreover, he has deceived and lied to the man from whom he bought the item. He convinced the man that he could and would pay, and now he is not paying what he owes.

Very simply, a Christian believer *must* always pay his debts and fulfill his obligations. He must never owe any man anything lest he damage the name of Christ, and push men farther away from the Kingdom of God because of a negative view of Christian believers. The believer must live above reproach, and one of the most significant ways to live above reproach is to owe no man anything—to pay his debts and fulfill his obligations promptly.

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” (Mt.23:25).

“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Ro.13:7).

“Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped and entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth” (Jas.5:4).

“Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest” (2 Ki.4:7).

**“Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right” (Pr.16:8).**

**“The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death” (Pr.21:6).**

**“As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool” (Jer.17:11).**

**“Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work” (Jer.22:13).**

**“Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee” (Ezk.22:13).**

2. The believer is to owe no man anything *but love*. Love will do more to win men to Jesus Christ and to bring about the ideal society than any other virtue. As this verse says, love fulfills the law. Therefore, if everyone will love one another, then everyone will be fulfilling the law; and the ideal society and life for which we all long will become a reality. This is clearly seen in this passage; in fact, it is the major thrust of these verses. God is telling believers to love one another in order to demonstrate what society *can* be. The world and society can live in love if they will turn to Him. However, if believers continue to live owing debts and committing the sins about to be discussed, then believers are no different from the world. They prove to be men of false profession. Believers become nothing more than hypocrites. For this reason believers *must* obey God: “Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (v.8).

Just how love fulfills the law is the subject of the following points. Note that the laws mentioned are the laws dealing with man’s behavior toward his neighbor, all of which are taken from the ten commandments. Love fulfills the commandments of God.

**2** (13:9) **Adultery—Love:** love forbids adultery. “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Ex.20:14; Dt.5:18; see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.5:27-30 for more discussion). Note two significant points.

1. In the context of the ten commandments, adultery refers to all forms of sexual immorality. This would include sex before marriage, homosexuality, and all other sexual deviations.

2. Love forbids adultery, that is, any sex outside the marriage bond. How can love forbid a loving act? Is not sex an act of love, an act of mutual sharing that enriches life? Scripture says:

⇒ Yes, if it is experienced within a true marriage, that is, a marriage that is truly spiritually united by God.

⇒ No, if it is experienced outside a true marriage, outside a couple who have been truly bound together by God.

Scripture is pointed and clear about this fact. Note closely what Scripture says:

**“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Cor.6:18).**

How is sexual immorality a sin against the human body? How is a person’s body affected by immorality? There are five ways that the body is affected by sexual immorality.

1. Sexual immorality destroys a person’s rationality and intelligence. This is a critical point that is clearly seen by the honest and thinking person. Men and women are rational creatures; therefore, they can look at themselves and their world, and study, learn, and know what is happening when a man and woman have sex. Sex is the means of procreation, that is, of having children and carrying on the human race. Now note: it is through the act of sex that a person’s innermost being, his or her genes and nature, flow into another person and produce another life. That is, sex involves the most private and intimate part of a person—a person’s very genes and nature. Therefore, *by its very nature*, sex is the most private and intimate act of a person. From this fact alone, a rational creature knows that sex is bound to require some privacy, some limitation. But there is much more to think about that tells us just how private and limited sex should be.

Consider having and bearing children. By nature a woman cannot have a child by herself. It requires a man as well as a woman. One man and one woman have a child, and to have the child requires...

- the most private parts of their *two bodies*.

- the most intimate act of their *two bodies*.

Therefore while rearing the child, rational and moral creatures know that the *two are meant* to be each other’s. Why? The man and woman have put their very *nature and genes* into the child, and the child has their nature and genes; therefore...

- they are the ones who should *rear* the child.

- they are bound together, their genes and nature, *within the body* of the child.

No closer bond and relationship, no greater love, trust, or hope exists than the union of the three. The man has given the woman his very nature, and the woman has willingly received his nature and given both his and her nature to the child. The three are bound together in a most unique relationship, no matter how much it may be ignored, denied, and abused. The husband and wife and their sexual relationship is a very unique relationship. But note this: men and women are set off from other animals by their rationality. This is one of the features that makes man’s sexual relationship different from the relationship between animals. They can know who they are and what is happening to them when other animals do not. Men and women can know that their relationship is not just *animalistic*. Therefore, when they have immoral relationships, they ignore, neglect, violate, abuse, and damage their minds. They do what they know should not be done. As God says:

**“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them [the minds]; for God hath showed it unto them” (Ro.1:18-19).**

**“When the Gentiles...do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience**

also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (Ro.2:14-15).

2. Sexual immorality destroys a person’s body in that it lowers his body to the level of an animal. It is simply the wrong view of a man. It views man as a beast, ignoring man’s spirit. It declares that life is to be lived on the level of passion and instinct, ignoring the life of the spirit. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Immorality*—1 Cor.6:18 for more detailed discussion of this point.)

3. Sexual immorality destroys a person’s body in that it corrupts the most intimate temple of the Holy Spirit. Scripture declares that the human body was made to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. God created man to be His child. Man is spirit as well as body, and when a man truly believes in Christ, Christ is said to enter and to dwell *within* the man’s body. Therefore, when a man commits sexual immorality, he destroys his body; that is, he violates, misuses, and abuses the temple of God.

4. Sexual immorality destroys a person’s body in that it uses the human body only as an object or tool to satisfy urges and passions. It keeps a human body from reaching its fullest potential. It ignores the *satisfaction, peace, fulfillment, and development* of both the spirit and mind that comes from a union wrought by God.

5. Sexual immorality destroys a person’s body in that it creates all sorts of emotional and spiritual problems for the persons involved. Having sex outside marriage creates guilt and negative thoughts within a person whether admitted or not. After an illicit act, when the person is alone with his thoughts, he thinks about his life and senses lack and need. No matter who the person is and no matter how long the person has been engaged in sexual misbehavior, there are times when the person thinks about his or her life and the need for something more meaningful. God sees that we all have these thoughts. They are a safeguard to try and turn us back to Him. Sexual misconduct eats away at our emotions, thoughts, and spirits until we are destroyed, unless we repent and turn to God.

Now, the thrust of the point is this: love forbids sexual immorality. A person who really loves someone would never destroy the body of his loved one. Anyone who honestly loves a person could never cause such problems for the one loved.

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:27-28).

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication [immorality]” (Ro.1:26-29).

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [homosexuals], nor abusers of themselves with mankind” (1 Cor.6:9).

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness....of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19, 21).

“And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot [party, revel] in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Pt.2:13-15).

**3** (13:9) **Murder:** love forbids killing. “Thou shalt not kill.” The law against murder is the sixth commandment (Ex.20:13; Dt.5:17). God gave the commandment to protect human life. Life is to be respected and cherished; no life is to be taken—not one’s own life nor the life of anyone else. Civilized societies have always considered murder to be a serious crime and worthy of judgment. However, note what Scripture says:

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Mt.5:21-22).

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer” (1 Jn.3:15).

“He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness” (Mt.19:18).

“But let none of you suffer as a murderer” (1 Pt.4:15).

Christ says that anger and hate are equal to murder. Therefore, the answer to solving the problem of murder and killing is to get rid of anger and hate. How? Scripture has the answer. Look at...

- verse 8: “He that *loveth* another hath fulfilled the law.”
- verse 9: “Thou shalt *love* thy neighbor as thyself.”
- verse 10: “*Love* worketh no ill to his neighbor.”
- verse 10: “*Love* is the fulfilling of the law.”

Love is the answer to anger, hate, and killing. It is the duty of men to love one another: God expects and demands it. But how? It is not enough to simply say that men must love each other. Words alone will not get rid of the anger, hate, and killing in the world. How can men be turned from their anger and hate to love? The answer is found in God's people, in those who follow God and are already loving others.

- ⇒ God's people must *demonstrate love* before the world more clearly and forcefully than ever before.
- ⇒ God's people must proclaim love to the world more than ever before—explaining just how a man can have his heart changed from hate to love.

Very simply stated, Christian believers must demonstrate what it is to love and proclaim how a person can have his heart changed from anger and hate to love. There are four steps in *securing* a changed heart and in *learning* how to love.

1. A person must come to know God and be born of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly says that true love is possible *only* if a person is born of God.

**“Beloved, let us love one other: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” (1 Jn.4:7-11).**

2. A person must think upon and understand the love of God. When a person truly comes to know the love of God, he will then love others. In fact, if he does not love others, the Bible says that he does not know the love of God. Therefore, the answer to changing a person's heart from anger and hate is to share the love of God with him.

**“Hereby perceive [know] we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).**

3. A person must seek the *gift of love* from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God can stir men to love one another if they will seek Him.

**“Follow after [seek] charity [love]” (1 Cor.14:1; cp. 1 Cor.13:1-13).**

**“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us” (Ro.5:5).**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love” (Gal.5:22).**

4. A person must diligently seek to obey the very special commandment of the Lord Jesus.

**“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).**

**4** (13:9) **Stealing—Ministering—World, Needs of:** love forbids stealing. “Thou shalt not steal” (Ex.20:15; Dt.5:19). In the Bible the word “steal” (klepheis) means to cheat, to take wrongfully from another person, *either legally or illegally*. Note that the laws of men are not the determining rule governing whether a person is stealing or not. This is what is so often misunderstood about stealing.

- ⇒ Men can sometimes use the law to steal.
- ⇒ Men can take from others without ever breaking a law.
- ⇒ Men can secure too much of something, well beyond what they need—something that rightfully belongs to others.

Very simply stated, the Bible teaches that stealing is the taking of anything that *rightfully* belongs to others. There are at least three forms of stealing.

1. A person steals by taking something which is *actually possessed or personally owned* by another person. If he owns it and we take it, then we are guilty of stealing. It may be something as simple as a pencil from the office or an answer to a test from a fellow student, or it may be something as complex as embezzlement of funds through bookkeeping procedures. If we take it, we have broken God's commandment and stand guilty as thieves.

**“Not purloining [stealing], but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Tit.2:10).**

**“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief” (1 Pt.4:15).**

**“A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight” (Pr.11:1).**

**“It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth” (Pr.20:14).**

**“The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death” (Pr.21:6).**

**“He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress” (Hos.12:7).**

2. A person steals by hoarding and banking more than he needs. *Keeping back* is stealing. It is...
- keeping what is not needed for one's own needs.
  - keeping back what is desperately needed by others.

- taking away what nature and the earth have provided to meet the needs of the human population.
- hoarding the knowledge, gifts, blessings God gave to be used for the welfare of a desperate world filled with so many who are less privileged and gifted.

We may call it by whatever name we wish, but to God it is stealing. God has put within the earth enough resources to meet the needs of His people, and He has given men both the *ability and command to subdue and have dominion over the earth*. Look closely at His command:

**“And God blessed them [man and woman], and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen.1:28).**

The earth is to be subdued and taken dominion over by men. Men are commanded by God to develop the technology to explore the universe and to control nature, to feed, clothe, house, and give health to people. Note what God is saying. He is not saying this: only some are to have the benefits and blessings of the earth. God is saying this: men are to love each other and *share* the blessings of the earth together. When men use their God-given ability to make money and produce goods, and then begin to keep back and hoard, they are stealing; they are keeping for themselves what rightfully belongs to others. Therefore, they will suffer catastrophic loss in the next world. They will suffer total devastation (Lk.12:20; 16:22-23). Why? Because they did not *love enough* to do what they and their particular talents were put on earth to do: provide for those who were less gifted and less fortunate.

**“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mt.6:19-21).**

**“And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you” (Lk.3:13).**

**“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).**

**“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Tim.6:9).**

**“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim.6:17-19).**

**“Thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbors by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezk.22:12).**

3. A person steals by living extravagantly, beyond what he needs. There are some who give to meet the crying needs of the world, yet they do not live sacrificially. They *keep plenty* for themselves, indulging their flesh...

- in clothing
- in food
- in jewelry
- in housing
- in transportation
- in recreation
- in possessions
- in property

Many within industrialized nations are guilty of *selfishness* despite a tenderness and concern for the needy in the world. However, *concern and some giving* are not enough to fulfill the demand of God that we share and meet the needs throughout the world. Every day that we awaken and arise out of bed, the world is reeling under the weight of *masses*...

- who are hungry and starving to death.
- who are without drinking water.
- who are without adequate clothing.
- who are diseased and without medicine.
- who have no roof over their heads.
- who have no one to teach them.

There is no question, the means to help meet the needs of the world exist today. The lack is not manpower and resources; the lack is *sacrificial commitment* to give the resources and to go and become personally involved. The extravagant and indulgent are stealing from the needy, and the gifted are not meeting the needs of the less gifted. The scene is tragic, for God put the gifted upon earth to *sacrificially* meet the needs of the less gifted. But instead of meeting their needs, the gifted are living in excessive comfort and pleasure, indulging the whims of their flesh.

**“Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Mt.19:21).**

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” (Mt.23:25).**

**“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mk.4:19).**

**“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Lk.12:33).**

**“Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them” (Amos 5:11).**

## ROMANS 13:8-10

What is the answer? Love—loving people enough to stop stealing from them. However, we *must always remember* that words alone are not enough. Just *telling* a person not to steal will not keep him from stealing. Some very practical steps must be taken.

- a. A person must follow Christ by giving all he is and has to the poor. This is unequivocally proclaimed by Christ time and again (see outline and notes—Lk.18:18-30).

**“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:33).**

**“Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Lk.18:22-25).**

**“He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity” (Eccl.5:10).**

- b. A person must stop playing the fool and lay up treasure in heaven; he must remember that his soul can be required of him this very night.

**“And he [the rich man] said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Lk.12:18-21).**

- c. A person must keep the truth before his mind: a selfish indulgent life that neglects and ignores the poor will send him to hell.

**“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom [heaven]: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments” (Lk.16:19-23).**

- d. A person must give all that he has and not try to cheat God.

**“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things” (Acts 5:1-5).**

- e. A person must work at his job as though he serves the Lord Jesus. In fact, the Bible says that he is working for the Lord Jesus.

**“Servants [employees], obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col.3:22-24).**

**“Servants [employees], be obedient to them that are your masters [employers] according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph.6:5-7).**

- f. A person must work to make more than he needs so that he can earn enough to help others.

**“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).**

**5** (13:9) **False Witness:** love forbids bearing false witness against one’s neighbor. “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor” (Ex.20:16; Dt.5:20). When most people look at this commandment, they think of a courtroom scene and think that lying against someone in court is what is being forbidden. This is true: bearing false witness does mean that we must not lie against a person standing trial for some crime. We must tell the truth when witnessing for or

against someone. But *bearing false witness* means far more than just not lying against someone in court. *Bearing false witness* means any kind of lying, and there are several kinds that need to be diligently guarded against.

1. There is slander: thinking something bad about a person and sharing it; misrepresenting something about someone; tearing down the reputation and life of a person by spreading bad news about him.

**“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer” (Ps.101:5).**

**“He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool” (Pr.10:18).**

2. There is rumor, gossip or tale-bearing: spreading little or big, idle or active tales, whether imagined or real; spreading the evil news that one has imagined in his mind or has heard.

**“And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not” (1 Tim.5:13).**

**“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters” (1 Pt.4:15).**

**“Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people” (Lev.19:16).**

**“A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter” (Pr.11:13).**

**“A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends” (Pr.16:28).**

**“Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth” (Pr.26:20).**

3. There are suggestive hints: arousing a bad impression about someone; stirring the idea that something might possibly be true; planting in the mind the possibility of something improper or indecent.

**“Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness” (Ex.23:1).**

**“Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders” (Jer.9:4).**

4. There is deception: thinking or wanting something to be true, and accepting it as true and sharing it; tricking oneself and others into thinking something is true; defrauding oneself and others by accepting bad news as true when the truth is really not known; causing oneself and others to believe bad news.

**“He that speaketh truth showeth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit” (Pr.12:17).**

**“Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause; and deceive not with thy lips” (Pr.24:28).**

5. There are charges and criticism: accusations made against a person to a third party; sharing the faults and failures of a person with someone other than the person himself; talking about the weaknesses and failures of a person with someone else; condemning, blaming, and censoring a person with others.

**“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Mt.5:11-12).**

**“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pt.3:16).**

**“For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life” (Ps.31:13).**

6. There is exaggeration and blown up flattery: stretching the truth about a person; excessively praising someone; falsely representing someone; or painting a false picture of a person.

**“Let me not, I pray you, accept any man’s person; neither let me give flattering titles unto man” (Job 32:21).**

**“He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips” (Pr.20:19).**

**“A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin” (Pr.26:28).**

**“He that rebuketh a man, afterward shall find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue” (Pr.28:23).**

**“A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his feet” (Pr.29:5).**

**“The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things” (Ps.12:3).**

**“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness” (1 Th.2:4-5).**

**“He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him” (Pr.24:24).**

In light of what a false witness is, it looks like God has left no room for us to discuss *bad news* with others. This is the very point God is after: *we should not discuss bad news about another person*, for it is impossible to discuss bad news about someone and not bear *some* false witness. To some degree bad news is *always*...

- blown up and added to.
- twisted and distorted.
- misunderstood and incomplete.

Therefore, when sin, failure, or bad news is known, God expects the person to be loved and comforted. God expects the person to be led to repentance and restored. God does not expect the person to be torn down by false witnesses.

There are four facts to note about bearing a false witness.

1. False witness is usually shared with loved ones and good friends, with people we know can be trusted. Therefore, we always feel that our loved ones and friends can be trusted with the *bad news*. However, what is overlooked is that our loved ones and friends have good friends who can also be trusted. And so the bad news is spread farther and farther afield, and more and more damage and hurt is done to the cause of Christ. God knows this is the way people are; this is the reason He forbids His people from sharing failure, whether true or untrue, except in dealing with the person about the issue.

2. Bearing tales about a person, true or untrue, always hurts the person. The person being talked about has a heart just like we do: a heart that is subject to being cut, hurt, and suffering pain. Therefore, when tales are shared, we are eventually going to cause pain and hurt, sometimes a great deal of pain to the person and his loved ones. (Imagine how God feels about this.)

**“All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt” (Ps.41:7).**

**“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly” (Pr.18:8).**

**“A man that beareth false witness against his neighbor is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow” (Pr.25:18).**

3. The person who bears tales, giving false witness, shall be judged by God, no matter who he is.

**“Being filled with all unrighteousness...deceit...whisperers, backbiters....Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Ro.1:29-30, 32).**

**“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer” (Ps.101:5).**

**“A false witness shall not be unpunished; and he that speaketh lies shall perish” (Pr.19:9).**

4. If a person truly loves, he will not bear false witness before anyone. He will deal with the person himself, seeking to restore him to the faith. Note: love does not deal with a person in harshness, downgrading him; but in love, tenderness, and in *strength*, being guided by the Holy Spirit of God.

**“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:1-2).**

**“I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners” (Is.57:18).**

**“Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips” (Ps.141:3).**

**6** (13:9) **Covetousness:** love forbids covetousness. “Thou shalt not covet” (Ex.20:17; Dt.5:21). The word “covet” (epithumeseis) means to crave and desire. A person can desire both good and bad things; the word can be used in both a good and bad sense (cp. 1 Cor.14:1 for the good sense). In the present context the believer is not to covet in an evil sense. If he loves his neighbors and fellow citizens he will not covet. (See DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Covetousness*—Ro.1:29 for the full meaning of the word.) Note two points.

1. The commandment condemns not only the act of sin but the *desire* to sin. The *desire* is what covetousness is; craving or desiring something is what covetousness means. It precedes the act. Therefore, this commandment strikes at the very heart of what a man is *deep within* himself. It exposes the innermost being of man, showing him that the cravings of his heart are evil. Why do we say this? Because desiring and craving are *natural*. It is a fact of human nature that we crave the thing which others have. We might not crave what they have; that is, we might not wish to steal their possessions, but we crave to have possessions like they have. As said, such desire is natural, but note: God is saying that we are not to covet what our neighbors have. To covet is evil. Why? Because it causes us to focus our attention, energy, and efforts—our lives—upon securing more and more. We neglect God and the needs of a world reeling under the weight of starving and dying masses. *Love* focuses upon sharing and helping *people*, not upon craving *things*. There is a world of difference between centering one’s life upon *people* instead of *things*.

The point is this: the commandment “thou shalt not covet” exposes the human heart. It shows us that we are depraved, basically sinful, and that we need a Savior. We desperately need *Someone* who can change our hearts and turn them toward God and the needs of our fellow citizens—the lost and dying masses of the world.

2. Note the kinds of things we are forbidden to covet. The tenth commandment is clear: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s...”

- house: personal provisions.
- wife: companion and love.
- manservant or maidservant: employee, position, employment, authority.
- ox and colt: possessions, property, wealth.

And, if this list does not include all that our neighbors have, God adds: “Thou shalt not covet...*anything* that is thy neighbor’s.” Look at the commandment as a whole.

**“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s” (Ex.20:17).**

A believer who loves his neighbor and fellow citizens will not covet what they have. Instead of desiring their possessions, he will be focusing upon blessing them and building them up. He will encourage them to know the Lord and to surrender their lives to the great task of meeting the needs of a lost and dying world.

**“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).**

**“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).**

**“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).**

**“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind [covet] earthly things” (Ph.3:18-19).**

**“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim.6:9-10).**

**“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous” (2 Tim.3:1-2).**

**“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).**

**“For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely” (Jer.6:13).**

**“And they come unto thee as the people [in church] cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezk.33:31).**

**“And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage” (Mic.2:2).**

**7** (13:9) **Love:** love sums up all the commandments, no matter what the commandment is. The royal commandment is “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” We *are* supposed to love ourselves, but we are not to love *only* ourselves. God expects us to love our neighbors *as ourselves*. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 7, *Love*—Mt.22:39 for more discussion.)

**8** (13:10) **Love—Neighbor—Brotherhood:** love works no evil to a neighbor. To *work evil* against a person does not mean just the doing or the carrying out of evil against a person. Working evil means...

- thinking evil.
- wishing and hoping evil.
- planning and devising evil.
- practicing and doing evil.
- withholding good.

Note the last fact, for it is often overlooked, but Scripture clearly states that withholding good from a person is evil.

**“Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. Devise not evil against thy neighbor, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee” (Pr.3:27-29).**

A person who loves will not work evil, but on the contrary, he will work good. He will love his fellow citizens, the neighbors of his world. What does it mean to love? Scripture spells out some very practical acts which are involved in love.

- ⇒ Love suffereth long (endures long, is patient).
- ⇒ Love is kind.
- ⇒ Love envies not (is not jealous).
- ⇒ Love vaunts not itself (brags not, boasts not).
- ⇒ Love is not puffed up (is not vainglorious, arrogant, prideful).
- ⇒ Love does not behave itself unseemly (unbecomingly, rudely, indecently, unmannerly).
- ⇒ Love seeks not her own (is not selfish, self-seeking, insisting on one’s rights and way).

## ROMANS 13:8-10

- ⇒ Love is not easily provoked (is not touchy, angry, fretful, resentful).
- ⇒ Love thinks no evil (harbors no evil thought, takes no account of a wrong done it).
- ⇒ Love rejoices not in iniquity (in wrong, sin, evil, injustice), but rejoices in the truth (in justice, in righteousness).
- ⇒ Love bears all things.
- ⇒ Love believes all things (exercises faith in everything, under all circumstances).
- ⇒ Love endures all things (never weakens; has the power to endure).

The call of believers is to love their neighbors—all the citizens of the world. God's love is to be demonstrated to the world through us. The world is to be given the opportunity of seeing God's love in action so that they, too, will become worshippers of Him through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The commandment is clear:

**“Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law....Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Ro.13:8-9).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Ro.15:1-2).**

**“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal.5:14).**

**“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well” (Jas.2:8).**

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| <p><b>1 The believer is to know the time</b><br/> <b>2 It is time to awaken out of sleep<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> a. Salvation is nearer than when we believed<br/> b. Judgment is at hand</p> | <p><b>G. The Believer and the Threat of Time, 13:11-14</b></p> <p>11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.</p> <p>12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us there-</p> | <p>fore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.</p> <p>13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.</p> <p>14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.</p> | <p><b>3 It is time to cast off the works of darkness &amp; to put on the armour of light</b><br/> <b>4 It is time to walk straight</b><br/> a. To walk in decency &amp; honor<br/> b. Not to walk crooked, staggering about<br/> <b>5 It is time to put on the Lord Jesus Christ &amp; to make no provision for the flesh<sup>DS2</sup></b></p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR, 12:1-15:13**

**G. The Believer and the Threat of Time, 13:11-14**

(13:11-14) **Introduction:** time is important, very important, to most people. Without time, man is not living; he *is* no more. The one thing he does not want is to run out of time. Therefore, it is critical for every man to know the threat of time.

1. The believer is to know the time (v.11).
2. It is time to awaken out of sleep (v.11-12).
3. It is time to cast off the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light (v.12).
4. It is time to walk straight (v.13).
5. It is time to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and to make no provision for the flesh (v.14).

(13:11-14) **Another Outline:** four pictures are also given in this passage.

1. Picture 1: Sleeping vs. awakening (v.11).
2. Picture 2: Darkness vs. light (v.12).
3. Picture 3: Walking straight vs. walking crooked (v.13).
4. Picture 4: Clothing—putting on Christ vs. putting on the flesh (v.14).

**1** (13:11) **Time—History, Pivotal Points:** the believer is to know the time. The word “knowing” (eridotes) means to make sure that you know; do not dare miss knowing. The word “time” (ton kairon) means the critical period; the strategic or special period of time.

What strategic or critical period of time is meant? What is the period of human history that we must not overlook?

- ⇒ The day of “our salvation,” the day which is nearer than when we first believed.
- ⇒ The day which is at hand, the day when we shall meet the Lord Jesus Christ face to face.

**2** (13:11-12) **Time—Dedication—Sleep, Spiritual:** it is time to awaken out of sleep. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Spiritual Darkness—Ro.13:11* for more discussion.) Too many believers are *slumbering* and paying no attention to what is going on in the world; too many are not watching; too many are not observing the signs of the time. Too many are *complacent and slothful*, lazily passing through life with *little commitment* to serving Christ. Too few are meeting the needs of the suffering and dying masses of the world. It is time “to awaken” (egerthenai) out of sleep: time to wake up, to be aroused and stirred. It is time to get up and to move and act—*now*—before it is too late. The exhortation is strong, and there are two reasons for its forcefulness.

1. Our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The word “salvation” is being used in a future sense, referring to the glorious day when we shall be fully saved. It is the day when our salvation will be consummated, and we will be delivered from this present evil world and perfected forever to live in the presence of God. The point is dramatic: the day is *nearer* than when we believed. Awaken out of sleep—arouse yourself—get up—pay attention:

- Look at the world situation
- Look at yourself
- Look at life, its uncertainty
- Look at the signs
- Look at your body, its condition
- Look at the time

The day of salvation, the day of our redemption, is nearer than when we believed.

“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Lk.21:28).

“[God] hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Heb.1:2).

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [trials]” (1 Pt.1:5-6).

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (1 Jn.2:18; cp. 2 Tim.3:1; 2 Pt.3:3; Jude 18).

2. Judgment is at hand. The night is far spent; the day is at hand. What day? The day when we will meet God face to face, either through death or through the return of the Lord Jesus. Time is fleeting, passing ever so rapidly—so prepare.

“Prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12).

“Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight” (Mt.3:3).

“For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mk.13:34-37).

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor.15:34).

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph.5:14).

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober” (1 Th.5:6).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(13:11) **Spiritual Darkness—Carnal:** there is the sleep of false security; the sleep of slothfulness, complacency, and neglect; and the sleep of indifference.

**3** (13:12) **Darkness—Light:** it is time to cast off the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light.

1. The works of darkness are the works which men do *under the cover* of darkness and want to keep secret. They are sins...

- which men want to keep secret
- which men know are unacceptable
- which men know would cause hurt
- which men are ashamed of
- which men fear the results of
- which men know would do great damage

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved” (Jn.3:19-20).

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Ro.13:12).

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret” (Eph.5:11-12).

“For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night” (1 Th.5:7).

“And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden” (Gen.3:8).

“In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light” (Job 24:16).

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Pr.28:13).

“Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?” (Is.29:15).

“Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin” (Is.30:1).

“Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth” (Ezk.8:12).

2. The armour of light differs entirely from the clothing of darkness. Note: the picture is that of clothing oneself. The believer is to strip off whatever dark sins and works he has wrapped around himself, and he is to cast them away. Once he has stripped himself, the question arises: What is the believer to put on? What he puts on is striking: he is not exhorted to just put on the clothes of light; he is told to put on the *armour of light*. The believer is to be clothed with the heavy shield and protective armour of light—a shield and protection so full of splendor, glory, and brilliance that it cannot be penetrated by the works of darkness. What is this armour of light?

a. It is the armour of righteousness (2 Cor.6:7).

“But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God...by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left” (2 Cor.6:4, 7).

b. It is the armour of God (see outline and notes—Eph.6:10-20).

- ⇒ the belt of *truth*
- ⇒ the breastplate of *righteousness*
- ⇒ the sandals of the *gospel*
- ⇒ the shield of *faith*
- ⇒ the helmet of *salvation*
- ⇒ the sword of the Spirit, *the Word of God*
- ⇒ the supernatural resource of the soldier: *prayer*

**“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph.6:10-11).**

**“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Th.5:8).**

**4** (13:13) **Sin:** it is time to walk straight. The word “honestly” (euschemonos) means proper, honorable, decent, noble. The believer is to walk in honesty before God. He is to live a life of honesty, decency, and nobility. He is to live a life of honor and honesty before God. He is to walk in the day, not hiding nor trying to hide anything. Scripture gives six sins in particular which the believer is to cast off and turn from—forever.

1. *Rioting* (komois): revelling, carousing, partying, feasting, intemperance, debauchery, unrestrained revelry, indulgence, giving license to basic urges.

**“Now the works of the flesh are manifest....envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19, 21).**

**“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead” (1 Pt.4:3-5).**

2. *Drunkenness* (methais): to take intoxicating drink or drugs to affect the senses and faculties; to become intoxicated for the purpose of lust or pleasure; to seek to be tipsy or intoxicated; to seek to loosen moral restraint for the sake of bodily pleasure.

**“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lk.21:34).**

**“Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:10-11).**

**“Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!” (Hab.2:15).**

3. *Chambering* (koitais): sexual immorality, adultery, fornication (pre-marital sex).

**“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet” (Ro.1:27).**

4. *Wantonness* (aselgeiais): sensuality, running wild, licentiousness, debauchery; homosexuality, lasciviousness, living a wild, partying, and immoral life. It is excess lust, unbridled lust that consumes one’s thoughts and behavior through...

- |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| • looks and dress          | • books and pamphlets |
| • films and pictures       | • songs and music     |
| • dances and parties       | • talk and jokes      |
| • suggestions and gestures | • touch and behavior  |

**“Ye [the rich] have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter” (Jas.5:5).**

**“For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error” (2 Pt.2:18).**

5. *Strife* (eridi): contention, quarreling, arguing, striving. It is the craving deep within a person that wants recognition, honor, position, and authority. It is a spirit that is in constant competition with others, that will push one forward...

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • by putting others down | • by holding others back |
| • by bypassing others    | • by blaming others      |
| • by ignoring others     | • by neglecting others   |

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Ph.2:3).**

**“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Tim.2:14).**

**“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim.2:24).**

**“He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears” (Pr.26:17).**

6. *Envyng* (zeloi): jealousy that begrudges others. It looks upon the position, recognition, and success of others with a jealous eye. It regrets the success of others.

“Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up” (1 Cor.13:4).

“Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another” (Gal.5:26).

“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth” (Jas.3:14).

“A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones” (Pr.14:30).

“Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long” (Pr.23:17).

“Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them” (Pr.24:1).

**5** (13:14) **Believer—Clothing, Spiritual:** it is time to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and to make no provision for the flesh. Note two points.

1. We are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, the picture is that of clothing ourselves. We are to clothe ourselves with Jesus Christ and His righteousness. We are to be as closely bound to Him and His righteousness as we are to our clothes. This means two things.

a. Jesus Christ becomes our clothing. As our clothing He...

- touches us
- protects us
- warms us
- covers us
- hides us

b. We are wrapped up in Jesus Christ. Being in Him means that we live, move, and have our being in Him: in His life and thoughts and behavior. Therefore, we must...

- look only at that upon which He would look.
- listen only to that to which He would listen.
- talk only as He would talk.
- touch only what He would touch.
- eat and drink only what He would eat and drink.
- think only that upon which He would think.

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Ph.2:5).

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col.3:1-3).

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him....Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Col.3:10, 12).

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).

2. We must not make provision for the flesh. The idea is that we do not give in to the flesh and its lusts; we do not indulge or give license to the flesh. We do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Mt.5:29).

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Ro.6:6).

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Ro.13:14).

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the souls” (1 Pt.2:11).

“That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (1 Pt.4:2).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(13:14) **Believer—Clothing, Spiritual—Put on:** Scripture lists seven things that the believer is to put on or with which he is to clothe himself.

1. The believer is to put on and be endued (endues the, clothed) with the *Holy Spirit* (Lk.24:49).
2. The believer is to put on and be clothed with the *Lord Jesus Christ* (Ro.13:14; Gal.3:27).
3. The believer is to put on and be clothed with *immortality* (1 Cor.15:53-54; 2 Cor.5:3).
4. The believer is to put on and be clothed with the *new man* (Eph.4:24; Col.3:10).
5. The believer is to put on and be clothed with the *nature of God* (Col.3:12).
6. The believer is to put on and be clothed with the *armour of light and of God* (Ro.13:14; Eph.6:11f).
7. The believer is to put on and be clothed with *love* (Col.3:14).

| CHAPTER 14  |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Receive the weak brother</b><br/>                     a. Without arguing, without criticizing<br/>                     b. Simply because there is a difference<sup>PS1</sup></p> <p><b>2 Do not despise &amp; judge (criticize) others</b><br/>                     a. God has received the strong<br/><br/>                     b. No one has the right to judge the Lord's servant<br/>                     c. Because God shall hold him up</p> <p><b>3 Be fully persuaded of right &amp; wrong behavior</b><br/>                     a. In your own mind, not violating your conscience: Be careful to do no wrong<br/>                     b. A man is to live as he sees &amp; understands God's will</p> <p><b>4 Watch out—watch what you do</b><br/>                     a. You are under the watchful eye of Christ<br/>                     b. You belong to Christ—in life and death<br/><br/>                     c. You have been purchased by the Lord's death &amp; resurrection</p> <p><b>5 Leave the judgment up to God</b><br/>                     a. Because everyone shall be judged by Christ</p> | <p><b>H. The Strong Believer and the Weak Believer: Questionable Functions &amp; Behavior—Christian Liberty, 14:1-23</b></p> <p>Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.<br/>                     2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.<br/>                     3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.<br/>                     4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.<br/>                     5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.<br/>                     6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.<br/>                     7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.<br/>                     8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.<br/>                     9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.<br/>                     10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment</p> | <p>seat of Christ.<br/>                     11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.<br/>                     12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.<br/>                     13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.<br/>                     14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.<br/>                     15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.<br/>                     16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:<br/>                     17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.<br/>                     18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.<br/>                     19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.<br/>                     20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.<br/>                     21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.<br/>                     22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.<br/>                     23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.</p> <p>b. Because every knee shall bow &amp; confess: Christ alone is God<br/><br/>                     c. Because everyone shall give an account of himself to God</p> <p><b>6 Judge only one thing: Stumbling blocks</b><br/><br/>                     a. By watching the things which men think are unclean<br/><br/>                     b. By walking in love: Not hurting, wounding, ruining</p> <p><b>7 Give no occasion for criticism</b><br/>                     a. Because the Kingdom of God is the believer's concern, not pleasure<br/><br/>                     b. Because serving Christ &amp; the Kingdom of God pleases God &amp; men</p> <p><b>8 Pursue things that bring peace &amp; edification</b></p> <p><b>9 Do not destroy or ruin the work of God in another person's life: It is sin to do so</b></p> <p><b>10 Do nothing to cause a brother to stumble</b></p> <p><b>11 Watch &amp; do not condemn yourself</b><br/>                     a. By keeping your faith<br/>                     b. By not going against conscience<br/>                     c. By acting on faith, from a conviction that God approves your behavior</p> |

**DIVISION VIII**

**THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR, 12:1-15:13**

**H. The Strong Believer and the Weak Believer: Questionable Functions and Behavior—Christian Liberty, 14:1-23**

(14:1-23) **Introduction:** the issue of Christian liberty vs. license is always confronting the believer and the church who wish to please their Lord. What can a believer *do and not do* socially and personally? Can he...

- drink socially?
- attend films, and if so, are any unacceptable?

- watch television, and if so, are all programs acceptable?
- gamble, and what is considered gambling?
- dance, and is there any form of dance unacceptable?
- listen to loud and suggestive music or lyrics?
- attend athletic contests on Sunday?

There are a host of social and recreational functions that are sometimes questioned by the believer who is truly seeking to please his Lord in *all that he does*. This passage deals with the principles which are to guide the believer as he faces these issues.

1. Receive the weak brother (v.1-2).
2. Do not despise and judge (criticize) others (v.3-4).
3. Be fully persuaded of right and wrong behavior (v.5-6).
4. Watch out—watch what you do (v.7-9).
5. Leave the judgment up to God (v.10-12).
6. Judge only one thing: stumbling blocks (v.13-15).
7. Give no occasion for criticism (v.16-18).
8. Pursue things that bring peace and edification (v.19).
9. Do not destroy or ruin the work of God in another person's life: it is sin to do so (v.20).
10. Do nothing to cause a brother to stumble (v.21).
11. Watch and do not condemn yourself (v.22-23).

**1** (14:1-2) **Believers, Duty—Brotherhood—Ministry—Weakness, Spiritual—Receive:** receive the weak brother. The word “receive” (proslambano) means to welcome, to accept, to take to oneself. However, there is a significant fact about the word that must be noted. It means...

- to receive a weak person just as *God graciously receives* men.
- to take a weak person to oneself just as God graciously takes men to Himself.

The believer is to “receive” the weak brother just as God receives him. The exhortation is both forceful and tender, demanding and hopeful. It is forceful and demanding in that it gives the believer the opportunity to act as God acts, and it gives the weak believer great hope in being cared for and looked after. Now, note two instructions about receiving the weak brother.

1. The weak brother is to be received without criticism and argument over his weaknesses. There is to be no *doubt* and no *disputing* in receiving him. He is to be received with open arms just as God receives men.

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor.9:22).**

2. There are differences between Christians as to how they should live—about what is and is not allowed by God. For example, one Christian believes he can eat anything, whereas another Christian believes he must be a vegetarian. The Roman church was apparently dealing with this very problem. The Jews from their earliest history had a long list of laws governing food (cp. Lev.11:1f), so there was probably some division within the church between the Jewish and Gentile converts as to just how closely these laws should be observed, if indeed at all. The point, however, is not limited to rules governing food. The Scripture is applicable to all the rules, scruples, taboos, and restrictions of behavior which some believers and churches say should regulate our lives. However, having said this, it is absolutely critical to note two facts.

a. This passage is *not dealing with the clear commandments of God*; it is dealing with those behaviors about which there are *clear differences of opinions* among men. *There is no dispute about the commandments of God in Scripture: they are to be obeyed.* In fact, Christian maturity is measured by our obedience to Christ. (See note—Mt.5:17-18 for more discussion.)

**“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn.14:21).**

**“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love....Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (Jn.15:10, 14).**

**“Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam.15:22).**

b. The person who is a vegetarian, that is, who governs his life by *strict rules*, is called the “*weak*” brother. Why would the keeping of strict rules cause a believer to be called a “*weak*” Christian? (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Christian Liberty*—Ro.14:2 for discussion.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(14:2) **Christian Liberty:** both the weak Christian believer and the strong Christian believer thought the other was weak. This is important to see, for both are subject to criticizing and condemning the other (v.3f).

Paul faced the issue of Christian liberty often; therefore, he is an excellent example to consider in discussing this issue. Paul was willing to become all things to all men when principle *was not at stake*, but when principle *was at stake*, he would concede nothing.

For example, Paul had Timothy circumcised, conforming to the law of Moses; however, here in Romans he exhorts believers to ignore outward observances and to resist them to the utmost. In another instance, he *would not allow* Titus to be circumcised—under any circumstance (Gal.2:3-5); and he warned the Galatians that if they were circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing. They would be renouncing their salvation. What is the difference?

When rules and observance are made the *means of salvation*, they become a fatal heresy, and in the case of Titus and the Galatians this is what was happening. Rules and observances are contrary to God's method of saving men. There is all the difference in the world between a man who approaches God *by means of rules* and the man who approaches God *by means of Christ*. The first man believes he is saved by his works, that is, by the morality of keeping rules; whereas the second man believes he is saved by Christ and Christ alone.

The problem of the weak brother is that he is just a little bit mixed up as to how day to day cleanliness comes. He feels a tinge of conscience to observe some rule in order to keep his life clean. He feels that he keeps the favor of God by doing *extra* works. He just has not matured to the point of understanding that even his day to day cleanliness comes from the *righteousness of Christ*.

There are essentially two reasons why the strict or judgmental man is weak in the faith.

1. He still believes in the necessity of works. Down deep within his heart he still believes that he can gain *some favor* from God by doing certain things and abstaining from others—things that are not taught in the Bible, that are reasoned out by himself and others as commendable and beneficial. To some degree he is still trying to gain and to maintain a right relationship with God by his own works. He has not fully accepted the way of God's grace and love. He has not yet understood that he is accepted *in* the righteousness of Christ and in His righteousness alone. He has not yet understood—not fully—that he is short and always will be short of God's glory, unable to do any work or act perfectly. He has not grasped that he must trust the love of God to count him righteous in Christ *every day*. He is not completely liberated from a belief in works and self-righteousness.

2. He does not know the meaning of Christian liberty. He sees Christianity as a thing of rules and regulations, and he governs his life by these rules and observances. In many cases even the thought of Christian liberty *frightens* him.

Now, having said this, it is of *utmost importance* that a believer keep in mind his duty as a Christian (see notes—Ro.6:1-2; 6:14-15). There are *commands and prohibitions* given in the Bible about which there are no questions. A believer must unquestionably obey them (see notes—Ro.14:13-15; 15:1-3; cp. Ex.20:1f; Ro.1:29f; Gal.5:19f; Eph.4:17f).

**2** (14:3-4) **Judging Others—Criticizing:** do not despise and judge others. As the strong believer and the weak believer associate together, both are subject to serious sin.

⇒ The believer who understands his liberty in Christ is subject to *despising* the weaker brother. The word despise (exoutheneito) means to look down upon, to hold in contempt, to treat as meaningless and utterly wrong.

⇒ The weak believer, the believer who feels he must observe some *extra* rules, is subject to judging (krineto), to criticizing, to censoring.

Three reasons are given for not despising and judging one another, three reasons that stand as a warning to believers.

1. God Himself has received the strong believer. The believer who walks in the liberty of Christ and does not live a strict life has been accepted by God, no matter what the more legalistic believer may think. There may be some man-made religious rules which he does not observe, but he has trusted Christ, and he obeys the Word of God. Therefore, he is not to be criticized and judged, but he is to be accepted into the fellowship of the more legalistic believer.

2. No one has the *right* to judge the Lord's servant. Note: both believers belong to the Lord; both are the servants of the Lord. Therefore, the Lord alone has the right to judge them. Believers do not have the *right to play God* and to judge each other. They have no right to condemn and pass judgment upon each other's behavior and works, for they do not belong to each other. They each belong to Christ; therefore, He alone determines whether or not they stand or fall and are accepted or rejected.

3. God *shall hold* the believer up. There is no question about the matter: the believer will be held up, for God is able to make him stand.

**“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Ph.1:6).**

**“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim.1:12).**

**“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).**

**“[You] who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pt.1:5).**

**“And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of” (Gen.28:15).**

**“For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off” (Ps.37:28).**

**“He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints” (Pr.2:8).**

**3** (14:5-6) **Believers, Behavior:** be fully persuaded of right and wrong behavior. The Jews had made a maze of rules governing the Sabbath and special holy days.

**“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years” (Gal.4:9-10).**

**“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Col.2:16-17).**

Again, this issue was apparently a hotly debated issue between the Jewish and Gentile believers in the Roman church. But again, the issue is much broader than the mere observances of *holy days*; it involves all the man-made restrictions laid upon men by legalistic believers and churches. In saying this, however, it bears repeating: Scripture is not talking about the commandments found throughout the Bible. The commandments and instructions of Scripture are to be kept. The present passage is dealing with the legalistic tendencies of men: the rules and regulations which some men put forth as commendable and beneficial to practice.

Another fact needs to be mentioned as well. Paul is not suggesting that the Lord’s Day is not important. He is not suggesting that it is all right to ignore, neglect, or abuse the Lord’s Day. Far from it. What he is attacking is an attitude that substitutes a Christian day for Christianity. The Lord’s Day is very important to God, for it is the day set aside for the worship of His Son and for the rest and relaxation of His followers. However, the believer is not to worship the day, but worship the Lord of all days.

The point is this. Whatever the believer does, he must be fully persuaded that it is right and not wrong. Note two points.

1. The believer is to be fully persuaded in his own mind when dealing with questionable matters. The believer is to make the decision for himself; no one else is to decide for him. But note:

- ⇒ He must make sure the matter is *questionable*, that it is not covered by some command in the Scripture.
- ⇒ He must be honest and intelligent in deciding if the behavior is right.
- ⇒ He must not violate his conscience *at all*, not in the least.
- ⇒ He must be absolutely sure to do no wrong.

2. The believer is to live as he sees and understands God’s will. The point is very simply stated: one man dedicates every day to the Lord and sees every day as the Lord’s; the other man dedicates every day to the Lord, but he believes Sunday and holy days are more special and meaningful and should be especially set aside for God. Note that the same attitudes prevail toward food: one man *gives thanks* to God and eats everything; another man *gives thanks* and eats only vegetation. The point to note is that...

- both men dedicate and worship the Lord every day. They differ only in that one man sets aside some days for an extended celebration to God.
- both men thank God for their food. They differ only in what they are eating.

Now note the crucial factor: the hearts of both men are focused upon God. Both men are dedicating their lives to worship and serve God and both are thanking God for what they have. Their hearts are right with God. The differences between them are external and concern material things: days and food. Therefore, both are acceptable to God. Both are fully persuaded that what they are doing is right before God.

**4** (14:7-9) **Dedication—Purchased—Possession—Surrender:** watch out—watch what you do. There are two *supreme reasons* why the believer must watch what he does.

1. The believer belongs to Christ in both life and death.

- ⇒ He does not live to himself: he does not do as he wills, follow his own desires, do his own thing, give in to his urges and passions.
- ⇒ He does not die to himself: take his death into his own hands or expect to handle death by himself.

The believer does not live for himself; he lives for Christ. He has committed both his life and his death into the hands of Christ, surrendering all he is to Christ. While he lives He is the Lord’s, and when he dies he is the Lord’s. The Lord’s dominion does not extend only to this life, but in the other life as well. No matter where the believer is or what he is doing, he is the Lord’s. The Lord is his Lord, for the believer has placed his life and death under the care and keeping of the Lord. The Lord is the Master and God of his life; therefore, the believer watches closely what he does: he makes sure that what he does pleases his Lord, *for the welfare of his life and death is under the Lord’s care*.

**“For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him” (Lk.20:38).**

**“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Ro.14:8).**

2. The believer has been purchased by the Lord’s death and resurrection. Christ died, bearing the sin of the believer upon Himself, so that the believer could be freed from the coming judgment upon sin. The believer has faith in the death of Christ. He believes that...

- when Christ died, he *symbolically died* with Christ.
- when Christ hung upon the cross, he *symbolically hung* upon the cross with Christ. How? By faith. God loves man so much that when a man truly believes in the death of Christ for his sins, God will take that man’s *faith* and count it as the death of Christ, as the believer having died with Christ. It is the same with the resurrection of Christ. When a man truly believes in Christ, God counts the man’s belief as the

resurrection of Christ. The man is identified with Christ in the resurrection of Christ, and he is given a new life that is both abundant and eternal.

The point is this: it was for this purpose that Christ died and arose—that He might be the Lord both of the living and the dead. He is the Lord of all believers whether they are living on this earth or deceased and passed on into heaven. The true believer has been purchased by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The believer does not belong to himself: he cannot act selfishly and sinfully in making decisions about behavior. He must obey and please the Lord, for the Lord has purchased the right to the believer's life and death.

**“For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:10-11).**

**“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**5** (14:10-12) **Judgment:** leave the judgment up to God.

⇒ Why do you judge and criticize your brother?

⇒ Why do you despise and look down upon your brother?

The questions are forceful and disturbing because so many believers stand guilty before God.

Note the word “brother.” The person being criticized and judged is a brother, and what he is doing is coming from a sincere conviction that it is either God's will or acceptable to God (v.5-6). Why then do you set yourself up as God and criticize and judge him? Watch out! For “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (v.10). Everyone of us shall be judged *by Christ, not by each other.*

- a. Every knee shall bow *to Christ*, not to each other. Every tongue shall confess *to God*, not to each other. None of us are God; therefore, we absolutely have no right to be judging and criticizing each other. God alone is the judge of men.

**“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Ro.14:11).**

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

**“Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev.15:4).**

**“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Is.45:22-23).**

- b. Everyone shall give an account of himself to God. We are not going to be called to give an account of others before God. We are going to give an account of ourselves. Each one shall be held accountable *for himself only*. God is not going to be asking us what we think or know about Stephen or Ruth. Each one shall stand alone before God and give an account for his own behavior only.

**“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt.25:32).**

**“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (Jn.5:22).**

**“And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10:42).**

**“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).**

**“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Ro.2:16).**

**“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Ro.14:10).**

**“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor.4:5).**

**“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim.4:1).**

**6** (14:13-15) **Stumbling Block—Judging—Criticism—Socials, Questionable:** judge but one thing—if you are a stumbling block to a brother. The word “stumbling block” (proskamma) means an obstacle placed in the way of someone. The words “occasion to fall” (skandalon) mean to trap, to snare, to do something that causes a person to stumble and fall. It has reference in particular to leading or causing someone to sin. The exhortation is strong: believers are not to be criticizing and judging each other; they are to be judging themselves. Every single believer is to be constantly looking at his own life making sure...

- that he is not putting a stumbling block in his brother’s path to God, not even a single obstacle or hindrance of any kind.
- that he is not doing a single thing that will cause his brother to stumble or fall into sin.

If a believer is constantly looking at his own life and guarding against becoming a stumbling block, he does not have time to judge and talk about his brother. There are three very practical behaviors that will keep us from putting stumbling blocks in our brother’s walk toward God.

1. First, we must watch for the things which our brothers think are unclean. And, very simply, if some behavior or activity is thought to be unclean, we are not to do it. Scripture gives us a great principle in these three verses, a principle that could revolutionize the behavior of believers and much of society if we would just do what God says.

Note the words, “there is nothing unclean of itself.” The immediate situation of the early church was dealing with eating certain foods and keeping special holy days. However, the fact is applicable to the questionable functions faced by every generation of believers. In its pure and natural form, all of God’s creation is acceptable to God. It is what man does with things that make them impure.

- ⇒ The grape is pure, but man takes it and makes an intoxicating drink out of it that damages the human body and leads to immoral behavior.
- ⇒ Fellowship is pure; but man takes it and turns it into a loose, partying atmosphere that leads to exposure of the human body, suggestive thoughts and conversation, and immoral behavior.
- ⇒ Vegetation and forest plants are pure, but man takes them and makes all kinds of harmful and intoxicating drugs, drinks, and foods that harm the human body and lead to immoral and unjust behavior.

The point is this: because of what man does with the things and activities of the earth, believers must watch the things which men make unclean and the things which other believers think are unclean. We must not do anything that would cause a brother to stumble.

**“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Ro.14:13).**

**“But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died” (Ro.14:15).**

**“But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak” (1 Cor.8:9).**

**“A little leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal.5:9).**

**“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him” (1 Jn.2:10).**

2. Second, we must walk in love toward our brother. Note:

- ⇒ We are to do nothing that would grieve a brother. Imagine! We are not to cause “grief” for him—not to cause any kind of *misery or disturbance* whatsoever for him. (What an impact this would make upon churches and the world if we would live out this commandment!)
- ⇒ We are to do nothing that would destroy a brother. This is a forceful command: “Destroy not [me apollue] him.” The words mean to hurt and wound to the point of ruining. Such behavior is absolutely forbidden of the Christian believer. We are to do absolutely nothing that would destroy or ruin our brother.

**Thought 1.** Imagine the judgment coming upon some because of their judging and criticizing, grumbling and divisiveness, habits and behavior, drinking and partying. Just look at the very nature of some who are constantly causing problems and being a stumbling block for both young and old alike.

**“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Cor.8:13).**

**“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth [welfare]” (1 Cor.10:24).**

**“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Ro.13:10).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Ro.15:1-2).**

**“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal.5:14).**

**“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well” (Jas.2:8).**

3. Third, we must keep in mind that Christ died for our brother. This is the clear reason we must not grieve, much less destroy, our brother: Christ died for him. The argument is forceful: if Christ loved him enough to die for him, then we must love him enough to give up a few desires and activities.

**“And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?” (1 Cor.8:11).**

**“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:15).**

**“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight” (Col.1:21-22).**

**7** (14:16-18) **Criticism—Christian Liberty vs. License:** give no occasion for criticism. Christian liberty can be abused. A believer may be free to eat and drink some things and be free to go and participate in certain activities, but he *should not* do either. Why? Because his behavior would be considered evil. Two facts are to be kept in mind by believers when they are considering questionable things.

1. The Kingdom of God is the believer’s concern, not pleasure. Note: the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking; that is, it is not concerned with external matters but with the heart. It is not a sin to abstain from food and drink and questionable activities; therefore, the believer must readily stay away from anything that will grieve or cause others to stumble. The Kingdom of God is...

- righteousness: being and doing what is right; establishing and maintaining the highest possible good with God and man.
- peace: being in a right relationship with both God and man and maintaining that relationship; working for the highest possible good between God and man.
- joy: experiencing the fulfillment and happiness of a right relationship with God and man; bearing the fruit of being right with God and man.

The point is this: the believer is to be concerned with people and their relationships with God and with himself, not with the right to eat, drink, and socialize. His primary purpose in life is to reach and build men up, not to grieve and cause them to stumble.

2. The believer who puts the spiritual welfare of people before his own desires pleases both God and men. Note a crucial point: this is the person who is *acceptable* to Christ, the person who is a *genuine believer*. A man who professes to know God makes a questionable profession...

- if he does not love God enough to do what He says.
- if he does not love his brother and fellow man enough to keep from grieving and causing him to stumble.

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).**

**“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).**

**“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn.14:21).**

**“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).**

Note another fact: the believer who seeks the welfare of his brothers will be acceptable to men.

**“For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth” (2 Cor.10:18).**

**“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim.4:12).**

**“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold” (Pr.22:1).**

**“A good name is better than precious ointment” (Eccl.7:1).**

**8** (14:19) **Purpose, of Believers:** pursue things that bring peace and edification. This is the very purpose for believers being on earth: to bring peace to men and to build them up. Men must secure peace with God and with each other. They must be built up in Christ. Believers have both the message of peace and of growth; therefore, they must *follow only* those things which will make peace and edify men.

**“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Ro.12:18).**

**“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb.12:14).**

**“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Ro.15:2).**

**“Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity [love] edifieth” (1 Cor.8:1).**

**“Let all things be done unto edifying” (1 Cor.14:26).**

**“Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying” (2 Cor.12:19).**

**“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph.4:29).**

**9** (14:20) **Liberty vs. License:** do not destroy or ruin the work of God in another person's life—it is sin to do so. A person, child or adult, is far more important than having the right to eat and drink certain things and to attend and participate in certain social and recreational activities.

“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Mt.18:6).

“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Cor.8:13).

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal.5:13).

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:4).

“As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God” (1 Pt.2:16).

**10** (14:21) **Liberty vs. License; Influence—Testimony:** do nothing to cause a brother to stumble. Note how clearly Scripture speaks: food, wine—nothing—is worth causing a brother, child, or adult to stumble. What is right for one may be the downfall of another, for men do influence children and other adults, and the fact is not debatable. The weak person, whether child or adult, may do something...

- because everyone else is doing it.
- because he does not wish to go against the crowd.
- because he simply does not wish to be different.
- because he does not wish to be criticized, ridiculed, or unpopular.
- because he is weaker in stamina.
- because he looks up to and idolizes his friends (parents).

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations” (Ro.14:1).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak” (1 Cor.8:9).

“And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?” (1 Cor.8:11).

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor.9:22).

“Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth [welfare]” (1 Cor.10:24).

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:4).

**11** (14:22-23) **Liberty vs. License—Condemnation, Self:** watch—do not condemn yourself. There are three ways a believer can keep from condemning himself.

1. By keeping his faith. *Faith* means the belief that a person can do a certain thing and that it is acceptable to God. If a believer feels free to do a certain thing, then he can do it, but it is to be done in *private before God*. It is not to be paraded publicly and done before men. It is to be eaten, drunk, and done only in private. Doing the thing privately and *offering it up to God with thanksgiving* are the only ways it is acceptable. *If it cannot be offered up to God with thanksgiving, then it should not be done.*

2. By not going against his conscience. The believer must not condemn himself in what he does and allows in his life and home. (Remember: the children and spouse are being influenced by what the believer does.)

3. By acting on faith, from a conviction that God approves the activity. If there is any question, note how clearly and forcibly Scripture speaks: “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” If a believer cannot eat, drink, and do the thing *in faith*—knowing it is acceptable to God—then *doing it is sin.*

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas.4:17).

“He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he” (Pr.14:21).

“The thought of foolishness is sin” (Pr.24:9).

| CHAPTER 15   |   | Lord Jesus Christ.  |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Mark 1: The strong bear the weaknesses of the weak</b><br/>                     a. How: By not pleasing self, but one's neighbor—focusing on his good and edification<br/>                     b. The pattern: Christ</p> <p><b>2 Mark 2: Everyone studies the Scriptures</b></p> <p><b>3 Mark 3: Everyone works for harmony</b><br/>                     a. How: By prayer &amp; relying upon God<br/>                     b. The pattern: Christ<br/>                     c. Purpose: To glorify God with one mind &amp; one voice</p> | <p><b>I. The Marks of a Strong Fellowship Within the Church, 15:1-13</b></p> <p>We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.<br/>                     2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.<br/>                     3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.<br/>                     4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.<br/>                     5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:<br/>                     6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our</p> | <p>7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.<br/>                     8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:<br/>                     9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.<br/>                     10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.<br/>                     11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.<br/>                     12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.<br/>                     13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.</p> <p><b>4 Mark 4: Everyone accepts one another without discrimination</b><br/>                     a. The pattern: Christ, who received us all<br/>                     1) Christ received the Jews &amp; ministered to them<br/>                     2) Christ received the Gentiles &amp; ministered to them<br/>                     b. The Scriptures prove the point</p> <p><b>5 Mark 5: Everyone is filled by the God of hope</b><br/>                     a. Not with division &amp; malice<br/>                     b. With joy, peace, hope<br/>                     c. Source: The Holy Spirit</p> |

**DIVISION VIII**

**THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR, 12:1-15:13**

**I. The Marks of a Strong Fellowship Within the Church, 15:1-13**

(15:1-13) **Introduction:** this passage is a continuation of the former chapter. It clearly pinpoints the marks of a strong church. Once studying this passage, a believer can never claim he did not know his duty within the church. Every believer's part in building and making the church strong is clearly spelled out.

1. Mark 1: the strong bear the weaknesses of the weak (v.1-3).
2. Mark 2: everyone studies the Scriptures (v.4).
3. Mark 3: everyone works for harmony (v.5-6).
4. Mark 4: everyone accepts one another without discrimination (v.7-12).
5. Mark 5: everyone is filled by the God of hope (v.13).

- 1** (15:1-3) **Brotherhood—Ministry—Weak—Weaknesses:** in a strong church, the strong bear the weaknesses of the weak. The *weak* believers are described in Chapter 14. They are...
- those who judge, grumble, complain, murmur, and criticize (cp. Ro.14:2-3, 10, 13).
  - those who still trust in a legalistic behavior, a do and don't behavior (Ro.14:1, 14-15).
  - those who disobey God's Word and go against the explicit commands of God (Ro.14:10-12, 16-23).

The word "bear" (*bastazein*) does not mean to bear in the sense of putting up with and forbearing with an attitude of begrudging. It means to *bear the weak along*, to support them, to carry them along as a father or mother would carry a child—in love and tenderness, understanding and care.

1. How can such an attitude ever prevail in the church? Scripture clearly gives the answer: "Let *every one of us* please his neighbor." It is that simple: let us not please ourselves, but let us please our neighbor—let us live for his good and edification. No matter what we may wish...

- the place we may want to go,
- the drink we may want to drink,
- the food we may want to eat,
- the film we may want to see,
- the thing we may want to buy,

...if it is going to be a stumbling block to our brother—we do not do it. We please, help, support, and live for the good of our brothers and sisters so that they might be edified and built up in the faith.

2. The believer has the greatest pattern in all the world for denying self and living for his neighbor: Jesus Christ Himself. "For *even* Christ pleased not himself."

⇒ The reproaches that were cast against God—the cursing, dishonor, unbelief, denial, hostility, shame, and rebellion against God—cut the heart of Christ. Therefore, Christ set out to bear the reproaches against

God: He came to earth and bore the sin of the reproaches and made it possible for all persons to praise God instead of reproaching His glorious name. The zeal to remove all the dishonor cast against God consumed Christ and fell upon Him. (Cp. Ps.69:19-20.)

Note the point: Christ did not live to please Himself. He did not pray "Father, remove this cup of sacrifice and denial from me--no matter what." He prayed: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Mt.26:39). Jesus Christ is the believer's pattern for pleasing others instead of self.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Ph.2:5-8).

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pt.2:21).

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pt.3:18).

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Is.53:5).

**Thought 1.** What a glorious spirit would prevail in the church if this was really practiced as Scripture says: by "everyone of us."

"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal.6:2).

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" (Heb.13:3).

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas.1:27).

**Thought 2.** Note how *life-changing* this point really is. The serious believer no longer asks if questionable behavior is right and moral, but if it is good for his brother. Will this thing edify and build up his brother?

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mk.12:30-31).

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn.13:34-35).

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

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Ro.14:19).

"For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection" (2 Cor.13:9).

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Gal.5:14).

"Let not corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph.4:29).

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (Jas.2:8).

**2** (15:4) **Scripture—Study:** in a strong church, everyone studies the Scripture. This is a great verse on the purpose of the Holy Scriptures. In very simple terms it tells us why God gave us the Bible.

1. The Scriptures were written for our learning (didaskalian): instruction, direction, and guidance.

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (Jn.20:31).

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Ro.15:4).

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor.10:11).

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim.2:15).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim.3:16).

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 Jn.5:13).

2. The Scriptures were written to stir three things within believers.
  - a. Patience (see note—Ro.5:3-5 for discussion).
  - b. Comfort (parakleseos): encouragement, consolation, solace, help, exhortation, supplication. Whatever is needed to comfort the believer, the Scripture gives him.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (Jn.8:51).

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (Jn.14:15-16).

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).

- c. Hope (see note—Ro.5:3-5 for discussion).

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Ro.1:16).

“[Christ] who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pt.1:20-23).

**3** (15:5-6) **Unity—Brotherhood:** in a strong church, everyone works for harmony. When there are so many differences and different ideas among people, believers must be constantly striving to be of one mind.

1. How can a church—a church with so many diverse personalities—achieve harmonious feelings and one mind? Note: these two verses are a prayer of Paul. He has just said that the endurance and comfort necessary to live for God comes from the Scriptures. Now he says they come from God. In fact, he says that God is the God of patience (endurance) and consolation (comfort). Therefore, the believer secures his strength or endurance and comfort from both the Scriptures and God. If he wishes to stick—to endure to the end—he must study the Scriptures and pray, asking God to give him...

- the strength and endurance.
- the comfort and consolation.

Now, note the point. If we know the endurance and comfort of God, then we are bearing the weaknesses of each other; we are constantly supporting and helping and caring for each other. We are living in harmony and being of one mind.

2. The pattern of endurance, consolation, and of harmonious feelings with God and man was Christ Jesus.
  - ⇒ He was faithful to God, sticking ever so close to God and fulfilling His ministry to the ultimate degree.
  - ⇒ He experienced the comfort and the consolation of God, possessing an unbroken relationship with God.
  - ⇒ He never held any ill feelings toward God or God’s people. He was of one mind with God and was always working to bring every person into harmony with God.

The believer could have no greater pattern than the pattern of Christ Himself. Christ was always working to bring men together with God so that they could have the endurance and comfort to live through all the trials and sufferings of life.

3. The purpose for harmony between believers and within the church is striking: that we might *glorify God*—all of us together—with one mind and one mouth. God longs for our worship and praise. It is the very reason He created us and saved us. Note a significant point: a divided church cannot worship God. This is exactly what is being said. A church has to be of one mind and mouth to worship God. If a people are not of one mind and mouth, God is not glorified; He is not worshipped.

The point is clear. Every one of us must work for the harmony of the church so that we may be of one mind and fulfill the very purpose for our existence: to glorify God.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor.1:10).

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor.13:11).

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:3).

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Pt.3:8).

**4** (15:7-12) **Unity**: in a strong church everyone accepts one another. There is no discrimination whatsoever in a strong church. The word “receive” (proslambanesthe) means to take to oneself; to receive a person as a friend; to treat as the closest of friends with the most caring kindness. Believers are to receive one another in the closest of bonds.

1. The believer has the greatest pattern imaginable: Christ Himself. Christ received us, and note why: that God may be glorified. Therefore, believers must receive each other so that God may be glorified through their lives and church. Just look at how far Christ went.

- a. Christ received the Jews and ministered to them. He did it for the truth of God: to confirm and fulfill the promises made to the Jewish nation. Think how discriminating, prejudicial, and judgmental the Jews were; yet Christ came to them and received and ministered to them. Why? For the truth of God—to fulfill the Word and praise of God.
  - b. Christ received the Gentiles and ministered to them. He came to bring them the mercy of God, that they might praise God for His mercy. Remember He received and ministered to the Gentiles when they were living the most licentious and indulgent lifestyle imaginable (cp. Ro.1:18-32).
2. The Scripture proves the point. Scripture foretold...
- that the Gentiles would have the gospel preached to them (v.9; cp. Ps.18:49).
  - that the Gentiles would rejoice with God’s people (v.10; cp. Dt.32:43).
  - that the Gentiles would praise God and trust Christ as their Savior and Lord (v.11; cp. Is.11:1, 10).

Believers are to receive one another even as Christ has received us. No person is too prejudicial or critical, too weak or base for us to receive. The point is that Christ received and ministered to the most prejudicial and judgmental (the Jews), sinful and base (the Gentiles) people in the world; therefore, believers can receive one another. No one is too far gone to be rejected and cast away.

⇒ We are to receive each other, as Christ also received us.

**“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria [a despised people] had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John” (Acts 8:14).**

**“Can any man forbid water, that these [Gentiles] should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” (Acts 10:47).**

**“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).**

**“Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God” (Acts 15:19).**

**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28).**

**“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph.2:13-14).**

⇒ We are to receive each other for *the glory of God*.

**“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.15:6).**

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th.1:12).**

**5** (15:13) **Church—Hope**: in a strong church everyone is filled by the God of hope. God is the “God of hope”...

- the Author of our hope.
- the Foundation of our hope.
- the Builder of our hope.
- the Finisher of our hope.

Note that this is a prayer. The things mentioned cannot be possessed apart from God, and we can possess them only as He gives them to us.

1. There is joy (charas): an inner gladness; a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behavior.

**“And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves” (Jn.17:13).**

**“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pt.1:8).**

**“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Is.61:10).**

2. There is peace (see note, *Peace*—Ro.5:1 for discussion). Note that peace comes through believing. No man has peace apart from God.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn.14:27).

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:6-7).

“The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace” (Ps.29:11).

“Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word” (Ps.119:65).

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Is.26:3).

3. There is hope (see note—Ro.5:3-5 for discussion).

“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Ro.8:24).

“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel” (Col.1:5).

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).

“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil” (Heb.6:18-19).

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

“The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death” (Pr.14:32).

Again note: these great qualities come only through the power of the Holy Spirit. God and God alone is the source of the things that give life (cp. Gal.5:22-23. See note, *Justification*—Ro.5:1.)

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| <p><b>1 He was gracious in dealing with people</b><br/> a. Called them brothers<br/> b. Acknowledged their commendable qualities</p> <p><b>2 He was bold in reminding people</b></p> <p><b>3 He was called to minister the gospel of God</b></p> | <p><b>IX. THE MESSENGER OF GOD AND HIS PLANS 15:14-16:27</b></p> <p><b>A. The Messenger or Minister of God, 15:14-21</b></p> <p>14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.</p> <p>15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,</p> <p>16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.</p> | <p>17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.</p> <p>18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.</p> <p>19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.</p> <p>20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:</p> <p>21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.</p> | <p><b>4 He gloried &amp; talked about the things that pertained to God</b><br/> a. Gloried through Jesus Christ<br/> b. Gloried in the obedience of converts—wrought by Christ</p> <p>c. Gloried in the mighty signs and wonders wrought by the Spirit<br/> d. Gloried in the fact that he had been able to preach the gospel of Christ all around</p> <p><b>5 He strived to preach for Christ in pioneer areas</b><br/> a. To reach those who had never heard</p> <p>b. To fulfill God's call for his life: To reach the pioneer areas of the world</p> |
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**DIVISION IX**

**THE MESSENGER OF GOD AND HIS PLANS, 15:14-16:27**

**A. The Messenger or Minister of God, 15:14-21**

(15:14-21) **Introduction:** this is one of the most descriptive passages dealing with the minister of God. It forcefully reveals what it was that made Paul such a great minister of God.

1. He was gracious in dealing with people (v.14).
2. He was bold in reminding people (v.15).
3. He was called to minister the gospel of God (v.16).
4. He gloried and talked about the things that pertained to God (v.17-19).
5. He strived to preach for Christ in pioneer areas (v.20-21).

**1** (15:14) **Minister:** the minister of God is gracious in dealing with people. Note two significant points.

1. Paul called the members of the Roman congregation brothers (v.15, 16). Paul did not look upon himself as being superior to the Roman congregation. He did not see himself...

- as being better.
- as being more spiritual.
- as being more intellectual.
- as being more educated.

Paul never looked upon himself as being superior to other believers in any sense of the word. Note also: Paul was not nagging, harping, or badgering the Roman congregation. On the contrary, he was addressing the congregation in the most gracious of spirits, treating them as his equal before God. Paul called the members *brothers*, not *sons* and *daughters*.

2. Paul acknowledged the commendable qualities of the Roman congregation. He mentioned three qualities or traits in particular.

a. The believers were “full of goodness” (mestoi agathosunes): full of kindness and helpfulness, of virtue and excellence, of peace and conciliation, of inner depth and richness.

“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph.3:19).

“He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD” (Ps.33:5).

“O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Ps.34:8).

“I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses” (Is.63:7).

b. The believers were filled “with all knowledge” (pases gnoseos): spiritual insight and perception; knowledge of Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit, and of the spiritual need of man and his world; spiritual truth.

“Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn.7:16-17).

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn.8:31-32).

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Jn.17:3).

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Ph.3:10).

“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col.1:10).

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge” (2 Pt.1:5).

“And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (2 Pt.2:2-3).

- c. The believers were able “to admonish” (nouthetein) one another: to put in mind, to implant the truth into the mind, to guide, correct, and instruct.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col.3:16).

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).

“Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2 Th.3:15).

**Thought 1.** Remember that Paul had never visited the Roman church. He had only met a few of the Roman believers in his travels over the Mediterranean world. What he knew about the Roman believers was only what he had heard about them. Therefore, his writing to them is comparable to a visiting preacher. Note his gracious spirit and attitude toward other believers and congregations. Every minister can learn from this soft, tender spirit of Paul.

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:4).

“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Lk.22:26).

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim.1:15).

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pt.5:5).

- 2** (15:15) **Minister, Duty of:** the minister of God is bold in reminding people of the great truths of the gospel. Glance at the overall outline of Romans, and you quickly see how Paul has covered the great truths of the Christian faith. This is the task of the minister of God. The minister must proclaim the truths of the gospel—to preach the gospel is the very reason for his call. He exists for no other purpose.

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20; cp. 2 Cor.5:18).

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:1-2).

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Eph.4:7-8).

“[The gospel] whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim.1:11).

- 3** (15:16) **Minister, Duty:** the minister of God is called to minister the gospel of God. When Paul called himself a minister (leitourgon), the Greek word was often used to refer to the priests of the Old Testament. This is a beautiful passage describing the nature of the Christian ministry. The Christian ministry is seen as a priestly ministry. However, we must

always remember that the ministry is not an office to make atonement for sin, nor to offer a propitiatory sacrifice to God. It is a ministry of preaching the gospel under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the ministry is this: to bring men to the point where they will offer themselves as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God (cp. Ro.12:1-2). A minister's only priesthood is the preaching of the gospel, and his only offering is the offering of redeemed and sanctified men to God. He is not a mediator between God and men; he does not offer propitiatory sacrifices. He is only an instrument which God uses to share the gospel of salvation with men. He is a priest only in the sense that he serves the gospel of God *to men* and brings men to God through the gospel of God.

Note what the "offering" was that God wanted Paul to make: the offering of the Gentiles, of human lives. God wanted Paul to bring people to Him. This is the task of ministers: to offer the lives of men, women, boys, and girls to God.

**"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (Jn.15:16).**

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Ro.12:1).**

**"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pt.2:5).**

Note: the offering that God wants from ministers, the only offering that is "acceptable," is the offering of human lives. The word "*acceptable*" is significant. If ministers bring any other offering, it is unacceptable. God is not after buildings, programs, money, equipment, or anything else. God is after the lives of people.

The word acceptable means something else as well. It means that the offering of a human life is acceptable only if the person is brought...

- by "the gospel of God" and is "sanctified [set apart to God] by the Holy Spirit."

The good news of God's Son, Jesus Christ, has to be proclaimed and accepted for a person to be acceptable to God. The only person set apart to God by the Holy Spirit is the person who comes to God in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ.

**"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn.14:6).**

**"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).**

**"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim.2:5-6).**

**4** (15:17-19) **Minister—Boasting—Glorying:** the minister of God talks about the things that pertain to God. Note four facts.

1. Paul talked about and gloried in Jesus Christ alone. There is a legitimate boasting, a justified glorying for the minister. However, it is critical to note where. The minister's boasting...

- is not in material things such as buildings, programs, membership, and numbers.
- is not in fleshly things such as position, charisma, fluency of speech, education, and titles.

Paul demonstrated this fact clearly, for he did not talk about himself nor about what he had done. He talked only about the things that pertained to God, only about the things wrought through Jesus Christ.

**"That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor.1:31).**

**"My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad" (Ps.34:2).**

**"In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever" (Ps.44:8).**

**"In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory" (Is.45:25).**

**"But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jer.9:24).**

2. Paul talked about and gloried in the obedience of converts. Note that the Gentile converts were *wrought by Christ*, not by Paul. Christ used Paul's "words and deeds" to reach the converts, but it was Christ who worked in their hearts to convict and convert them.

The point is this: Paul talked about and shared the glorious news of converts, but he was careful...

- to give all the credit to Christ.
- to make no claims that were not true ("I will not dare to speak of...things which Christ hath not wrought").

**"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Ro.12:3).**

**"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (Jas.4:10).**

**"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic.6:8).**

**"When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom" (Pr.11:2).**

**"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Pr.16:18).**

**"Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain" (Pr.25:14).**

**"But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" (Jas.4:16).**

**"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 Jn.2:16).**

3. Paul talked about and gloried in the mighty signs and wonders wrought by the Holy Spirit. This is a term used in Scripture to refer to the wonderful miracles wrought by God—miracles which could be wrought only by God. Apparently, Paul had an extensive ministry of both evangelism and healing among people. But note the emphasis: it was all wrought by the “power of the Spirit of God.” It was the Holy Spirit who did the miracles. (Cp. Acts 13:11; 14:3, 10; 16:18; 19:11; 20:10; 28:5, 8.)

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19:11-12).

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor.2:4).

“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph.3:16).

“For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” (Heb.1:5).

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim.1:7).

4. Paul talked about and gloried in the fact that he had been given the privilege to *preach the gospel* all around: “from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum” (present day Yugoslavia). Note that God had used Paul to preach throughout the world, but note the emphasis: “I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” It was the gospel of Christ that God wanted the world to hear and receive, not the gospel of Paul. Paul was only the instrument that God used. Paul talked about *the gospel of Christ penetrating and reaching the world*.

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

“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Cor.1:23).

“For though I preach the gospel, *I have nothing to glory of*: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor.4:5).

**5** (15:20-21) **Minister**: the minister of God strives to preach in pioneer areas for Christ. Note two striking points.

1. Paul strived to reach those who had never heard about Christ. His one ambition was to carry the gospel to those to whom no other preacher had gone. God had called him to be an apostle, a missionary evangelist, not to pastor and to build upon the ministry of other men.

⇒ Too many in the world had never heard about Christ.

⇒ Too many were still doomed to die without ever having heard.

⇒ Too many were to spend eternity apart from God.

Why? Simply because they had never heard. There were not enough ministers going into the pioneer areas and staying with the people long enough to root and grow them in the Lord.

2. Paul strived to fulfill God’s call to him by reaching the Gentiles, for God had called him to reach the pioneer areas (Acts 9:15; 22:14-15; 26:15-18). Note: Scripture predicts that the gospel is to be carried to those “who have not heard” (Is.52:15).

**Thought 1.** Paul was the first of God’s chosen vessels to carry the message to those who had never heard. Tragically, there are still multitudes who have not heard the gospel of Christ and who are dying and will spend eternity apart from God—all because we have not carried the gospel to them.

⇒ Who will be the “Pauls” of today?

⇒ Who has the courage to go to the pioneer areas today?

⇒ Who will reach those who have never even had the opportunity to hear?

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Mt.28:19).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Lk.24:47).

“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us” (Acts 16:9).

“Thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard” (Acts 22:15).

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Ps.2:8).

“Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people” (Ps.96:3).

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| <p><b>1 He did a thorough job where he was</b></p> <p>a. He stayed &amp; handled problems, but wanted to go elsewhere</p> <p>b. He completed his ministry—fully</p> <p><b>2 He had a worldwide vision</b></p> <p>a. His vision: To reach the limits of the world</p> <p>b. His expectation: To have the help &amp; support of believers</p> <p><b>3 He did not forget immediate needs as he made worldwide plans</b></p> | <p><b>B. The Messenger &amp; His Ministry, 15:22-33</b></p> <p>22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.</p> <p>23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;</p> <p>24 Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.</p> <p>25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.</p> <p>26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.</p> <p>27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been</p> | <p>made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.</p> <p>28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.</p> <p>29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.</p> <p>30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;</p> <p>31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;</p> <p>32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.</p> <p>33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.</p> | <p><b>4 He served in the gospel of Christ—in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel</b></p> <p>a. He maintained a worldwide vision</p> <p>b. He served the gospel of Christ &amp; nothing else</p> <p><b>5 He begged for much prayer in behalf of his ministry</b></p> <p>a. That he might be delivered from unbelievers</p> <p>b. That his service might be accepted</p> <p>c. That he might carry out his worldwide vision &amp; be refreshed by believers</p> <p><b>6 He set the example of intercessory prayer</b></p> |
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**DIVISION IX**

**THE MESSENGER OF GOD AND HIS PLANS, 15:14-16:27**

**B. The Messenger & His Ministry, 15:22-33**

(15:22-33) **Introduction:** this passage is a remarkable description of the ministry of God's messenger. The messenger may be a preacher, a teacher, or a witnessing believer—it matters not—the principles of ministry are the same for all.

1. He did a thorough job where he was (v.22-23).
2. He had a world-wide vision (v.24).
3. He did not forget immediate needs as he made world-wide plans (v.25-27).
4. He served in the gospel of Christ—in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel (v.28-29).
5. He begged for much prayer in behalf of his ministry (v.30-32).
6. He set the example of intercessory prayer (v.33).

**1** (15:22-23) **Ministry:** the minister of God does a thorough job where he is. Paul set a dynamic example for every minister and teacher of the gospel to stay where he is and complete the job God called him to do—despite the enormity of the task and great difficulties.

Paul stayed where he was and completed his ministry despite the desire to move on. God had called him to evangelize and minister throughout the region from Jerusalem to Illyricum, the country formerly known as Yugoslavia. Note how Paul longed to reach Spain and Rome for Christ, but he stayed in his present ministry because of the enormous problems and needs of the churches. (A quick glance at the overall outlines of the Epistles Paul wrote will give a review of some of the problems.) In addition to the problems within the churches, think of the opposition and personal attacks against Paul himself. Yet Paul stuck to the task at hand, working ever so diligently trying to straighten out the problems within the churches, and to meet their desperate need to grow in Christ. Note the words "having no more place in these parts." Paul was saying that he had now completed his task and finished his work. He had fought a good fight and finished his course. He had "fully preached the gospel of Christ" (v.19). Therefore, he could now move on.

**Thought 1.** What a convicting example Paul is to so many ministers who long to flee instead of facing the problems and meeting the needs of God's people.

*"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness*

and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (2 Cor.11:23-28).

**2** (15:24) **Minister—Stewardship:** the minister of God has a world-wide vision.

1. Paul had a world-wide vision. He longed and ached to reach the outer limits of the world. In the days of Paul, the western borders of Spain were considered the outposts of the civilized world. Paul knew that if he could *personally evangelize* the outposts of western Europe, the gospel would spread out into the uncivilized world.

**Thought 1.** He was consumed with the passion to reach every man, woman, and child with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ who had died for them.

“[Christ] whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily” (Col.1:28-29).

2. Paul had a strong expectation: to have the help and fellowship and support of other believers in his attempt to reach the world. When he visited the Roman church, he expected...

- to be filled with the company and fellowship and help of the believers.
- to be financially supported in his mission to Spain (“sent on my way”).

**Thought 1.** In the great task of reaching the world for Christ, there are those who go forth to preach the gospel, and there are those who prayerfully and financially support the preachers. Both are *absolutely* essential.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Ro.10:13-15).

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, in exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Ro.12:6-8).

“Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea” (Acts 11:29).

**3** (15:25-27) **Ministering:** the minister of God does not forget immediate needs as he makes future or world-wide plans.

As much as Paul longed to preach the gospel in Rome and Spain, there was a more immediate need pressing in upon him—a need of enormous proportion. Saints of God all throughout Judaea were suffering from deep poverty. No doubt some of them had lost their jobs because of their witness for Christ, and the land had apparently suffered a famine of some sort. Whatever the cause, many of God’s people were hungry, unclothed, and unsheltered. They needed help, and it was the minister’s (Paul’s) task to help them. For this reason, Paul had taken a special offering from all the churches in Macedonia and Achaia to help the poor saints in Jerusalem. Note how strongly Paul felt about saints helping one another when they were in need. He said that the Gentile churches were debtors to the poor saints at Jerusalem. Why? Because it was from the Jerusalem believers that the gospel had spread. Since they had ministered the spiritual gift of salvation to the Gentile churches, the Gentile churches were now in debt to help the Jerusalem believers in their physical need.

Our task is to always meet the needs (true needs) of local saints before we move out to meet the needs of those in other nations. If we do not meet the needs of our brothers who live next door, how can we expect God to bless us in trying to meet the needs of those in other countries?

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate [give]” (1 Tim.6:17-18).

“But to do good and to communicate [give, minister] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).

**Thought 1.** Believers are debtors to help other believers throughout the world when they face critical needs. Why? Because genuine believers are ministering to each other through their daily prayers and other spiritual gifts.

Genuine believers are the recipients of each other's prayers and gifts as they minister to each other daily through the presence and power of God's Spirit.

**4** (15:28-29) **Gospel—Minister:** the minister of God serves in the gospel. Note two significant points.

1. Paul kept his world-wide vision even in the face of the pressing needs of the Jerusalem believers. He intended to evangelize Rome and Spain, and he would not let the desperate plight of the present need—as desperate as it was—deter his world-wide vision.

**Thought 1.** What a lesson for most of us! How long ago would the world have been reached for Christ if we had *kept* the world before our face despite the pressing needs of our present situations?

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock” (Ezk.34:8).**

2. It is the “gospel of Christ” and the blessing of it that Paul served. There is no other message or truth that can meet the desperate need of man for life—life that is both abundant and eternal. Paul knew this; therefore, he was gripped with the burning zeal to proclaim Christ.

**“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also” (Ro.1:14-15).**

**“Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).**

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:25-26).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

**5** (15:30-32) **Prayer:** the minister of God begs for much prayer. Note: he does not request prayer for selfish reasons, but for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's one ambition in life was for Jesus Christ to be praised, worshipped, and served by all men. It was for Christ's sake—for the cause of Christ and His kingdom—that Paul wanted people praying for him. Paul needed prayer in three areas in particular.

1. He needed deliverance from unbelievers. Unbelievers were constantly rejecting, ridiculing, mocking, abusing, threatening, and persecuting him—even while he was sharing the glorious news of eternal life with them.

**Thought 1.** The fact that men reject the glorious truth of eternal life is shocking to some people. However, we must keep in mind why men react against the gospel. They are unwilling to give their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord: to sacrifice all they are and have to serve Him and to meet the desperate needs of a world reeling under the weight of starvation, disease, sin, and suffering.

2. He needed prayer that his ministry would be accepted by the saints. Unfortunately and tragically, too many believers do not accept the ministry of all of God's servants. The servant may be a lay teacher or a professional preacher—it does not matter—too many ministers are opposed and rejected by believers for selfish and sinful reasons. Paul was constantly being opposed by carnal believers. He desperately needed prayer: prayer that the believers to whom he ministered would understand his call and ministry and understand why God had placed him with them. The churches to whom he ministered needed to receive his spiritual gifts and to grow under his ministry.

3. He needed prayer that he might be allowed to carry out his world-wide vision and be refreshed by believers where he was called to go.

**“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).**

**“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col.4:2).**

**“Pray without ceasing” (1 Th.5:17).**

- 6** (15:33) **Prayer:** the minister of God sets the example of intercessory prayer. This is striking: while in the midst of requesting prayer, Paul broke out into prayer for the Roman believers. The prayer was only one request, but it was forceful and meaningful: "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." Note these facts:
- ⇒ What every man needs is peace: peace within and peace without.
  - ⇒ Peace comes from God: if men want true peace, they must seek it in God.
  - ⇒ God is the God of peace: peace is of His very nature.
  - ⇒ If man could make only one request in life, the request should be to receive the God of peace. This is the one request Paul made for the Roman believers. Peace does not come from a genie in a bottle nor from the sorceries and sciences of this world. Peace comes only from the Creator of the world, from the God of peace Himself.

| CHAPTER 16   |  |   |
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|  | <b>C. The Messenger's Commendations: One of God's Halls of Fame, 16:1-16</b>   | note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.<br>8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.<br>9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.<br>10 Salute Appelles aproved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.<br>11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.<br>12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.<br>13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.<br>14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.<br>15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.<br>16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you. |
| <b>1 Phebe: A Christian sister who deserved to be welcomed &amp; befriended</b>                                    | I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:<br>2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.   | <b>6 Amplias: One beloved</b><br><b>7 Urbane: A fellow-worker</b><br><b>8 Stachys: One beloved</b><br><b>9 Apelles: Tried, proven</b><br><b>10 Aristobulus' household: Slaves serving a true Master</b><br><b>11 Herodion: A relative of Paul</b><br><b>12 Narcissus' household: Enslaved "in the Lord"</b><br><b>13 Tryphena &amp; Tryphosa: Two ladies who labored much</b><br><b>14 Persis: A beloved believer who worked hard</b><br><b>15 Rufus: A saintly man</b><br><b>16 Rufus' mother: A mother to God's servants</b><br><b>17 The unknown servants: Unknown but faithful in the fellowship of the church</b>  |
| <b>2 Priscilla &amp; Aquila: A hospitable couple, who opened their hearts &amp; home—even at the risk of death</b> | 3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:<br>4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.<br>5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. |   |
| <b>3 Epenetus: A courageous first convert</b>  | 6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.  |   |
| <b>4 Mary: A lady who labored much</b>   | 7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of  |   |
| <b>5 Andronicus &amp; Junia: Early converts imprisoned with Paul</b>   |  |   |

DIVISION IX

THE MESSENGER OF GOD AND HIS PLANS, 15:14-16:27

C. The Messenger's Commendations: One of God's Halls of Fame, 16:1-16

(16:1-16) **Introduction—Church—Christian Brotherhood:** this is one of God's Halls of Fame. It gives a list of some of the believers in the Roman church and their outstanding Christian traits. Each name stands as a challenge to every believer to follow the Lord more closely than ever before. Throughout the passage note the emphasis upon a warm, tender heart. A local church should be a friendly, welcoming church—an open, gracious church. There should be no strangers in the Lord's church. The church should *guard against becoming a closed society*, a body of *cliques*, shut up only to themselves.

1. Phebe: a Christian sister who deserved to be welcomed and befriended (v.1-2).
2. Priscilla and Aquila: a hospitable couple, who opened their hearts and home—even at the risk of death (v.3-4).
3. Epenetus: a courageous first convert (v.5).
4. Mary: a lady who labored much (v.6).
5. Andronicus and Junia: early converts imprisoned with Paul (v.7).
6. Amplias: one beloved (v.8).
7. Urbane: a fellow-worker (v.9).
8. Stachys: one beloved (v.9).
9. Apelles: tried and proven (v.10).
10. Aristobulus' household: slaves serving a true Master (v.10).
11. Herodion: a relative of Paul (v.11).
12. Narcissus' household: enslaved "in the Lord" (v.11).
13. Tryphena and Tryphosa: two ladies who labored much (v.12).
14. Persis: a beloved believer who worked hard (v.12).
15. Rufus: a saintly man (v.13).
16. Rufus' mother: a mother to God's servants (v.13).
17. The unknown servants: unknown but faithful in the fellowship of the church (v.14-16).

**1** (16:1-2) **Phebe—Deaconess:** there was Phebe, a Christian sister who deserved to be welcomed and befriended. Note these facts about her.

1. The name Phebe is one of the names of the goddess Diana; therefore, Phebe was probably a convert from a heathen religion.

2. Paul calls her “our sister,” meaning a sister in the faith of Christ. She was a woman beloved by Paul and the believers of her church, highly esteemed as a genuine sister of the faith.

3. Phebe was a *servant* of the church at Cenchrea, which was the seaport of Corinth (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Cenchrea*—Acts 18:18). Note the word “servant” (diakonon). It is the word deacon or deaconess. Does this mean that Phebe held the official office of a deacon in the early church? Note closely what the Scripture says and it seems to be saying that she did: “Phebe our sister, which is a servant (deaconess) of the church.” The words “of the church” (tes ekklesias) modify servant or deaconess. Phebe was a servant or a deaconess of the church which is at Cenchrea. Paul is not saying she is a servant of the Lord to all of God’s people in general. She was, of course, just as all believers are. But this is not what Paul is saying. He is very clear about the matter: she is an official “servant [deaconess] of the church which is at Cenchrea.”

The separation of the sexes in that day would almost necessitate some official office of women to minister to the women of the church. This would be especially true in the area of ministry where women would be alone, for example, in visiting and caring for the sick and in distributing food and clothing among the needful.

4. Phebe deserved to be welcomed and befriended in the Lord. There are two reasons for this.
  - a. Believers are always to welcome and befriend other believers. The church is not an exclusive club nor a society of cliques. It is to be a welcoming center for all strangers and neighbors, whether saint or sinner.
  - b. Phebe had been a “succourer” (prostatis) of many, including Paul himself. The word *succourer* means that she protected, helped, looked after, and provided for people. Phebe was a woman who ministered to the needs of many. Apparently she helped and looked after the welfare of any who had need.

**Thought 1.** The great lessons to be learned from Phebe are twofold:

- ⇒ We should be servants of the church.
- ⇒ We should be constantly ministering to all who are in need.

“I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame” (Job 29:15).

“She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy” (Pr.31:20).

“The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned” (Is.50:4).

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Mt.25:34-36).

“And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance” (Lk.8:2-3).

“Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints’ feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work” (1 Tim.5:10).

**2** (16:3-4) **Priscilla—Aquila—Hospitality—Church, in Homes:** there was Priscilla and Aquila, a hospitable couple who opened their hearts and home even at the risk of death. Priscilla and Aquila were close companions of Paul. They were originally residents of Rome. But the Roman emperor, Claudius, had the Jews banished from Rome in A.D. 52. Priscilla and Aquila moved to Corinth. They were the couple who opened their home to Paul when he first entered Corinth. They were also the couple who went into business with Paul as tent makers. They later travelled with Paul to Ephesus where they settled (Acts 18:18). The chief characteristic of this couple was an open heart and an open house. Wherever we find them, we find that their home was the center for Christian worship and fellowship. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 18:2.)

1. They received the young preacher, Apollos, into their home to instruct him in the faith (Acts 18:24-26).
2. They had a church meeting in their home in Ephesus (1 Cor.16:19).
3. They had another church meeting in their home in Rome (Ro.16:13).
4. Paul called them “my helpers [fellow-workers] in Christ Jesus” (Ro.16:3), and he explained what he meant. They risked their lives in order to save him. This probably refers to the attacks made upon Paul and the church in Corinth (Acts 18:6, 12-17), or to some other severe persecution that took place in Ephesus (1 Cor.15:32; cp. 2 Cor.1:8). In either case, this godly couple, Priscilla and Aquila, risked their lives in order to save the life of one of God’s dear servants, Paul himself.

**Thought 1.** Note several lessons.

- 1) A believer should have an open home and show forth a testimony of hospitality. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Church in Houses*—Lk.9:4 for more discussion.)

“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).

“But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate” (Tit.1:8).

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb.13:2).

“Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Pt.4:9).

- 2) A believer should be a helper or a fellow-worker and laborer in the ministry of Christ Jesus.

**“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Mt.9:37-38).**

**“Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (Jn.4:35-36).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**“But to do good and to communicate [give] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).**

**“Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jas.5:20).**

**“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Pr.11:30).**

- 3) A believer should humble and sacrifice himself for the sake of other believers.

**“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Mt.16:25).**

**“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth [welfare]” (1 Cor.10:24).**

**“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:4).**

- 3** (16:5) **Epenetus—Courage:** there was Epenetus, a courageous first convert. He was probably a member of the *household of Stephanas* whose house is said to have been the first fruits of Achaia (1 Cor.16:15). It took raw courage to be the first convert to Christ in the midst of a pagan society. Just imagine the changed life, the surrendering of himself to Jesus as Lord, and the giving of all he was and had to the Lord’s cause. Just imagine the attitude and reactions of his neighbors, friends and fellow-workers: the possible questioning, misunderstanding, ridicule, mockery, withdrawal, isolation. Epenetus was unquestionably a man of remarkable courage.

**“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.10:32-33).**

**“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mk.8:38).**

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

**“And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God” (Ph.1:28).**

- 4** (16:6) **Mary:** there was Mary, a lady who labored much. Note that Mary was a member of the Roman church. Paul had never been to the Roman church; therefore, Mary had ministered to him and his fellow-workers someplace else. In fact, she had ministered so *much* to his corps of workers that Paul commends her for this labor rather than for her ministry to the church. We have no idea what she did for *Paul’s team*, but whatever it was, it was an effective ministry that required *much* diligent labor.

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph.6:7).**

**“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb.12:28).**

- 5** (16:7) **Andronicus—Junia:** these two believers were early converts who were imprisoned with Paul. They were per-haps man and wife. The facts given about them are interesting, for they reveal that Paul had some relatives who were also believers.

1. They were “kinsmen,” that is, relatives of Paul.
2. They were imprisoned with Paul at some point in his ministry. This indicates...
  - that they were genuine believers willing to stand up for their faith.
  - that they were a part of Paul’s mission team, at least for some time.
3. They were known and highly esteemed by the apostles of Christ.
4. They were believers before Paul. This means they were among the very earliest believers, having been converted before Stephen’s martyrdom (Acts 7:54-60).

**Thought 1.** Did these relatives of Paul have an impact upon Paul’s conversion? Were they witnessing to him during his days of soul-searching and reaction against the early church? Was the fact that some of his family were

becoming Christians arousing bitterness in Paul? Was this part of the reason for his flaming vengeance against Christianity? (See notes—Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-2 for more discussion.) Whatever the case, we should always be witnessing to our family and relatives.

**“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).**

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).**

**“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn.1:3).**

**Thought 2.** We must be willing to stand up for Christ and to bear testimony for Him, even if it means imprisonment and death.

**“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel” (2 Tim.2:7-8).**

**6** (16:8) **Amplias:** this believer simply has the testimony of being beloved. But note, he is “beloved” by a minister of the gospel; and he is greatly loved, for he is called “my beloved.” The fact that God has his name recorded as “beloved” in the Holy Scripture indicates that he was a man of remarkable love, a man who greatly loved others and who was greatly loved by others.

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).**

**“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).**

**“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).**

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).**

**7** (16:9) **Urbane:** this believer was a helper, that is, a fellow-worker in the ministry. Three things in particular are noteworthy.

1. He was a man who worked side by side with God’s minister, Paul.
2. He was a man of unusual diligence. The very fact that he would be laboring with Paul and would be mentioned as a fellow-worker by Paul indicates this.
3. He was a man of unusual faithfulness who was loyal to Christ wherever he travelled. Remember: he met Paul while on a trip away from Rome. He could have been a tradesman or a salesman; nevertheless, whatever his reason for travelling, he did not become entangled again with the world, joining the crowd in its worldliness. He was faithful in serving and witnessing for his Lord wherever he was.

**“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).**

**“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage [of sin]” (Gal.5:1).**

**“Only let your conversation [behavior] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

**“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim.2:3-4).**

**“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).**

**“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).**

**8** (16:9) **Stachys:** this believer is also called “my beloved” by Paul. He was a believer who was characterized by the greatest of all traits and qualities: love.

**Thought 1.** Just imagine the strength of a man whose character is said to be so strong that his dominant feature is love.

**“Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (1 Cor.13:4-7).**

- 9** (16:10) **Apelles:** this was a believer who had been tried and approved as faithful. Apparently, Apelles had undergone some extreme suffering and had stood against it, proving his loyalty beyond question. Note: the trial and suffering had been so severe that it had made a lasting impression upon Paul and is mentioned in Scripture.

**Thought 1.** So far as we know Apelles was a lay believer. The fact that he was tested so fiercely shows that God will meet our need in the midst of suffering—if we will do but one thing: be faithful, loyal. We are to stand fast against suffering, trusting the presence of God’s Spirit to carry us through the trial.

**“There hath no temptation [trial] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation [trial] also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).**

**“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2 Cor.1:3-4).**

**“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Cor.4:7).**

**“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (Jas.1:12).**

**“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.1:6-7).**

**“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s suffering; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13).**

- 10** (16:10) **Aristobulus:** the believers being greeted in this statement were slaves who were now serving the true Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. Aristobulus was the name of *Herod the Great’s grandson*. This could possibly be a reference to his slaves. The two names surrounding Aristobulus’ name would indicate this. Apelles is the Greek name that a Jewish slave would take when enslaved, and Herodion is a name that would be commonly used by a person of Herod’s household. At any rate, the charge is to the slaves of some master, probably of royal rank. Since coming to know Christ, they were first and foremost enslaved by Christ, the true Royal Master.

**“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Eph.6:7-8).**

**“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col.3:23-24).**

- 11** (16:11) **Herodion:** this man was another relative of Paul who was a believer (cp. v.7). There is no reason for translating kinsman (suggene) as fellow-countryman instead of relative. Others who are mentioned were *Jews*, but are not called kinsmen by Paul. What effect did this relative have upon Paul’s conversion? Again the answer is unknown, but the fact that we should be witnessing to our relatives is driven home to our hearts and minds.

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).**

- 12** (16:11) **Narcissus:** the believers in this household were the enslaved “in the Lord.” Note: not all of the household were believers. Paul greets only those who were believers. The phrase “in the Lord” is in contrast to the phrase “in the world” (cp. 1 Jn.2:15-16). It is probably a deliberate wording to contrast the difference between the laboring slaves and their wealthy master. *Narcissus was probably the wealthy secretary to the Emperor Claudius*. He determined the appointments of the Emperor and amassed a great fortune from kickbacks. (William Barclay. *The Letter to the Romans*, p.233.)

The fact to note is this: these believers were so enslaved by Christ that they stood up for Him even in the midst of a divided household. Nothing can pose any more of a temptation and threat to one’s faith than one’s own household when it is filled with unbelievers. The indication is that these believers within this household were faithful to Christ, so loyal that their commitment to Christ merited being recorded in Scripture.

**“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mt.16:24).**

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:26-27).

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:33).

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Ph.3:8).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

- 13** (16:12) **Tryphena—Tryphosa**: these two dear ladies labored much in the Lord. The name Tryphena means *dainty* and the name Tryphosa means *delicate*. The word “labor” means to work to the *point of exhaustion*, toiling to the point of collapse. The point is that the two dainty and delicate ladies were working like horses for the Lord and His church (cp. vs.6, 12<sup>b</sup>).

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Heb.10:24).

- 14** (16:12) **Persis**: this was a beloved believer who worked hard in the Lord. Note that two traits are recorded in God’s Hall of Fame about her:

- ⇒ She was beloved: a woman of such love and ministry that the believers looked upon her as the “beloved Persis.”
- ⇒ She labored ever so diligently for her Lord: witnessing, ministering, and helping in every way she could.

“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate [give]” (1 Tim.6:18).

“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you” (Tit.2:7-8).

“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father” (1 Th.1:3).

“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it” (Ps.34:14).

- 15** (16:13) **Rufus**: this believer is said to be a *saintly man*. Note the word *chosen*. Paul does not say that Rufus was chosen *by the Lord*, but *in the Lord*. The emphasis is not election, but tenderness, preciousness, and warmth—an intimate relationship. Rufus was a man who lived ever so close to Christ. He had an intimate, personal relationship and communion with Christ. He was known as a saintly man—a man who was totally set apart unto the Lord. Note that Rufus was probably the son of Simon the Cyrenian who carried the cross for Jesus (see note—Mk.15:21). Our imaginations can easily picture the family of Simon along side the road watching their husband and father carry the cross for Jesus up the hill of Calvary. The impact of the crucifixion would forever change their lives by leading to their conversion.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor.3:18).

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness [being saintly, sanctified] in the fear of God” (2 Cor.7:1).

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb.12:14).

“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pt.1:16).

- 16** (16:13) **Rufus’ Mother**: this dear lady was a mother to God’s servants. Note: Paul calls her his *mother*, not literally, but *in the Lord*. On several occasions, perhaps many occasions, she had cared for Paul just as a mother cares for her son. When Paul needed a mother’s comfort and care, presence and love, sharing and advice—he went to the mother of Rufus if she was close by.

**Thought 1.** How many mothers live so close to the Lord that Paul would go to them for a mother’s comfort, love, and advice?

“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Mt.12:50).

“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Tit.2:4).

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb.2:11).

- 17** (16:14-16) **Believers—Hall of Fame**: there are the unknown servants of God—believers who are unknown, but faithful in the fellowship of the church.

⇒ Note the words: “and the brethren which are with them” (v.16).

⇒ Note also the words: “and all the saints which are with them” (v.17).

## ROMANS 16:1-16

Apparently two different groups or congregations are being greeted. The stress is upon the unity, faithfulness, and fellowship of the believers. Not all believers are leaders, nor would all believers be counted worthy of a Hall of Fame while on this earth. But in heaven the situation will be different. God will look upon the heart, and every person will be written in the Book of Life, God's eternal Hall of Fame. Only two conditions exist for a person to be written therein:

⇒ Receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

**“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn.1:12).**

**“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).**

⇒ Being faithful to the Lord and to the fellowship of His people (His true church).

**“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb.10:25).**

**“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev.20:15).**

**“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away....And there shall in no wise enter into any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life” (Rev.21:1, 27).**

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|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 Mark divisive people &amp; avoid them</b></p> <p>a. Because they cause division &amp; are stumbling blocks</p> <p>b. Because they do not serve Christ, but their own desires</p> <p>c. Because they use smooth</p> | <p><b>D. The Messenger's Final Warning: Mark Divisive People, 16:17-20</b></p> <p>17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.</p> <p>18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair</p> | <p>speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.</p> <p>19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.</p> <p>20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.</p> | <p>talk &amp; flattering words to deceive</p> <p><b>2 Mark what is good, &amp; untainted with evil</b></p> <p>a. Because you have been obedient until now</p> <p>b. Because you must be wise to know what is good</p> <p>c. Because God shall soon give victory over Satan</p> |
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**DIVISION IX**

**THE MESSENGER OF GOD AND HIS PLANS, 15:14-16:27**

**D. The Messenger's Final Warning: Mark Divisive People, 16:17-20**

(16:17-20) **Introduction:** divisiveness and evil are always a threat to the local church. The reason can be simply stated: people have problems, even believers. The fact that we live in a corrupt and depraved world means that people become disgruntled, disappointed, unhappy, selfish, sinful, and in some cases evil. Even the strongest believers become contaminated with corruption by having to live in the very air of a sinful world. It is because of this that Paul warns the church and its believers: mark divisive people, for they are a constant threat to the church.

1. Mark divisive people and avoid them (v.17-18).
2. Mark what is good, and untainted with evil (v.19-20).

**1** (16:17-18) **Teachers, False—Division—Stumbling Block:** mark divisive people and avoid them. Note: this warning abruptly cuts into Paul's greeting to the Roman church. Paul is greeting various believers in the church whom he has met on his travels throughout the world. All of a sudden, he interrupts his greeting and issues a severe warning. The abrupt interruption *is not an afterthought*; it is the final exhortation needed by a strong church—an exhortation against an event that is bound to happen: the seeping in of divisive people. A divisive person is a person who...

- grumbles
- complains
- criticizes
- murmurs
- gossips
- is argumentative
- causes strife
- acts out of pride, ambition, or selfishness
- is unloving
- teaches a different doctrine

The most effective way for Satan to get a foothold into a strong church is to quietly and insidiously move a divisive person into some teaching or leadership position where he can influence immature believers. Paul knew this, so he left the warning until the end of his letter. It is a warning that must be heeded by a strong church if it is to keep its witness for the Lord.

There are three reasons why a divisive person must be marked and avoided.

1. A divisive person causes division and lays stumbling blocks in the way of growth. Note exactly what is said: a divisive person acts "contrary to the doctrine which [believers] have learned." He causes "divisions and offenses."
  - ⇒ The word "division" (dichostasias) means standing apart, being separate, or causing cleavage.
  - ⇒ The word "offenses" (skandala) means laying a stumbling block in someone's way or causing someone to fall.
- a. The divisive person acts "contrary to the doctrine which [believers] have learned." The doctrine of God and of Christ is simply stated:

**"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (1 Jn.3:23).**

*Genuine believers* have trusted God's Son. They have accepted Christ as their Lord, giving all they are and have to Him; and they do love one another, having committed their lives to carry the doctrine of Christ to the world.

However, this is not true with a divisive person. He acts *contrary* to the teaching of God and of Christ. He opposes...

- the Lordship of Christ.
- the doctrine of Christ.
- the love of believers.
- the mission of reaching the world with the gospel: the glorious news of life in Christ, life that is both abundant and eternal.

- b. Avoid them because of the terrible devastation that a divisive person can do to the strength of a church. The word “avoid” (ekklinante) means to shun, to turn away from, to keep away from, to remove oneself from. Get away from them and have absolutely nothing to do with them.
- c. “Mark” the divisive person. The word “mark” (skopeite) means to keep one’s eye on, to look at, to observe, to focus upon, to contemplate, to scrutinize. Note: it is the divisive person himself who is to be *avoided and turned away from*, not just his sin. We are not to have anything to do with a divisive person...
- for we give the appearance of approving what he is doing.
  - for we run the risk of being influenced and stumbling over what he says and does.

**“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” (Mt.18:7).**

**“And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea” (Mk.9:42).**

**“But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth” (Lk.11:17).**

**“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor.1:10).**

**“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor.3:3).**

**“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (1 Cor.10:31-32).**

**“Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed” (2 Cor.6:3).**

**“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27)**

2. A divisive person does not serve Christ, but his own desires. The word “belly” (koiliai) means the stomach and its physical appetites. A divisive person is gripped by...

- selfish desires
- base ambition
- personal urges
- physical appetites
- wanting his own way
- getting what he wants

Note: Scripture clearly says that divisive persons do not serve Christ. They call themselves *Christians*, but their Lord is not Christ. They are not committed to His honor, glory, and mission, but to themselves—to getting and doing what they want. The divisive person is still given over to the things of this carnal, sensual, and secular world.

**“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Ph.3:18-19).**

3. A divisive person uses talk and flattering words to deceive. He uses smooth, persuasive, and plausible words to lead people to take sides with him. He talks and acts godly, and he shows interest and concern for those whom he wants to convince. But note what Scripture says: the motive of the divisive person is to deceive. He wants others...

- to think as he thinks.
- to believe as he believes.
- to walk as he walks.
- to live as he lives.
- to follow as he follows.
- to talk as he talks.

The result of his divisiveness is tragic: he deceives the simple, that is, the unsuspecting, the innocent, the immature, the carnal, the new-born believers.

**“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision [religionists]: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” (Tit.1:10-11).**

**“[Men] having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning [the latest philosophy or theology or novelty], and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim.3:5-7).**

**2** (16:19-20) **Church, Strong:** mark what is good, and untainted with evil. A strong church, such as the Roman church, must constantly be marking and focusing upon *what is good and untainted with evil*. If a strong church fails to know and do good, it will be penetrated by evil (divisiveness) and it will become a weak church. Therefore, a strong church must always, with the utmost diligence, be looking for what is good and untainted with evil. Three reasons are given for this charge.

1. A strong church such as the Roman church is obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the very reason for its strength: the church has been obedient to the Lord, doing exactly as He commands. The believers have been...

- a. Living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

**“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).**

- b. Ministering to the needs of people even as He ministered.

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21).**

- c. Witnessing to all far and wide, fulfilling His mission.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

The result of such a dynamic obedience is a strong testimony that is spread among all men. People know where to go when they need help: they know where the obedient believers are who are truly following the Lord.

2. A strong church must be wise to know what is good. Its people must grow more and more in *goodness*—in knowing what is good and what is evil. Believers must be *wise*...

- to *search* for what is good and untainted with evil.
- to *know* what is good and untainted with evil.

The word “simple” (akerios) means unmixed, unadulterated, pure, innocent, without any mixture of evil. The idea is that the believers of a strong church must constantly mark, focus, and concentrate upon what is good in order to keep the bad out of its fellowship. The way to keep evil out of a church is to focus upon the good. The way to demonstrate spiritual wisdom is to concentrate upon the good; then evil will be recognized for what it is, and it will be rejected.

The point is this: a strong church must not only avoid evil (v.17); it must not allow evil to penetrate its fellowship. It must not allow a divisive person to stir up the “simple” (unsuspecting and innocent) believers of the church. A church must be wise: it must mark and focus upon what is good and untainted with evil. It must be wise enough to spot evil and to stop its penetration into the fellowship.

3. God will soon give victory over Satan. The meaning of “soon” does not mean shortly, but *quickly* or *swiftly*. The idea is *not* that God is coming soon to destroy Satan, but when God acts to deliver His people from evil and divisiveness, Satan will be quickly defeated. His work against God’s consecrated people (a strong church) will last only for a moment. The “God of Peace” will restore peace swiftly and quickly to the fellowship of a strong people. But note: the defeat of Satan and divisive persons is conditional. A strong church must do what has been said: mark and focus upon what is good and untainted with evil. God will bless a church that is obedient and concentrating upon Christ and His mission (cp. point 1 of this note).

Note another fact: God is going to bruise Satan under the *believers’ feet*. It is the *feet of the believers that God uses* to bruise Satan. When genuine believers of a strong church do what God says, then God will act to deliver His people from evil and divisiveness.

**“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Lk.10:19).**

**“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (Ro.16:20).**

**“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).**

**“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jas.4:7).**

**“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 Jn.4:4).**

| <b>E. The Messenger's Companions, 16:21-24</b>             |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1 Timothy: A right-hand man, a fellow-worker</b>        | 21 Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason,  |
| <b>2 Lucius, Jason, Sosipater: Relatives who were bel.</b> | and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.  |
| <b>3 Tertius: A humble helper</b>                          | 22 I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.   |
| <b>4 Gaius: A man of hospitality</b>                       | 23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother. |
| <b>5 Erastus: A civil servant, the city treasurer</b>      | 24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.  |
| <b>6 Quartus: A Christian brother</b>                      |   |

## DIVISION IX

### THE MESSENGER OF GOD AND HIS PLANS, 15:14-16:27

#### E. The Messenger's Companions, 16:21-24

(16:21-24) **Introduction:** it is important for every minister and believer to have close associates who know and are faithful to the Lord. The strength of the associates greatly affects the witness of the minister. This passage gives a glimpse into the lives of a few of Paul's associates.

1. Timothy: a right-hand man, a fellow-worker (v.21).
2. Lucius, Jason, Sosipater: relatives who were believers (v.21).
3. Tertius: a humble helper (v.22).
4. Gaius: a man of hospitality (v.23).
5. Erastus: a civil servant, the city treasurer (v.23).
6. Quartus: a Christian brother (v.23).

**1** (16:21) **Timothy:** Paul calls Timothy his right hand man, his fellow-worker. There is a great deal of information on Timothy throughout the New Testament. There are even two letters which bear his name included in the New Testament. The letters were written to Timothy by Paul himself (1 and 2 Timothy. Also see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 16:1-3; notes—Ph.1:1; 1 Tim.1:18 for more discussion.) Note two facts mentioned about Timothy, facts which should speak to our hearts.

1. His name, "Timothy," means *one who honors God*. Both his mother and grandmother were faithful believers who reared Timothy in the Scriptures (2 Tim.1:5; 3:15). Apparently when Timothy was born, his mother had dedicated him to the Lord after the pattern of the Old Testament believers. She gave him his name knowing perfectly well what it meant. Her hope and prayer was that Christ would take her child and use him to *bring honor* to God's name.

**Thought 1.** What a dynamic example for parents! We should all commit our children to Christ, rearing them in the Scriptures and constantly praying for Christ to use them to bring honor to God's name.

**"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Tim.1:5).**

**"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim.3:15).**

**"And thou shalt teach them [God's Word] diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Dt.6:7).**

**"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Pr.22:6).**

2. Timothy is called Paul's "fellow-worker." Paul places Timothy on an equal *par* with himself. Paul sees Timothy's call and ministry as being as important as his own. This says several significant things.

- a. Timothy's mind—his thoughts, imaginations, concepts, ideas, purposes, plans, concerns—was consumed with the very same things as Paul's mind: Christ, His mission, and the reaching and caring for people.

**"For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state" (Ph.2:20).**

**"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor.10:5).**

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Ph.4:8-9).**

- b. Timothy was faithful in ministering right along with other ministers of the gospel, doing exactly what God had called him to do. Note that he was second to Paul, that is, Paul’s assistant. However, this did not bother Timothy, for Timothy knew something: it was God, not man, who had called him to be second and to serve as the assistant. Therefore, he was *faithful*, always serving his Lord and helping the chief minister.

**“For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church” (1 Cor.4:17).**

**“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Ph.1:1).**

**“But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me” (Ph.2:22-23).**

**“Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty [released from prison]; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you” (Heb.13:23).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**2** (16:21) **Lucius—Jason—Sospater:** these men were apparently relatives of Paul. It should be noted, however, that the word “kinsmen” is thought by some to mean fellow-countrymen. This is unlikely, for Paul often mentions others who are fellow Jews and he does not refer to them as kinsmen. Apparently, Paul had a family tree just like most of us have: branches that just keep on running out from our aunts, uncles, and their children who are our cousins. Just who these men were we cannot be sure, but note what is said in this passage.

1. They were relatives of Paul who had trusted Christ as their Savior and surrendered to His Lordship. Who was converted first, Paul or his three relatives? We do not know; but this much is known. Genuine believers pray, and they diligently pray for relatives, believing that it is their responsibility to reach their own families first. For this reason, Paul’s family saw quite a few of its members give their lives to Christ (cp. Ro.16:7).

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).**

**“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house [to witness]. And he arose, and departed to his house” (Mt.9:6-7).**

**“Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him” (Lk.8:39).**

**“He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ” (Jn.1:41).**

**“So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house” (Jn.4:53).**

**“And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there, And she constrained us” (Acts 16:15).**

**“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:30-31).**

**“But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite [make some return to] their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God” (1 Tim.5:4).**

2. They were serving the Lord with Paul. Any person serving with Paul was bound to be committed to Christ and to be fully committed, for if any man has ever been committed to Christ, it was Paul. Without question, these three men had given all they were and had to the Lord. They were bound to be gripped with the needs of masses suffering under the weight of starvation, disease, poverty, sin, and death, and with the urgent need to get the gospel of salvation to them. The very fact that they were serving with Paul tells us that this was the heartbeat of their lives.

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21).**

**3** (16:22) **Tertius**: this believer was a humble helper. Note two significant facts about Tertius.

1. He helped Paul in a most significant but humble way. Apparently he was not a preacher, but he served as the personal secretary to Paul, writing this letter to the Romans for Paul.

**Thought 1.** The need for dedicated people who are gifted to handle details is desperately needed in the service of Christ! Very little if anything can be done effectively without what may be called the *Service Ministries*. May God stir and arouse men and women to give their lives as Tertius did: to reach out in the *service ministries* of the Lord.

2. He personally knew the Lord and was bold in proclaiming his testimony. Glance at the verse again: "I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you *in the Lord*" (v.22) Paul does not send the greeting for Tertius; Tertius takes it upon himself to send his own greeting. He is a fellow-believer with the Roman Christians, and he wants to greet them in the name of Christ, proclaiming his own faith and his own ministry in the Lord. Men of the world may consider him and his work as secretary of little importance. But he does not: his faith and ministry are the most important things in the world to him. Therefore, he proclaims that he too is "in the Lord" and that he is the secretary who wrote the letter for Paul.

**Thought 1.** Just imagine how few letters, books, articles, and papers would be written for Christ without the dear saintly servants who labor ever so diligently as the secretaries for God's ministers. Think about all the *service ministries* and how much would never get done without the commitment of God's *detail servants*.

**"But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Lk.22:26).**

**"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Ro.12:3).**

**"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Ro.12:10-11).**

**"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Ph.2:5-7).**

**Thought 2.** Something we must always remember and proclaim: no work and no service done for God is small. Men may rank work and labor, but God does not. God ranks and judges only faithfulness.

**"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Lk.16:10).**

**"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (Lk.19:17).**

**4** (16:23) **Gaius**: this believer was a man of unusual hospitality. Apparently Gaius was a wealthy man who had a home large enough to entertain the whole church and to house God's servants over a long period of time. The point to note is this: he was faithful in using his money, wealth, and estate for the Lord.

**"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Mt.6:19-20).**

**"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Ro.12:13).**

**"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim.6:17-19).**

**"But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (Tit.1:8).**

**"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb.13:2).**

**"Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Pt.4:9).**

**5** (16:23) **Erastus**: this believer was a civil servant, the treasurer of the great city of Corinth. This tells us that he was...

- a man highly respected both among believers and the world.
- a man of extreme responsibility who could be greatly trusted to look after his responsibility.
- a man of courage who stood up for his convictions and did not let political office, friends, or associates in high places keep him from confessing Christ.

It is interesting to note that Erastus was apparently called to *preach* the gospel, and eventually he resigned or was removed from political office. He is seen on a mission tour with Timothy (Acts 19:22) and is mentioned as still being faithful in the latter months of Paul's life (2 Tim.4:20).

**“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.10:32-33).**

**“Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God” (Lk.12:8).**

**“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).**

**6** (16:23) **Quartus:** this believer is very simply called “a brother.” This is significant, for it means...

- that he had made a genuine commitment to Christ and that he was serving mankind as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- that he had a brotherly heart and love, helping and standing with other believers as a brother in the Lord.

**“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).**

**“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn.15:12).**

**“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).**

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).**

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>1 Established by the gospel<br/>2 Established by the preaching of Christ<br/>3 Established by God's revelation of the mystery<br/>a. It was a secret</p> | <p><b>F. The Messenger's Benediction: God is Able to Establish You, 16:25-27</b></p> <p>25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept</p> | <p>secret since the world began. 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:<br/>27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.</p> | <p>b. It is now revealed in the Scriptures<br/>c. It is revealed for one purpose: To lead all to be obedient to the faith</p> <p>4 <b>The benediction</b></p> |
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**DIVISION IX.**

**THE MESSENGER OF GOD AND HIS PLANS, 15:14-16:27**

**F. The Messenger's Benediction: God is Able to Establish You, 16:25-27**

(16:25-27) **Introduction:** God is able to establish the believer. The word “establish” (sterixai) means to strengthen, secure, make stable, set fast, and make firm. The one thing men long for is to be secure, strong, and firmly established in life. God is able to fulfill this longing. God is able to establish and strengthen man, giving him a strong life.

1. Established by the gospel (v.25).
2. Established by the preaching of Christ (v.25).
3. Established by God's revelation of the mystery (v.25-26).
4. The benediction (v.27).

**1** (16:25) **Spiritual Growth—Stability—Stedfastness—Security:** believers are established and made strong by the gospel. Note a significant point.

Paul calls the gospel “my gospel.” He does not mean that he possesses the gospel, nor that he is the author and creator of it. He does not mean that he has formulated a man-made gospel that men are to follow. He simply means that he is a preacher of God's gospel, and God uses the gospel which he and other preachers proclaim to strengthen believers. God is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe who possesses the message of the glorious gospel. God is the Author and Creator of the message, not Paul nor any other preacher. But note: Paul and other preachers are ambassadors; they are the representatives of God who carry forth the gospel of God. The preacher of the gospel stands before the world with *God's message*. He has the right and the authority to proclaim the gospel, and the gospel proclaimed comes forth from his voice. In this sense it is his message—his gospel—that God uses to establish and strengthen believers.

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20).

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word [the Word of the gospel given by God]” (Jn.17:20).

“But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16).

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace [the gospel], which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Pt.2:2-3).

**2** (16:25) **Jesus Christ, Preaching of:** believers are established and made strong by the preaching of Jesus Christ. The preaching of Jesus Christ can mean either the message preached by Jesus Christ Himself or the message about Jesus Christ which is preached by others. Both meanings make sense, and both are certainly true, for the message of salvation preached by Christ and by His followers is the same.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (Heb.2:3).

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn.3:14-15).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (Jn.8:51).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:25-26).

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (Jn.3:17-18).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).

**3** (16:25-26) **Mystery—Gospel:** believers are established and made strong by God’s revelation of the mystery of the gospel. Note three points.

1. The mystery of the gospel had been a secret since the world began. The word “mystery” (musteriou) does not mean something obscure and difficult to understand nor something that has to be searched out and solved by men. It simply means...

- some truth that was not previously known.
- some truth that *could not* be discovered by human reason.
- some truth that had to be *revealed by God* if it was ever to be known.

The gospel could never have been known by man. It is not a creation of man’s mind, of his rationalizations, concepts, thoughts, and ideas as to how man is to become reconciled to God. Man could never and can never figure out how to become acceptable to God. No man in this physical world could ever penetrate the spiritual world, no matter what some have claimed. Jesus said so:

“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (Jn.3:13).

The spiritual world and the message of the spiritual world have always been a mystery, and they would have remained a mystery if God had not acted and revealed the spiritual world and dimension to man.

2. The mystery of the gospel is now revealed by the commandment of God in the prophetic Scriptures. God wants the world to know the gospel; therefore, He has commanded that it be revealed and proclaimed to the world. But note the crucial point: it is revealed by the prophetic Scriptures (dia graphon prophetikon). This is extremely important, for it tells us exactly where we are to find out about God and His message to the world. We do not discover God by natural reasoning: God reveals Himself to us.

**Thought 1.** There are two questions that desperately need to be studied by everyone.

- 1) Since God has revealed how men are to become acceptable to Him, why do men continue to create their own ideas about how to reach God? Why do men continue to think they will be acceptable to God if they can just do enough good to pacify God? Why do most men continue to think that God will never reject them, that they are not evil enough to be unacceptable to God?
- 2) Since God has revealed the gospel in the prophetic Scriptures, why do men not rush to the Scriptures to find the truth? Why do men not search the Scriptures daily to find out what God has revealed?

“([The gospel of God] which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:2-4).

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Ro.3:21-22).

3. The mystery of the gospel is revealed for a purpose: to lead all nations to be obedient to the faith. Very simply, God wants from us what any person wants from others: love and trust. We all want others...

- to love us and to care about us.
- to trust us and have confidence in us.

“Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (Jn.6:28-29).

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (Jn.15:10).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).

“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision [religious ritual] availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Gal.5:6).

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).

“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 Jn.3:23).

**4** (16:27) **Benediction:** the benediction is a glorious declaration of praise.

- ⇒ God is the God of the gospel; therefore, He is the only wise God. As the only wise God and as the Author of the gospel, He is due praise forever.
- ⇒ But note the simple and clear fact that is proclaimed again and again by Romans: God can be approached and praised only through Jesus Christ.

“Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (Jn.4:42).

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim.1:15).

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:5).

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Tit.3:4-7).

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb.7:25).

“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb.8:6).

“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb.9:15).

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb.9:24).

“And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant” (Heb.12:24).

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 Jn.2:1).

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 Jn.4:14).



**THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE**

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**CORINTHIANS**



# THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

## INTRODUCTION

**AUTHOR:** Paul, the Apostle.

The writing is Paul's style, and the description of Corinth and its people fit Paul's day. In A.D. 96 Clement of Rome referred to the Corinthian letter in a letter that he himself wrote: "Take up the Epistle of the blessed Paul, the apostle." Ignatius and Polycarp often quoted from the letter (about A.D. 155). The Muratorian Fragment lists it, and this Fragment is a list of books dating around the middle of the second century.

**DATE:** Uncertain. Probably A.D. 54-56 on Paul's third missionary journey.

Paul said, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost" (16:8). Thus, he wrote the letter from Ephesus where he ministered for the space of three years (Acts 20:31). When Paul was in Corinth "Gallio was the deputy of Achaia" (Acts 18:12). Gallio entered his office around A.D. 51, and Acts 18:18 says that Paul left Corinth fairly soon, but not immediately, after Gallio's arrival. He traveled briefly to Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21); then to Caesarea, Jerusalem, and Antioch (Acts 18:22). Then, he began his third missionary journey through Galatia (Acts 18:23). Afterwards he went to Ephesus for his three year ministry and the writing of I Corinthians. These events would take considerable time, and would place the writing of the Epistle in the mid-fifties.

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** "To the church of God at Corinth, to those set apart in Christ Jesus" (1:2).

**PURPOSE:** Paul wrote for three reasons.

1. To draw the church back together in a spirit of unity as one body in Christ. The church was severely divided and split, feuding and arguing and forming cliques.
2. To deal with moral laxity in the church.
3. To answer certain questions the church had requested Paul to answer: questions concerning marriage, Christian liberty and rights, public worship, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection from the dead.

**SPECIAL FEATURES:**

1. The City of Corinth. Corinth was the capital of Achaia, located at the southern tip of Greece. It appeared almost like an island, lying on a narrow strip of land only four to five miles across. Its shores provided two natural harbors, one on the east coast and the other on the west coast. With all shipping from East and West harboring there, Corinth was a commercial paradise. All commercial traffic traveling by land from North and South also chose to pass through the city.

The city had a large population, a real mixture of nationalities including Greeks, Latins, Jews, Egyptians, Syrians, and Asiatics. The large population and material prosperity made the city a sports minded center. The Isthmian Games, considered the most important athletic events next to the Olympics, were held in the city.

Corinth was also morally corrupt. Material prosperity and traveling tradesmen made for a spirit of partying, drunkenness, and all sorts of immoral living. The city's very name, "Corinth," became a byword for evil and immoral living. Even the worship of the local residents centered around the great goddess of love, Aphrodite. The temple housed 1,000 sacred prostitutes.

Corinth was an intellectual and cultural center as well. Personal development and pleasure were the pursuit, whether pursued culturally or recklessly and immorally. There was little recognition of law, save the law of a man's desires.

Corinth had explosive potential for worldwide missions. It has been estimated that the population was more than a half-million. Morally, the city desperately needed the gospel. If the gospel could make an impact for morality, the message would be heard around the world. Geographically, the city was strategic and fitted Paul's strategy perfectly. (See note—Acts 18:1.)

2. The Church at Corinth. When Paul entered Corinth, he entered "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (2:3)—apparently discouraged. He had faced severe opposition in his three ministries immediately prior to Corinth. The Judaizers had run him out of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Even in Athens, he had experienced little success. Now, facing Corinth, he was confronting a hodgepodge of every sort, a city of diverse population and culture, a population that was proud, intellectual, busy, and immoral. And he was apparently alone, with Silas and Timothy having remained in Macedonia to minister. He was, so to speak, at the mercy of God alone.

God met Paul's need. Almost immediately, God brought across Paul's path two believers, Aquila and Priscilla, who were tentmakers by profession. These two godly Jews had been expelled from Rome along with all other Jews by the decrees of Emperor Claudius (Acts 18:2-3). Silas and Timothy also returned to him soon afterwards, bringing news that the Thessalonian believers were standing firm against persecution (Acts 18:5). Encouraged and pressed in the spirit, Paul immediately entered the synagogue and began his ministry, testifying that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:5).

Paul met with such success he was forced out of the synagogue by the hostile Jews. He moved next door to the synagogue into a house owned by Justus, which became his base of operations. Apparently to prevent further discouragement, God gave Paul a vision assuring him that many people in that city were to be reached for Christ (Acts 18:10). His ministry lasted eighteen months, the longest of any ministry other than the three years he spent with the Ephesian Church.

The converts at Corinth paint a clear picture of the kind of success Paul experienced in city after city. So far as is known, the only Jewish converts under his personal ministry were Crispus and his household. He was the chief ruler of the

become attracted to the Jewish religion because of its stress upon high morals and belief in one God. Judaism was especially attractive to women, especially well-to-do women. They were citizens of an immoral world that gave no rights to women; thus, they found great security in a religion of high morality. However, most Gentiles, despite their attraction to Judaism, were repulsed by Jewish nationalism and rites, such as circumcision. It was these who turned a ready ear to the gospel of Christ, who were by far the greatest number of converts.

There were some wealthy converts. Gaius was the host of Paul and the whole church (Ro.16:23). Erastus was the chamberlain (treasurer) of the city. Chloe was probably a lady of extreme wealth with business interests in both Corinth and Ephesus (I Cor.1:11). Some believers were engaged in legal disputes and others were attending wealthy banquets. These two engagements indicate wealth. However, the greatest number of converts came from average folk and from folk who had come from the most sinful backgrounds imaginable. Remember: Corinth was one of the cesspools of immorality and night club life in the ancient world. As Paul so clearly says, "...not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor.1:26-29).

3. Paul's Contacts with the Corinthian Church. A grasp of Paul's contacts with the church will give a much better understanding of the Corinthian situation.

- a. Contact 1: Paul's founding of the church.
  - b. Contact 2: Paul writes a letter that has since been lost (1 Cor. 5:9).
  - c. Contact 3: Paul, in Ephesus, receives disturbing news of division and moral corruption within the church from two sources. There is a visit from the household of Chloe (1 Cor.1:11), and there is a letter from the church requesting answers to certain questions (1 Cor.7:1f).
  - d. Contact 4: Paul writes I Corinthians.
  - e. Contact 5: Paul apparently hears that things get worse and he makes a hurried visit to Corinth. However, he is painfully disappointed in its results (2 Cor.12:14; 2 Cor.1:15). This visit is questioned by some; however, it is almost certain (see note—2 Cor.1:15-17). "I determined that I would not come again to you in heaviness" (2 Cor.2:1) just does not fit Paul's first visit. His first visit was anything but a disappointing experience.
  - f. Contact 6: after Paul recovers his spiritual composure and strength, he writes the severe letter and sends it by Titus. (It is mentioned in 2 Cor.2:4 and 7:8.)
  - g. Contact 7: in waiting for an answer, Paul becomes so anxious he strikes out to meet Titus. He meets him in Macedonia and learns that the severe letter has made its impact. Therefore, he sits down, probably right there in Philippi, and writes II Corinthians.
  - h. Contact 8: he pays a final visit to the church (Acts 20:1-4).
4. I Corinthians, along with II Corinthians, is "The Epistle that Reveals Paul's Personal Character." Charge after charge is leveled against Paul. He spends a good deal of time in both letters answering these charges (see II Corinthians, Introductory Notes, Special Features, point 3).
5. I Corinthians is "The Epistle Written to Answer a Church's Specific Questions" (see Purpose, point 3).
  6. I Corinthians is "The Epistle that Answers the Problems Confronted by a Pioneer Church" (see Purpose, points 1-3; Special Features, points 1-3).
  7. I Corinthians is "An Epistle Written to a Carnal Church." A quick glance at the General Outline will show this.
  8. I Corinthians is "The Diversified Epistle." Paul deals with more different subjects in I Corinthians than he does in any other epistle.

## OUTLINE OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

**THE PREACHER'S OUTLINE & SERMON BIBLE™** is *unique*. It differs from all other Study Bibles & Sermon Resource Materials in that every Passage and Subject is outlined right beside the Scripture. When you choose any *Subject* below and turn to the reference, you have not only the Scripture, but you discover the Scripture and Subject *already outlined for you—verse by verse*.

*For a quick example*, choose one of the subjects below and turn over to the Scripture, and you will find this marvelous help for faster, easier, and more accurate use.

*In addition, every point* of the Scripture and Subject is *fully developed in a Commentary with supporting Scripture* at the bottom of the page. Again, this arrangement makes sermon preparation much easier and faster.

*Note something else*: The Subjects of FIRST CORINTHIANS have titles that are both Biblical and *practical*. The practical titles sometimes have more appeal to people. This *benefit* is clearly seen for use on billboards, bulletins, church newsletters, etc.

*A suggestion*: For the quickest overview of FIRST CORINTHIANS, first read *all the major titles* (I, II, III, etc.), then come back and read the subtitles.

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**THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE  
CORINTHIANS**

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
|   | <b>CHAPTER 1</b>  |   |  |
|   | <b>I. THE GREETING, 1:1-9</b>   |   |  |
|   | <b>A. Some Foundational Facts, 1:1-3</b>  |   |  |
| <b>1 The messenger of Christ</b><br>a. Is called by God's will<br>b. Is called to be a brother to other believers | Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, | 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:<br>3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. | <b>2 The local church</b><br>a. Is born of God, but in Corinth<br>b. Is set apart in Christ: <sup>DS1</sup><br>Called saints <sup>DS2</sup><br>c. Is identified with all other believers: The universal church<br>d. Experiences grace & peace |

**DIVISION I**

**THE GREETING, 1:1-9**

**A. Some Foundational Facts, 1:1-3**

(1:1-3) **Introduction:** this is the introduction of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. This passage contains only three verses but they are powerful. They cover some *foundational facts* which are absolutely essential to grasp when dealing with the messenger of God and a problem church (see Introduction—Purpose and Special Features, point 3).

1. The messenger (v.1).
2. The local church (v.2-3).

**1** (1:1) **Ministers, Call of—Humility:** the messenger is a messenger of Christ, not of himself nor of anyone else.

1. The messenger of Christ is called by God's will. It is God who calls men and women to serve Him, not the men and women who choose to serve God. Paul was *called by God* to be an apostle, which means he was appointed by God to be a *messenger*, a *witness*, a *missionary* to carry the gospel of Christ to men.

The stress is this: the messenger's call and appointment comes from God, not from men. No man—neither himself nor any other man—puts him into the ministry. God alone chooses and calls him. In Paul's particular case, some of the Corinthian believers were questioning and denying his call by God (1 Cor.9:1-2; cp. 2 Cor.10:10). Note that the very first words written by Paul are the declaration of his call by God.

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20).**

**“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)” (Gal.1:1).**

**“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal.1:11-12).**

**“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Ps.40:8).**

**“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Is.6:8).**

2. The messenger of God is called to be a brother to other believers. Note that Paul called Sosthenes *our brother*, which means he was a brother in Christ. Sosthenes was probably one of the men sent by the Corinthian church to deliver their letter to Paul—the letter which asked Paul the questions that he answers here in First Corinthians. It is interesting to note that Sosthenes may also have been the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, the ruler who had taken the lead in having Paul arrested and tried. But note: Sosthenes was himself taken and beaten by the Roman governor because he dared to bother the busy schedule of the courts with such an insignificant matter as preaching (Acts 18:12-17). If Sosthenes was the same as the ruler of the synagogue, he was at some point converted to Christ.

The point is this: the messenger of God is called by God, but his call does not make him better or superior to other believers. His call and office as a messenger of God is to be acknowledged and respected, but it does not make him a superior person. He is a *brother* to all other believers.

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**2** (1:2-3) **Church:** the local church is addressed by Paul. Paul's introduction to the church is revealing because it points out just what a church is.

1. The local church is born of God: it is "the church of God, which is at Corinth"; that is, it is *God's church* in a particular city or locality. The church is not the church of Corinth or of any other city; it is the church which has been given birth by God; therefore, it belongs to God.

**"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).**

**"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph.5:25).**

**"[Christ] who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit.2:14).**

**"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pt.1:23).**

**"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn.3:3).**

**Thought 1.** The church is *the church of God*. The church belongs to God, not to any man or to any group of people. Too often some leader or some group of people within a church begins to act like they own the church, as though the church exists to do their will. Such behavior is dangerous to both the church and to those who act as though they own the church. It will destroy the fellowship and ministry and usefulness of a local church, and it will lead to severe punishment for those who set themselves up as the owners of the church. Why? Because God will not share His glory with any self-centered, arrogant person who works to destroy His church. The church is God's and God's alone.

**"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another" (Is.42:8).**

**"For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another" (Is.48:11).**

2. The local church and its believers are set apart in Christ and called saints. The word sanctified means *to be set apart* or *separated* (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Sanctify*—1 Cor.1:2 for discussion). God's church is to be set apart and separated unto Him. The idea is that believers are not to be taken out of the world, but they are to be different from the world. Their lifestyle and purpose in life are to be different. They are to live holy lives and to no longer love the world or touch the unclean things of the world.

**"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor.6:17-18).**

**"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]" (1 Pt.1:14-15).**

**"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 Jn.2:15-16).**

a. Note how a church and its believers *become sanctified to God*. They are set apart to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. No person can approach God—no person can ever be set apart to God—except through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim.1:15).**

**"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim.2:5).**

**"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 Jn.4:14).**

**"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Tit.3:4-7).**

**"Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (Jn.4:42).**

**"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn.14:6).**

**"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).**

**"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).**

**"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb.7:25).**

# 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-3

b. Note that believers are called “*saints*.”

3. The local church and its believers are identified with all other believers (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Saints*—1 Cor.1:2 for discussion). The church is universal. There is no exclusiveness, no superiority in the church of God—not in the true church. There may be caste systems and levels of superiority in some churches that dishonor the name of Christ and in the man-made religions of the world, but not in the true church of God. This was a problem in the Corinthian church. Some were claiming to be superior and to have a more special relationship to Christ than others. Super-spirituality and pride were seeping into the lives of some—to such a point that the whole fellowship of the church was being threatened (cp. 1 Cor.1:12; 2 Cor.10:7).

**Thought 1.** Super-spirituality and pride have no place in God’s church. There is only One who is to be honored and exalted: Christ Jesus our Lord. All believers, no matter how low or how high their position and station in life, are the subjects of Christ and not the lords of other believers.

**“God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).**

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).**

**“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand” (Ro.14:4).**

4. The local church and its believers experience grace and peace.

a. Grace means the favor of God. It means all the good and perfect gifts of God, all the good and beneficial things He gives to us and does for us, whether physical, material, or spiritual (Jas.1:17). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Grace*—1 Cor.1:4 for more discussion.)

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:7).**

**“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).**

**“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.1:14).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Tit.2:11).**

**“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).**

**“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas.1:17).**

b. Peace is the result or fruit of God’s favor: peace with God and peace with men. When a man receives the grace of God, he is immediately reconciled to God and man. He is given fellowship with God and a love for all other men.

**“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you, Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn.14:27).**

**“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).**

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

Note that both grace and peace come only from *God our Father* and from the *Lord Jesus Christ*. They are the only source of grace and peace. If a man wishes to receive the favor of God and to have the peace of God reigning in his heart and life, he has to come to God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ.

**“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel [and the world], preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)” (Acts 10:36).**

**“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor.5:19).**

**“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph.2:14).**

**“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).**

**“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Is.53:5).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:2) **Sanctify—Sanctification** (hagiazo): the word “sanctify” means to be set apart, to be separated (cp. 1 Pt.1:15-16). There are three stages of sanctification.

1. There is initial or positional sanctification. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, he is immediately set apart for God. This is a permanent, once-for-all act (Heb.3:1; cp. Heb.10:10).

2. There is progressive sanctification. The true believer makes a determined and disciplined effort to allow the Spirit of God to set him apart day by day. The Spirit of God takes him and conforms him to the image of Christ more and more. This growth takes place as long as the believer walks upon this earth (cp. Jn.17:17; 2 Cor.3:18; Eph.5:25-26; 1 Th.5:23-24).

3. There is eternal sanctification. The day is coming when the believer will be perfectly set apart unto God and His service—without any sin or failure whatsoever. That day will be the great and glorious day of the believer’s eternal redemption (Eph.5:27; 1 Jn.3:2).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(1:2) **Saints** (hagiois): the word means set apart, consecrated, sacred, and holy. A saint is a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ who has been set apart to live for God. The saint has given himself to live a consecrated, sacred, and holy life—all for the glory of God. Note that believers are *saints* in both senses:

1. Believers are *saints* in the sense that they have been given a new heart by God: a heart that is renewed and recreated in righteousness and true holiness.

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).

2. Believers are *saints* in the sense that they are set apart to live consecrated and holy lives in this world.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]” (1 Pt.1:14-15).

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| <p><b>1 Resource 1: The grace of God</b></p>   | <p><b>B. Some Resources for the Believer, 1:4-9</b></p> <p>4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;</p> | <p>Christ was confirmed in you:<br/>7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:</p>   | <p>1) A confirmed faith<br/>2) A full provision<br/>3) A strong longing for Jesus' return</p>                  |
| <p><b>2 Resource 2: The gifts of God's grace &amp; Spirit</b><br/>a. The gifts: Utterance &amp; knowledge<br/>b. The results</p> | <p>5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;<br/>6 Even as the testimony of</p>                                     | <p>8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.<br/>9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.</p> | <p><b>3 Resource 3: Jesus Christ Himself—His security</b></p> <p><b>4 Resource 4: God Himself—His call</b></p> |

**DIVISION I**

**THE GREETING, 1:1-9**

**B. Some Resources for the Believer, 1:4-9**

(1:4-9) **Introduction—Jesus—Problems:** the name of Jesus Christ is mentioned ten times in the first ten verses. Paul wanted the minds of the Corinthian believers to be immediately centered upon Jesus Christ. He knew this: the answer to the Corinthian problems did not lay in his ability to discuss and reason, nor in his laying down rules and regulations for them, but in Jesus Christ. Therefore, he immediately discussed some of the resources which the believer receives when he accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord.

1. Resource 1: the grace of God (v.4).
2. Resource 2: the gifts of God's grace and Spirit (v.5-6).
3. Resource 3: Jesus Christ Himself—His security (v.8).
4. Resource 4: God Himself—His call (v.9).

**1** (1:4) **Grace:** the believer's first resource is the grace of God. Very simply, grace means the undeserved favor and blessings of God. We do not deserve God looking upon us with favor nor God blessing us with His favor. But God loves us with an unbelievable love, so He favors us with the most unbelievable gifts.

The Corinthian church (the believers) *knew* and experienced the grace of God. They knew what it was to receive the favor and blessings of God (see **DEEPER STUDY # 1, Grace—1 Cor.1:4** for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:4) **Grace** (charis): the favor and blessings of God; the undeserved and unmerited favor and blessings of God; the depth and richness of the heart and mind of God; the kindness and love that dwells within the very nature of God. God's grace covers all of life.

1. Grace means the kindness and love that God freely gives to those who *have acted against Him*. It is the favor of God showered upon men who do not deserve His favor, men who are...
  - "without strength" (Ro.5:6).
  - "ungodly" (Ro.5:6).
  - "sinners" (Ro.5:8).
  - "enemies" (Ro.5:10).

No other word so expresses the depth and richness of the heart and mind of God. This is the distinctive difference between God's grace and man's grace. Whereas man sometimes does favors for his friends and thereby can be said to be gracious, God has done a thing unheard of among men: He has given His very own Son to die for His enemies (see outline and notes—Ro.5:6-11. Also see notes, *Love—Jn.21:15-17; Grace—Eph.2:8-9.*)

- a. God's grace is not earned. It is something completely undeserved and unmerited.

**"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph.2:8-9).**

**"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit.3:4-5).**

- b. God's grace is the free gift of God. God extends His grace out toward man.

**"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Ro.3:24).**

**"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" (Eph.2:4-5).**

**"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great**

God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit.2:11-14).

c. God's grace is the only way man can be saved.

"If through the offence of one [Adam] many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" (Ro.5:15).

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ" (1 Cor.1:4).

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor.8:9).

"[Salvation] which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit.3:6-7).

2. Grace means all the favors and gifts of God. It means all the good and perfect gifts of God, all the good and beneficial things He gives us and does for us, whether physical, material, or spiritual (Jas.1:17).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph.1:7).

"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph.2:7).

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Ph.4:19).

"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim.1:14).

**2** (1:5-7) **Gifts, Spiritual—Grace:** the believer's second resource is the gift of God's grace and Spirit. God's grace enriched the Corinthian believers "in every thing": they experienced the favor of God in every area of life and were actually blessed with all the gifts and blessings of God's Spirit.

1. They were *especially blessed* with the gifts of utterance and of knowledge.

⇒ Utterance: all the spiritual gifts involving speech, which would include gifts such as prophecy, teaching, and tongues—all forms of speech needed to praise God and to witness for Christ.

⇒ Knowledge: the spiritual gift of understanding spiritual truth and doctrine, of having unusual insight into the nature of God and His call and mission in the world.

The church and its believers were enabled by God's grace to know and understand the truth of God's Word and to speak the truth to a lost and dying world. The Spirit of God had enriched their lives by giving them all the gifts of spiritual knowledge and spiritual speech.

2. The results of God's grace and gifts were most wonderful. They show what can happen to our faith when we truly experience the grace and gifts of God's Spirit. There are three significant results mentioned by the Scripture.

a. The gifts and grace of God *confirmed* "the testimony of Christ" in the hearts of the believers. The believers had perfect assurance of their salvation. They knew beyond question that they were saved.

⇒ Jesus Christ had *testified* (proclaimed) to the truth: He was the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

⇒ The disciples had *testified* to Christ: that He was definitely the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

The Corinthian believers had accepted the testimony of Christ. They had been truly saved, and their salvation was confirmed by the gifts and blessings of God's grace. God had poured His grace and His Spirit out upon the Corinthian church and its believers. The gifts of the Spirit were their confirmation. Their faith in Christ was confirmed by the gifts of God's glorious grace and His Spirit. There was no question about their salvation. The presence of God's Spirit and God's grace bore clear evidence that their salvation and experience with Christ were genuine.

**Thought 1.** God will confirm the faith of a true believer. He will *seal* a person's decision for Christ with the Holy Spirit. God will pour His Spirit and His grace out upon a person who truly trusts His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The one thing God wants above all else is for the believer to be firmly established in the faith of His dear Son.

"Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest [guarantee] of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor.1:21-22).

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph.1:13).

**“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph.4:30).**

**“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:4-6).**

- b. The gifts and grace of God brought a full provision to the Corinthian believers (v.7). They lacked no spiritual gifts whatsoever; in fact, when it came to spiritual gifts, they stood equal with the strongest of churches. They experienced not only the personal gifts such as faith, knowledge, and tongues, but the public gifts such as miracles, healing, and prophecy; and they possessed them in abundance.

**Thought 1.** The believer is to “covet earnestly the best gifts” and to “desire spiritual gifts” (1 Cor.12:31; 14:1). But the believer must always remember that possessing the gifts of the Spirit does not mean that he is necessarily *strong* in the Lord. There were no more carnal believers in the early days of the church than the Corinthian believers. They tragically abused their gifts and their abuse and subsequent judgment serves as a strong warning to all. (See outline and notes—1 Cor.12:1-14:40.)

- c. The gifts and grace of God *stirred* a strong longing for the return of Christ. The gifts of the Spirit give us a foretaste of the glories of heaven.
- ⇒ The gift of prophecy or of preaching proclaims what heaven will be like.
  - ⇒ The gift of ministering demonstrates the loving compassion and care that exists in heaven.
  - ⇒ The gift of healing demonstrates the power and will of God for man to live without corruption and pain.

When the gifts of the Spirit are active among a people, it is only natural that the return of Christ and of heaven is stirred within their hearts; for they are constantly experiencing the presence of the Lord in their midst and receiving a foretaste of heaven.

The more active the gifts of the Spirit are among a people, the more the people long for the Lord’s return. The more a people talk and share about the Lord and minister to each other in the Lord, the more they long for the Lord and to be with Him. Whatever we sow, we reap. The more we sow conversation about the Lord and the gifts of the Lord, the more we shall long to be reaped by the Lord. The believer’s earnest longing for the Lord’s return is clearly understood. Just imagine the glorious expectation he possesses!

- ⇒ The believer knows that he will receive a place (a home) or a mansion in heaven.

**“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn.14:2-3).**

- ⇒ The believer knows that the sufferings of this world do not come close to comparing with the glory of the Lord’s return and of heaven.

**“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Ro.8:18).**

- ⇒ The believer knows that his corruptible body will be changed into a perfect incorruptible body when Jesus returns.

**“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).**

- ⇒ The believer knows that when Christ appears, he will appear with Christ in glory.

**“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).**

- ⇒ The believer knows that he will be reunited with all his loved ones (who were believers) when Jesus returns.

**“For if [since] we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the**

clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Th.4:14-18).

⇒ The believer knows that he will receive a crown of glory in that day.

"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pt.5:4).

⇒ The believer knows that he will be made in the image of His Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn.3:2).

**3** (1:8) **Security—Assurance:** the believer's third resource is the security of the Lord Jesus Christ, the assurance which He brings to the believer's heart. The word "confirm" (bebaiousei) means preserve and establish, make steadfast and firm and secure. Jesus Christ will preserve and secure the believer from falling. Note the glorious reason: that the believer may be "blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The word "blameless" (anegkletous) means unprovable, guiltless. It means that no one will be able to accuse or bring any accusation against the believer when he stands before Christ in the day of judgment. The "*day of our Lord Jesus Christ*" will bring about the judgment seat of Christ, and only those who are preserved by the blood and power of Jesus Christ will be counted blameless (v.8).

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Ph.1:6).

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim.1:12).

"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever" (2 Tim.4:18).

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pt.1:5).

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev.3:10).

**4** (1:9) **Fellowship, Spiritual:** the believer's fourth resource is God Himself, His glorious call. God has called believers for one specific purpose: to be in fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The longing of God's heart is for men to know His Son...

- by becoming personally related to Him through adoption (Ro.8:15-17; Gal.4:4-6).
- by fellowshiping with Him day by day, all day long.

Note the point: God is not after us to fellowship with His Son only on a temporary basis. When God calls us to fellowship with His Son, He means eternal fellowship. He is adopting us as children so that Jesus Christ will have our fellowship as brothers.

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Ro.8:15-17).

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Ro.8:29).

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal.4:4-6).

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn.1:3).

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev.3:20).

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| <p><b>1 The strong exhortation: "You all" agree</b><br/>                 a. Agree in speech<br/><br/>                 b. Allow no dissension<br/><br/>                 c. Join together in one mind &amp; judgment</p> <p><b>2 The tragic report: Contention</b></p> | <p><b>II. THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21</b></p> <p><b>A. The Problem: A Divided Church, 1:10-16</b></p> <p>10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.</p> <p>11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among</p> | <p>you.<br/>                 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.<br/>                 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?<br/>                 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;<br/>                 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.<br/>                 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.</p> | <p><b>3 The arguing parties</b><br/>                 a. Some favored one minister over others<br/>                 b. Some claimed to follow Jesus alone</p> <p><b>4 The problem with cliques</b><br/>                 a. Divides Christ<br/>                 b. Elevates men—as saviors<br/>                 c. Makes a person a man-follower<br/><br/>                 d. The conclusion: Paul did not seek personal followers<sup>DS1,2,3</sup></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**A. The Problem: A Divided Church, 1:10-16**

(1:10-4:21) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Unity—Division:** the church at Corinth was in a sad state. The fellowship among believers had deteriorated to such a degree that it was about to crumble and collapse. There was severe division and dissension in the ranks: verbal accusations, differing opinions, competitive positions, power struggles, envy, contention, grumbling, griping, complaining, murmuring, quarreling, attacking, and gossiping. Believer stood against believer, and there was no give in any corner. Disaster was about to strike; the church was divided and a severe split was threatened.

This was the first problem dealt with by Paul. It had to be dealt with first, for a house divided against itself cannot stand. There were other problems in the church, other matters that had to be handled, but the people could not handle them unless they were brought together in one spirit and mind. The ministry and mission of the church could not effectively go on until the people stood together. Worship, exhortation, missions, and reaching and ministering to people—the very cause of Christ, the very reason He came to earth and died—were affected and would continue to suffer until the people were brought together.

Thank God there is an answer to every division, no matter how severe and threatening. In fact, the Holy Spirit through Paul gives eleven answers or solutions to division within the church. A quick glance at the overall outline of this section will show how *sound* the answers are. The answers will pull any divided church together if the people are willing to listen.

1. The problem: a divided church (1:10-16).
2. Answer one: the cross (1:17-25).
3. Answer two: seeing God's simple and humble people (1:26-31).
4. Answer three: sound preaching (2:1-5).
5. Answer four: God's revealed wisdom (2:6-13).
6. Answer five: understanding the spiritual stages of man (2:14-3:4).
7. Answer six: seeing who ministers really are (3:5-9).
8. Answer seven: being a wise builder (3:10-17).
9. Answer eight: renouncing self-deception (3:18-23).
10. Answer nine: letting God judge (4:1-5).
11. Answer ten: not comparing and judging ministers (4:6-13).
12. Answer eleven: seeing and understanding the spirit of God's minister (4:14-21).

(1:10-16) **Introduction:** division within the church is one of the most serious problems a church can face, if not *the* most serious. It can devastate the church's fellowship, worship, mission, and witness to the world unless it is solved quickly. Paul knew this; therefore, he sought to solve the problem immediately. Every church and minister of God needs to study and keep this passage forever in their memories.

1. The strong exhortation: "you all" agree (v.10).
2. The tragic report: contention (v.11).
3. The arguing parties (v.12).
4. The problem with cliques (v.13-16).

**1** (1:10) **Unity—Division:** the strong exhortation is "you all" agree. Note how Paul approaches the severe problem of division: he does not have fire in his eyes nor a spirit of rebuke and fight in his heart. There is not even a trace of anger in him. On the contrary, his heart is tender and full of love. He graciously appeals to the Corinthians.  
 ⇒ He says, "I beseech you." The word "beseech" (parakalo) means to call to one's side. Paul says, "I call you to my side; come, let's share together, talk the matter over. I ask, plead, beg—hear what I have to say."

## 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-16

- ⇒ He calls them *brothers* twice in just two verses (v.10, 11).  
⇒ He begs them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to heed what he is saying. He pleads with them to consider their love for Christ. They must do away with their divisions and be unified once again—for the sake of Christ. For Him and His cause they must obey Him and be united in one spirit and one mind.

**Thought 1.** Ministers of the gospel and leaders must not lambaste nor attack and censure those in the congregation who cause trouble, dissension, and division. Rather, they must approach the divisive person in a spirit of tenderness and love, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes it may be difficult because of the severity of the problem and the arrogance and unwillingness of the troublemaker. Nevertheless, the heart of Christ is love and restoration. Therefore, we must always reach out in a spirit of love and restoration before church discipline is ever attempted (see outline and notes—Mt.18:15-20).

**“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt.5:7).**

**“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (Mk.11:25).**

**“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Mt.18:15-17).**

**“And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Lk.5:31-32).**

**“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)” (Acts 10:36).**

**“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Is.53:5).**

The exhortation is strong; it is direct and straightforward. And note: it is immediately given. There is no hesitation and no equivocation in giving it. There should be no problem in understanding it, for it is plainly and simply stated.

**“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (v.10).**

1. The exhortation is to agree in speech: reach agreement, quit talking against each other, accusing, attacking, murmuring, grumbling, griping, complaining, gossiping. Quit using the tongue to stir dissension and division.

**“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell” (Jas.3:6).**

**“Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge” (Jas.4:11).**

**“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings” (1 Pt.2:1).**

**“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile” (1 Pt.3:10).**

**“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile” (Ps.34:13).**

**“He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction” (Pr.13:3).**

**“Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles” (Pr.21:23).**

2. The exhortation is to allow no dissension or division. The word “division” (schismata) means to split, to rend, to tear apart. Note the words “among you.” The division or dissension is not outside the church; it is not out in the world. It is inside the church. The divisive church is not working to bring peace, love, and brotherhood to the world; the divisive church is not seen out in the world ministering to the starving, diseased, and lost masses of the world. The divisive church is seen fuming and fighting. The sinful and devastating problems of dissension are *within* the divisive church. The divisive church is splitting, rending, and tearing itself apart.

**“But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth” (Lk.11:17).**

**“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor.3:3).**

3. The exhortation is to be “*perfectly joined together* in the same mind and in the same judgment.” The words “perfectly joined together” mean just what they say: to be in perfect union with each other; to be perfectly united and joined together; to be restored to the perfect union of being together. The idea behind the Greek word is that of a torn net being repaired and mended (Mt.4:21), or a man’s broken and dislocated limb being restored to its proper place.

The union is to be in both mind and judgment. The mind would involve thoughts, reasonings, affections, emotions, motives, and intentions. Judgment would involve conclusions, purposes, goals, and objectives. The exhortation is for the Corinthian church to restore itself, and note: they are not just to be joined together—they are to be *perfectly* joined together in mind and judgment.

**“For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious” (2 Cor.3:11).**

**“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:3).**

**“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:31-32).**

**“Only let your conversation [behavior] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

**“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Pt.3:8).**

**2** (1:11) **Division—Contention:** the tragic report is that contention is within the church. The contention was so severe that some believer went to Paul about the matter. Just who the believer was is not known. He or she was of the household of Chloe, who was apparently a believer well known to the Corinthians. Chloe was probably a citizen of Ephesus and not of Corinth. Paul would never have identified his source of information if he or she had lived in Corinth lest some of the arguing parties turn against Chloe and her household. Paul was writing to Corinth from Ephesus, so a member of her household probably reported the matter to Paul on some return trip from Corinth.

The depth and seriousness of the division is again brought out by the word “contentions” (erides). The word means wranglings, strifes, quarrels, factions. Note: the nature of division is more clearly defined by the word. The church was arguing and splitting into groups, contending and quarreling over something. There was a severe strife between factions and cliques in the church. Contention is one of the terrible “works of the flesh.”

**“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19-21).**

**3** (1:12) **Division—Super-Spirituality:** the arguing parties. Note the outline of the Scripture: practically everyone was exalting some former minister over the other ministers of the church. The few who were not were becoming super-spiritual, claiming they were followers of Christ and not of man. There were probably three basic problems causing the division within the church.

1. There was the problem in preaching ability and style. There was no difference in the messages preached by Paul and Apollos. They both preached the gospel of Christ, but there was a difference in their style of preaching and ministering. Apollos was an *eloquent man* and mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24). Paul was *not a great orator* (2 Cor.10:10; 11:6); therefore, some undervalued Paul as a preacher and surrounded Apollos. They failed to see God’s distinct call and gifts to each minister.

Paul was a small-framed missionary, gifted in the understanding of the Scriptures and gifted as an administrator in church order. Both gifts, although not so much out in the forefront of public recognition, were of immense value. Paul excelled in strengthening believers, in growing disciples, and in establishing churches. There is a good possibility that the Apollos party began to *intellectualize and socialize* Christianity, to turn it away from the doctrine of salvation in Christ, and to deemphasize the utter necessity to walk in Him day by day.

2. There was the problem of turning liberty into license. Peter’s emphasis had to deal with the *traditions and rituals* of the church, for he was the apostle to the Jews (Gal.2:7). Some believers preferred that the traditions and rituals be stressed more, and that Paul’s emphasis upon doctrine, salvation, and the daily walk of the believer be stressed less. The two groups began to gather around the name of the two apostles and form cliques.

3. There was the problem of those who claimed to be “of Christ.” These were probably fed up with the other groups and set themselves up as being more spiritual than the others. They looked upon themselves as being too spiritual to lower themselves to the level of becoming identified with any clique. They probably began to think of themselves as the only true spiritual Christians in Corinth. They claimed to follow Christ alone, and they denied needing or receiving the help of any man.

The Corinthians considered themselves to be so advanced in maturity that it gave them a privileged position. They set themselves up as *the judges* of others. They usurped God’s authority. They took it upon themselves to judge teachers (1 Cor.1:12f), to judge the wise and the unwise (1 Cor.1:19; 2:1f), to establish moral standards (1 Cor.5:1f), and to judge the gifted and their gifts (1 Cor.12:1f).

**“Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Mt.7:1).**

**“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Mt.7:3).**

**“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things” (Ro.2:1).**

**“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand” (Ro.14:4).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor.4:5).**

**“There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?” (Jas.4:12).**

**4** (1:13-16) **Division—Cliques:** the problem with cliques and dissenting groups in the church is threefold. Closely note the verse before the problems are discussed.

**“Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (v.13).**

In three short questions Paul shows the critical nature of divisive cliques. Cliques strike...

- at the Person of Christ or His Lordship.
- at the crucifixion or death of Christ.
- at the baptism or witness of the believer.

Note how clearly this is seen as each of the three problems with divisive groups is discussed.

1. Cliques divide Christ. A clique always thinks it is right, no matter how divisive its position is, and it wants its way—too often at any cost.

⇒ A clique dethrones Christ. It sets itself up as the *Lord*, as the persons who are able to judge what is right and wrong for the church.

⇒ A clique attempts the impossible: it tries to divide Christ, to take Christ over to its side. A clique often claims that Christ supports its position, that Christ would hold the position and do exactly what the clique is doing.

Note the question asked by Scripture: Is Christ divided? Is part of Christ over here with this group and part of Him over there with that group? Who rules the church? Who is Lord? Who has the right to judge and say what is right and wrong, the Lord within the church, or cliques within the church?

Jesus Christ cannot be divided. There is only one Lord, only one Person who is called the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not two persons. He nor His will can be split into two divisive cliques. He is one Person and He has one will.

**“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church” (Eph.1:22).**

**“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph.4:4-5).**

**“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col.1:18).**

2. Cliques elevate men to be saviors. Paul was not crucified for the Corinthians; therefore, he was not the savior of the Corinthians nor of any other body of believers. This is certain: if Paul was not a savior, then no other preacher nor any other leader of a clique is a savior. Believers do not owe their allegiance to preachers and leaders of cliques; they owe their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was Jesus Christ who died for us, not preachers and leaders of churches. Therefore, we are to obey and follow the will of Christ as dictated in Scripture, and we are to support the servants of the Lord whom He places in our midst to minister to us. The Lord places a particular minister in our midst because he has a unique gift to offer to the church and ministry—a very special contribution that is needed during a particular time.

**“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Lk.2:11).**

**“Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph.5:23).**

**“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).**

**“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim.1:15).**

**“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb.7:25).**

3. Cliques make a person a man-follower. This is tragic, for a genuine believer is always baptized in the name of the Lord, not in the name of some minister or church leader. In his baptism the believer *confessed the Lord* and gave testimony that he was committing his life to follow the Lord. He did not confess loyalty to some man, no matter how great and wonderful the man might be. However, when the person forms or joins a clique, he disassociates himself from Christ and the rest of the believers; he betrays his baptism and commitment to Christ and His church, and gives his loyalty to the leader or position of a divisive clique.

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Jas.4:10).**

**“Better it is to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud” (Pr.16:19).**

**“A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Pr.29:23).**

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Is.57:15).

“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic.6:8).

4. Now note Paul’s adamant denial that he ever attempted to secure a personal following of believers. He thanks God that he had not baptized but a few believers, for no believer can rightfully accuse him of seeking to form a following or a clique.

“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” (1 Cor.15:9).

“And [John the Baptist] preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose” (Mk.1:7).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:14) **Crispus:** the leading ruler of the Jewish synagogue at Corinth. He was led to Christ and baptized by Paul personally (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor.1:14).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(1:14) **Gaius:** Paul’s host when he was in Corinth. Since Paul baptized Gaius, he probably led him to the Lord as well (Ro.16:23; 1 Cor.1:4. Cp. Acts 19:29; 20:4 for a man named Gaius who served as a missionary with Paul. It may be the same Gaius, although the name was a common name in the ancient world.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

(1:16) **Stephanas:** one of three messengers who delivered the Corinthian letter to Paul (cp. 1 Cor.7:1). Paul baptized all the members of his household (1 Cor.1:16; 16:15).

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| <p><b>1 The cross is the primary mission of the preacher</b></p> <p><b>2 The cross can be emptied of its power</b></p> <p><b>3 The cross is the power of God<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/>                 a. Foolish to the perishing<br/>                 b. Power to the saved</p> <p><b>4 The cross destroys the wisdom of men &amp; makes foolish the wisdom of this world</b></p> | <p><b>B. Answer One: The Cross, 1:17-25</b></p> <p>17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.</p> <p>18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.</p> <p>19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.</p> <p>20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?</p> | <p>hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?</p> <p>21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.</p> <p>22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:</p> <p>23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;</p> <p>24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.</p> <p>25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.</p> | <p><b>5 The cross is the wisdom &amp; power of God to save them that believe</b></p> <p><b>6 The cross answers man's search for God</b><br/>                 a. The Jew: Seeks a sign—stumbles over the cross<br/>                 b. The Greek: Seeks wisdom—concludes the cross is foolishness<br/>                 c. The called: Finds Christ—discovers the cross is the power &amp; wisdom of God</p> <p><b>7 The cross proves that God's way is wiser &amp; stronger than man's way</b></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**B. Answer One: The Cross, 1:17-25**

(1:17-25) **Introduction:** remember, this section of Corinthians is dealing with division within the church. Note the contrast between “words of wisdom” or the “wisdom of words” and the “cross of Christ” (v.17). The “wisdom of words” is plural, hinting at differences and division within the fellowship of the church. The “cross of Christ” is singular, suggesting unity of spirit. The cross alone is the answer to a divided church, not words of human wisdom. Human wisdom can never solve the divisions within the church, nor within the world, not by itself. Why? Because love—love among all persons—is the only remedy for division, and the greatest demonstration of love ever witnessed upon earth is the cross of Christ. It is the cross that reveals the love of God for an antagonistic world, and that challenges man to love his fellow men. The cross of Christ is the answer both to the divisions among men and to the problems that plague men and their world.

1. The cross is the primary mission of the preacher (v.17).
2. The cross can be emptied of its power (v.17).
3. The cross is the power of God (v.18).
4. The cross destroys the wisdom of men and makes foolish the wisdom of this world (v.19-20).
5. The cross is the wisdom and power of God to save them that believe (v.21).
6. The cross answers man's search for God (v.22-24).
7. The cross proves that God's way is wiser and stronger than man's way (v.25).

(1:17-25) **Another Outline:** The Cross and Man.

1. Man can make the cross ineffective: by cleverness of speech (v.17).
2. Man's view of the cross (v.18).
  - a. The “lost”: foolishness.
  - b. The “saved”: the power of God.
3. Man attempts to find God by wisdom (Is.29:14; 33:18) (v.18).
  - a. His wisdom passes, is transitory (v.19).
  - b. His attempt failed. He did not know God (cp. Ro.1:20, 28) (v.21).
4. Man is saved by the foolishness of preaching (v.21).
5. Man seeks for God (v.22).
  - a. The Jew: seeks a sign—stumbles over the cross.
  - b. The Greek: seeks wisdom—concludes the cross is foolishness (v.23).
  - c. The called: finds Christ and discovers the cross is the power and wisdom of God (v.24).
6. Man proves less wise and weaker than God (v.25).

**1** (1:17) **Jesus Christ, Cross—Ministers—Preaching:** the cross is the primary mission of the preacher. The minister of God is to preach the cross. Paul declares:

“Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel...[even] the cross of Christ”  
 (1 Cor.1:17).

This means two things.

1. The *message of the gospel* is the cross of Christ. The *content* of preaching and witnessing is to be the cross. The *main subject* of our lives and conversation is to be the cross of Christ. All the other subjects of the Christian life are due to the fact that we have been reconciled to God and brought near Him by the cross of Christ. The cross demonstrates the love of God, the fact that He accepts us and allows us to *walk* with Him day by day. In all our preaching and witnessing, the glorious love of God revealed in the cross is to be the dominant theme.

⇒ The preacher is to preach the cross.

⇒ The believer is to bear witness to the cross.

2. The minister of God should never let the rituals of the church take the place of the cross in his ministry—no matter how important they may be. Regardless of their importance—and none are more important than baptism—the central focus of the preacher’s message and ministry is to be the gospel, that is, the cross of Christ (v.17).

The point needs to be constantly driven home to our hearts: the main focus of our lives, conversation, and ministry is to be the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ—the cross that demonstrates the glorious love of God. The cross is the primary mission of the preacher, not the rituals and ministries of the church.

**Thought 1.** It is easy to let ritual, ceremony, and form replace the cross in the church. It is also much easier to administer rites and ceremonies than to spend hours in diligent study and to preach the cross to a selfish world that rejects the demand for self-denial.

Note something else: the demands upon the minister’s time by other functions of the church are often so consuming that he finds himself slipping from his primary call to study, pray, and preach the gospel. The minister of God must not let this happen. He must keep his priorities straight: he has to, for no one else will do it for him. He must focus upon the cross; he must make the cross the primary subject of his life and preaching.

**“And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mk.3:14).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**2** (1:17) **Jesus Christ, Cross of—Ministers—Preaching:** the cross can be emptied of its power. How? By preaching the gospel with “wisdom of words.” This means at least two things.

1. A preacher can become more concerned with eloquence than with the cross. He can focus upon...

- flowery speech
- descriptive terms
- persuasive words
- charisma
- fluency
- expressive words
- enticing arguments
- appearance

2. A preacher can also become more concerned about the content of his message and its points and arguments than he does about proclaiming the cross. He can focus upon...

- having a good, dynamic, interesting sermon.
- presenting a new or novel idea.
- sharing an intriguing position.
- stirring thoughts about some speculation or philosophy.

Note what Scripture declares: the man who preaches the gospel with “wisdom of words” makes the cross of Christ of no effect. He voids or empties the cross of its power. He focuses attention upon the flowery, descriptive presentation or else upon the new idea or dynamic power of the sermon. When people leave the service, their attention is not upon the gospel and the cross—their attention is upon the *preacher*. The cross is emptied of its power. No life has been changed, not by God.

**Thought 1.** No preacher or teacher should set out to impress people with his style, delivery, fluency, charisma, ideas, or anything else. The minister and teacher have been called by God to preach the cross and the cross alone, not self and not the new and novel ideas and speculations of men. The minister and teacher of God must not forget the forceful declaration of Scripture:

**“Christ sent me...to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect” (1 Cor.1:17).**

**“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor.2:1-5).**

**“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).**

**3** (1:18) **Jesus Christ, Cross—Ministers—Preaching:** the cross is the power of God. Note two significant points.

1. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Perishing—1 Cor.1:18*). In Greek “the preaching” (ho logos) is literally “*the Word* of the cross” (see note, *The Word—Jn.1:1-5*). A sharp contrast is being drawn between the “wisdom of words” (v.17) and “the Word of the cross.” The world’s wisdom includes many *words*, that is, many ways to find the truth and meaning to life. But the Word of the cross is the *only way* to

the truth and meaning of life. Just why the preaching or the Word of the cross is foolish to those who perish is discussed later (v.22-24, point 5). For the present, the point is to show...

- that the men of the world who do not come to God through the cross of Christ are in a *state of perishing* (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Perishing*—1 Cor.1:18).
  - that the lost do not like the message of the cross, that is, the message that man is saved through a crucified Redeemer. They count the message as foolishness.
  - that the lost do not like the simple way the message is proclaimed.
2. The preaching of the cross is the power of God to those who are saved. No other message on earth...
- can reconcile men to God and put them under His daily care.
  - can give men the *perfect assurance* of God's daily love and care and of living eternally with God.

No other message has changed lives like the message of the cross of Christ. No other message has revolutionized societies and communities and families like the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is the *power of God* to save men (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Salvation*—1 Cor.1:18; Ro.1:16 for discussion).

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(1:18) **Salvation—Perishing:** men are placed into one of two categories here, *perishing* or *being saved*. A man goes through life having one of these two experiences: he is either perishing, moving ever downward toward the grave; or he is being saved, moving ever upward toward eternal life. In the Greek, both words are continuous action; that is, a man *is perishing* or *is being saved*. The words are not static; a man is not sitting still. He is ever “perishing,” more and more being gripped by the flesh and being conditioned to accept a perishing, dying world; or he is ever “being saved,” more and more being freed to walk righteously and godly in this present world. The man who is saved is being conditioned to break loose from a perishing, dying world and to look for the glorious appearing of the new world. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Salvation*—Ro.1:16.)

1. The terrible word *perishing* means to be lost, to be utterly destroyed, to lose eternal life, to be spiritually destitute, to be cut off.

- a. Perishing means to be in a lost state in this world. It means to be...
- aging, deteriorating, decaying, dying. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.8:17; notes—1 Cor.15:50; Col.2:13; DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Pt.1:4.)
  - without life (purpose, meaning, significance). (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.1:4; DEEPER STUDY # 1—10:10; DEEPER STUDY # 1—17:2-3.)
  - without peace (assurance, confidence, security in God's keeping). (See note—Jn.14:27.)
  - without hope (of living forever). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Tim.4:18.)
- b. Perishing means to be in a lost state in the world to come. It means...
- having to die
  - facing judgment
  - being condemned
  - suffering separation from God and from all loved ones
  - experiencing all that is hell

(See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.5:22; DEEPER STUDY # 4—Lk.16:24; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Heb.9:27.)

2. The great word *salvation* is used in Scripture to describe at least three experiences for the believer.

- a. The *once-for-all experience* of salvation. It is an experience that has happened sometime in the past: “Ye *have been saved*” (Lk.7:50). It is the initial act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is receiving Christ into one's heart and life as Lord. It means being saved or delivered from sin, death, and hell; and being given the assurance that one will never be separated from God—either in this life or in the world to come. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.1:4; DEEPER STUDY # 1—10:10; DEEPER STUDY # 1—17:2-3.)

“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (Jn.17:2).

“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish” (2 Cor.2:15).

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph.2:5).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph.2:8).

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim.1:9).

- b. The *continuous experience* of salvation. It is an experience that is occurring right now, in the present. “Ye *are being saved*” (1 Cor.1:18). It is a description of God's work day by day in the believer's life. It is the Holy Spirit of God working within the believer. (Cp. Ro.6:14; 8:2; 2 Cor.3:18; Gal.2:20; Ph.1:19; 2:12-13; 2 Th.2:13.)

⇒ To guide and teach him and to deliver him through all the trials and problems of life.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).**

⇒ To fill him with a heart of love, joy, and peace—all the fruit and resources necessary to live life to the fullest.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

⇒ To conform him more and more to the image of Christ.

**“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor.3:18).**

⇒ To stir and equip him to live and witness for Christ day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, and moment by moment.

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:7-8).**

- c. The *redemptive experience* of salvation that is to occur in the future. “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Ro.13:11). This future reference to salvation points to the day of redemption—to the day of Christ’s kingdom—to the day when Christ shall usher in His kingdom upon this earth—to the day when God will create a new heavens and earth and bring about His perfect will and rule throughout the universe.

**“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Ro.8:21-23).**

**“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor.15:42-44).**

**“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pt.1:5).**

**“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).**

(See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Kingdom of God*—Mt.19:23-24.)

**4** (1:19-20) **Jesus Christ, Cross—World, Wisdom of—Man—Utopia:** the preaching of the cross destroys the wisdom of men and makes foolish the wisdom of the world. This is a verse quoted from the Old Testament (cp. Is.29:14; 33:18). How does the cross destroy and make foolish the wisdom of men and their world?

1. The cross exposes the fallacy of man’s reasoning and wisdom. Man seeks to conquer evil through science, technology, and the religion of human effort. Man tries to use everything at his disposal to conquer nature, disease, suffering, corruption, and death. Man wants a life that is full and free; but he wants it on his own terms, that is, he wants all these things in such a way that will allow him to continue...

- to do his own thing.
- to live as he wishes.
- to lust.
- to gain position and power.
- to gain recognition and fame.
- to be comfortable and to hoard and bank, even if large numbers of people are devastated and dying from hunger, disease, loneliness, and emptiness.

And all the while, man wants acceptance and recognition for his achievements. What the cross does is shatter this reasoning: it exposes a severe problem with man: the problem of sin, of a depraved and selfish heart. The cross is God's Son, the Perfect Man being put to death by the rest of the world. Men killed the Son of God because man is evil. Man is just not willing to live as Christ said; therefore, he put Christ to death.

2. The cross exposes the fallacy of man's search for love, joy, peace, and all the other spiritual qualities of life. Man wants to live a full and free life, and he wishes the same for other men—at least to some degree. But in all his searching man discovers something. Science, technology, and good works do not bring the love, joy, and peace for which he longs, nor do they give the perfect assurance of knowing God—of really knowing Him to such a degree that a person is *absolutely sure* he is going to live with God eternally.

However, the cross does give this assurance. Thousands of genuine believers who have trusted Christ and His death upon the cross to save them will testify that they have absolute assurance of living eternally with God. The cross destroys the idea that the fulness of life comes from science, technology, education, and even “good works.”

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

3. The cross shows that the answer to man's problems and utopia is the way of sacrifice. The answer is not through...

- power and fame
- selfishness and greed
- human works and efforts

No man can reach God and find truth or solve the world's problems without love and total sacrifice. This is what the cross is all about. Common sense tells us that we are short of God's glory; we are not completely righteous or just, and certainly not perfect. Therefore, there is no way that we can be acceptable and be allowed to live in the presence of a loving, just, and perfect God. Very simply, we are not like Him. There is only one way we can ever become acceptable to God: God will have to love us enough to provide a perfect sacrifice for us. And remember: He alone can provide the perfect sacrifice, for He alone is perfect.

This is the glorious message of the cross: God loves us enough to save us; He has offered a perfect sacrifice for us. Upon the cross Jesus Christ, God's own perfect Son...

- took our sins upon Himself.
- took our punishment for having sinned upon Himself.

God sacrificed His own Son for us, and it is through His sacrifice that God saves us. God accepts men when they approach Him through the cross, that is, when men believe that God loves them so much that He would sacrifice His Son for them. God takes that man's faith and counts it as righteousness or perfection. The man who believes becomes acceptable to God (see note, *Justification—Ro.5:1*).

How does this destroy and make foolish the wisdom of men and their world? The cross is not the way men want to approach God. Men want to be acceptable to God without having *to love God and sacrifice themselves completely*. Yet, if they accept the sacrifice of Christ as the truth, they have to sacrifice themselves even as He sacrificed Himself; they have to give all they are and have to reach and help the people of the world. Therefore, they seek to approach God through...

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| • their own reasonings   | • their own understanding |
| • their own thoughts     | • their own speculations  |
| • their own philosophies | • their own wisdom        |
| • their own religions    | • their own efforts       |
| • their own works        |                           |

But men fail. Every human effort other than the cross always has and always will fail. No effort of man has ever solved the world's problems of sin and evil, disease and suffering, selfishness and greed, death and judgment. No man has ever penetrated the spiritual world to find out what God is like. Only Christ and His cross can change men and give them life—life that is both abundant and eternal. *And the fact has been proven in life after life down through the centuries.*

The cross destroys the wisdom of men in this: it shows that the way to solve the problems of the world is the cross—not science, not technology, not education, and not religion. All the problems of the world could be solved (physical, material, and spiritual) if men would come to the cross, which is the perfect demonstration of love and sacrifice.

**Thought 1.** Just imagine what the world would be like if all men loved God and sacrificed all they were and had to solve the problems of the world—loved and sacrificed just as Christ did.

**5** (1:21) **Jesus Christ, Cross—Salvation—Preaching—God, Wisdom:** the cross is both the wisdom and power of God to save all who believe.

1. The cross is the wisdom of God. The term the “wisdom of God” means the cross, the way God has chosen to save the world. Note again the emphasis that the world by its wisdom has not known God. As stated in the previous point (v.19-20), man cannot be saved by science, technology, education, religion—not by any human effort of goodness. No matter what man does or how wise he gets, he will never be able to become perfect, not in love and justice. Despite all that man may achieve, he will still come “short of God's glory” (which is perfection).

The way for man and his world to be saved is not by the wisdom of men, but by the wisdom of God, which is the cross. If men would turn to the cross in its perfect demonstration of love and sacrifice, then men would love and sacrifice like they should to meet the needs of mankind.

Love and sacrifice are God's means of saving the world. Therefore, it is the person who believes the preaching of the cross that is saved. When a person believes that Jesus Christ died for him—when he gives all he is and has to Christ—God saves that person and uses him to reach the lost and destitute of the world.

2. The cross is the power of God to save those who believe. The cross alone changes the lives of men to love God and sacrifice themselves for God and for men.

**“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us...and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph.2:13-14, 16).**

**6** (1:22-24) **Jesus Christ, Cross—Man, Search for Utopia:** the cross answers man's search for God. The world has made three mistakes in looking at the cross.

1. The Jews or religionists of the world feel they are the chosen seed of God, that they reach God by having a godly heritage and by being religious and good enough to be acceptable to Him. They think they are to work as diligently as they can to bring the Kingdom of God and man's utopia to earth. Most religionists are just like the Jews were: they develop a system of thought whereby the Messiah is to come to earth when they have prepared the earth for Him. And when He comes, they say He will come with great signs of power and majesty and bring a golden age upon the earth.

**Thought 1.** Note how the emphasis of the religionist is *his* works and labor for God:

- ⇒ It is man who prepares the way for the Messiah's salvation upon earth instead of the Messiah who prepares the way for man to approach God.
- ⇒ It is man who brings the glory of God and utopia to earth instead of the Messiah who ushers in the kingdom.

The cross—a crucified Savior redeeming men—is bound to be a stumblingblock to religionists. The ideas of the cross are just foreign to a religionist, the ideas...

- that he cannot do enough good to be acceptable to God.
- that the penalty for his sins had to be paid for by the perfect sacrifice of God's Son.
- that he must trust in the perfect sacrifice of God's Son for his sins.
- that true belief in God's Son means that he sacrifices all he is and has to save a world of desperate and lost humanity.

When the religionist looks at the cross and sees the ugliness of sin and shame, punishment and death, blood and suffering instead of glory and majesty, triumph and victory, he is repulsed; and he recoils and withdraws from the truth that God's Son had to die for his sins. The religionist does not want to dwell upon the negative factors of sin and death; he wants to focus upon the positive things of ritual, ceremony, religion, works, and benevolence—just so he is not expected to give everything.

**“And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me” (Mt.11:6).**

**“Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him [that God could be Man]” (Mk.6:3).**

**“And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Pt.2:8).**

**“But Israel [religionists], which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Ro.9:31-33).**

2. The Greeks made the mistake of thinking of God as “*apatheia*.” *Apatheia* means more than apathy. It means a total inability to feel. God was thought to be too far away and uninvolved in human affairs to feel. Therefore, to think of a god who became a man and felt the pains of death upon a cross was foolishness to a Greek mind. It was simply nonsense. It was beyond anything that the human mind could grasp.

The Greeks also greatly admired “a wise man.” The wise man was a man who could speak persuasively with flowery speech about earthly affairs and human wisdom, and make them seem eternal. Therefore, the preaching of the cross with its blunt message seemed crude and uncultured. It was laughed at and ridiculed rather than listened to and accepted.

The world, generation after generation, makes the mistake of stumbling over the simplicity of the cross. Man feels that he has to use his own wisdom and energy to achieve anything in this world, or else he just does not achieve. Therefore, the world fails to understand that the cross is the expression of God's love for a lost world, and that the message of the cross is simple faith in God's love. The world does not have to exercise human wisdom in order to be saved. The world just cannot understand this, so it stumbles over the cross.

**Thought 1.** How many look upon the cross...

- as crude and uncultured?
- as a bloody, repulsive religion?
- as lacking rational evidence? The very idea that a man could die and arise from the dead is foolishness.

**“Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him [that God could be Man]” (Mk.6:3).**

**“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Ro.1:22).**

**“And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain” (1 Cor.3:20).**

**“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments [elementary teachings] of the world, and not after Christ” (Col.2:8).**

3. The called of God find Christ. There are some who pay attention to the pull of God’s call and movement in their hearts. They heed and obey the call of God: kneel and sacrificially surrender their lives to Christ. And when they do, two things happen.

- a. They discover that Jesus Christ is the power of God (see note 3 and DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Cor.1:18 for discussion).

**“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (Jn.17:2).**

- b. They discover that Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God. They discover that Jesus Christ brings to their heart and lives...

- deliverance from the sin and restlessness of their souls.
- the knowledge of God and the infilling of love, joy, and peace.
- the guidance and direction of God as they walk through the trials of life day by day.
- perfect assurance of living eternally with God.
- the greatest purpose and meaning in life possible: that of reaching and ministering to a world that reels under the weight of calamity and desperate needs—no matter the cost.

**“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col.2:8).**

**“For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Ro.11:32-33).**

**7** (1:25) **Jesus Christ, Cross:** the cross proves that God’s way is wiser and stronger than man’s way. It is wiser and stronger because it saves men. The fact is it could save the whole world if all men would surrender themselves to the *Christ of the cross*. How could the cross of Christ do such a phenomenal thing? By its example, demand, and power to change men from sinful and selfish beings to loving and sacrificial creatures. When a man truly bows before the cross, he surrenders *all he is and has* to Christ, and Christ makes him into a new creature. The man arises and goes forth to do all and to give all he can to save and meet the needs of a world that reels under the weight of its starving, diseased, and lost masses.

**Thought 1.** Just think what would really happen if only one million people within one nation bowed before the cross, giving all they were and had to Christ! What would happen if they really sacrificed themselves totally to Christ as Christ did for them?

**“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ [the cross]: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Ro.1:16).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal.6:14-15).**

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ [identified with the cross], he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

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| <p><b>1 God does not call many outstanding people</b><br/> a. Not many wise<br/> b. Not many powerful<br/> c. Not many high-born</p> <p><b>2 God calls simple &amp; humble people</b><br/> a. The foolish—to shame the wise<br/> b. The weak—to shame the strong</p> | <p><b>C. Answer Two: Seeing God's Simple and Humble People, 1:26-31</b></p> <p>26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:<br/> 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;</p> | <p>28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:<br/> 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.<br/> 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:<br/> 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.</p> | <p>c. The low-born &amp; despised<br/> d. The nothing to nullify the something</p> <p><b>3 God has one purpose: To eliminate man's boasting</b><br/> <b>4 God's real wisdom is Christ</b><br/> a. He is wisdom<br/> b. He is righteousness<br/> c. He is sanctification<br/> d. He is redemption, v.30<br/> e. Reason: To stir men to praise God</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**C. Answer Two: Seeing God's Simple and Humble People, 1:26-31**

(1:26-31) **Introduction—Christian Believer:** the second answer to division is seeing God's simple and humble people. The Corinthians needed to remember who they were. Not too many had come from among the wise, the powerful, or the noble. Therefore, they had no excuse for acting snobbish, or for criticizing and ignoring others. They were only what God had made them. Their knowledge, rank, and power did not attract God, and such things would not now secure any special favors from God.

Every church and believer needs to take the message of this passage to heart, for one of the most tragic characteristics of modern society is its pride and self-sufficiency. Modern society proclaims a doctrine of humanistic philosophy, that is, that man is supreme. The result is a world that is about to explode under the pressure of...

- self must be pleased above all else
- one has the right to do his own thing
- self image brings wholeness
- they owe me
- might makes right
- color and race determine status

The world's crying need is for man to see that the only answer to division is *reconciliation* with God and with each other, and the only way to be reconciled is to live lives that are simple and humble.

1. God does not call many outstanding people (v.26).
2. God calls simple and humble people (v.27-28).
3. God has one purpose: to eliminate man's boasting (v.29).
4. God's real wisdom is Christ (v.30-31).

**1** (1:26) **Believers—Call—Church:** God does not call many outstanding people. The Corinthians were boasting and taking great pride in their wisdom and understanding, gifts and abilities. God had gifted them with every conceivable spiritual gift, and they were especially enriched with the gifts that dealt with speech and knowledge. The gifts of speech and knowledge are the primary tools of the...

- preacher
- educator
- politician
- teacher
- ruler
- businessman

In fact, speech and knowledge are two of the primary tools of any leader. They are gifts that *stand out* and are clearly visible and noticed by everyone. The person gifted with knowledge and speech is often a leader who is in the limelight.

The point is this: these two gifts, speech and knowledge, are especially subject to the temptation of pride. Apparently the Corinthian church had yielded to the temptation of pride, that is, of feeling superior because of...

- the gifts and abilities they had.
- the knowledge and wisdom of their leaders.
- the unusual gifts of knowledge and speech (prophecy, tongues, teaching, eloquence, and charisma).
- the pastors and leaders God had sent their way (Apolllos, Peter, Paul).

Paul says, "You see your calling, brothers"—look at yourselves. Look at your church, at the type of people God calls.

1. God does not call *many* "wise men [who live] after the flesh": the educator, the teacher, the philosopher, the politician—all who seek the wisdom of this world instead of the wisdom of God. "The wise after the flesh" are those who pursue and live for the fleshly wisdom of this world. Few of these are ever saved. Some are, but not many. Men do not discover God by the wisdom of this world.

“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Ro.12:16).

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor.1:18-21).

“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor.8:2).

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” (Pr.3:7).

“Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him” (Pr.26:12).

“Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me” (Is.47:8-10).

2. God does not call “many mighty” men of this world: the great, the powerful, the rulers, the wealthy, the business leaders, the politicians, the influential. Of those who are wrapped up in the positions, wealth, and authority of this world, few are ever saved. Some are, but not many. Men do not have influence with God because of who they are. Their earthly position and power have no bearing upon God’s acceptance of them.

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor.10:12).

“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered” (Pr.28:26).

“With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures. By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches” (Ezk.28:4-5).

“Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men” (Hos.10:13).

“The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD” (Obad.3-4).

“This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand” (Zeph.2:15).

3. God does not call “many noble” men: the high bred, the upper class, the well-born, the nobility of society, those of respected heritage, those with noble roots.

**Thought 1.** Possessing earthly knowledge, influence, and nobility do not make a person acceptable to God. Such things may be esteemed by men, but they are not esteemed by God. This fact bothers men, for they think who they are and what they have done should have some bearing on God’s acceptance of them. However, this is the very thing that keeps so many from ever becoming acceptable to God: pride, self-sufficiency, self-attainment, self-righteousness, self-centeredness—whatever men may choose to call it. Men are saved by the grace of God, not by self-effort. All men stand on an equal footing before God, no matter their status.

“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal.6:3).

“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).

“The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish” (Is.24:4).

“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge” (Jer.4:22).

**2** (1:27-28) **Believers—Call—Church:** God calls simple and humble people. Note the word “chosen” (exelexato): the fact that men do not save themselves, but God saves them, is stressed three times in the words “calling” and “chosen” (v.26, 27, 28). God is the One who takes the initiative in saving men. It is God...

- who does not call many outstanding people.
- who does call the simple and humble people.

The point to see is this: God's choice is not arbitrary, not without reason. He knows why He chooses the simple and humble over the outstanding. God has His reasons, and He explains His reasons in this passage.

1. God chooses the "foolish things [people] of this world to confound the wise." Note the term "foolish things" is used instead of "foolish people." Many of the wise in the world look upon those who have little or nothing as things. They look upon them as nothing more than tools for the rich and powerful to use as they wish. God chooses the ignorant, the unlearned, and the disadvantaged over the wise of the world. Why? To "confound" (kataischune) the wise. The word means to shame. The wise feel self-sufficient in their education, knowledge, and wisdom. They feel little if any need for God, and often question if there is a living and true God who is sovereign. Common sense and logic tell us that such an attitude of arrogance could never be acceptable to God. Not because He denies men the right to ask and think through legitimate questions, but because most of the wise of this world are not sincere enough to genuinely study the truth of God which has been revealed in Christ and in the Holy Scriptures. And, too often, the few who might seek the truth study secondary sources (books about the Bible) instead of studying the primary source, the Bible itself. Too many seek for God through what men say instead of letting God speak for Himself.

It is because of such pride, arrogance, and close-mindedness that God chooses few of the wise in this world. In fact, God does exactly what most men would do: He chooses those who humble themselves before Him, confessing Him to be God and asking Him to save them. The result, of course, is that the wise of this world are shamed, and their shame will become ever so visible and embarrassing when judgment comes.

2. God chooses "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." By weak is meant those without position, influence, or wealth. The weak are the less important, the insignificant, the more dispensable. It is a person without any authority or influence whatsoever. It may be the common laborer, the simple worker, the poor, the homeless, the hungry, the child, the aged, the deformed, the diseased, or the helpless. God saves the weak person, not the mighty person. Any person who stands before God erect, with his chest out, professing his position, authority, wealth, and diligent work, will be *rejected* by God. In fact, God will confound and put to shame such an attitude of *arrogant might*. He will only accept the person who comes to Him in weakness and cries for His help.

3. God chooses the base things and the things which are despised. Again, note that people are looked upon as "things" and not as persons. The base are in contrast to those who are in the upper class of society. The base and the despised would include the lower classes of society: the lowly, the contemptible, the ignoble, the vile, the criminal, the immoral, the depraved, the dirty, the distasteful. It is such people that God chooses instead of the upper classes of society. Why? Again, because of pride, arrogance, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency. More of the upper class are unwilling to give all they are and have to Christ and His cause. They want some religion and some charitable causes, but they are unwilling to surrender their lives to a *Lord* who demands their total allegiance.

4. God chooses the nothings to nullify the somethings of this world. There are people in this world who are overlooked and bypassed and considered totally insignificant and useless. God chooses His people from among them as well, and He does it to nullify, dethrone, and bring to nothing all those who think they are something in this world.

**Thought 1.** Again, God does not deny or forbid man's right to think through and ask honest and sincere questions. On the contrary, God wants man thinking and learning. He is the One who gave man a mind for the purpose of reasoning and discovering the truths of the universe He created.

1) God expects man to gain dominion over the universe, to conquer and control the destructive forces of nature as much as possible.

**"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen.1:27-28).**

**"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Ps.8:6).**

**"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods" (Mt.25:14).**

**"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Tim.6:20).**

**"And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come" (Lk.19:13).**

2) God expects man to reason with Him, but He expects an honest and seeking heart and the subjection of one's life to His Lordship once the truth is revealed.

**"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Is.1:18).**

**"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Is.55:1).**

**"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt.11:28).**

**"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev.3:20).**

“And the Spirit and the bride [Christ] say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).

**Thought 2.** God sent His Son into the world to save those who confess...

- that they cannot save themselves from sin, death, and hell.
- that they want to live with God eternally and serve Him as Lord.

“Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you” (Mt.21:31).

“When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mk.2:17).

“Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (Lk.7:47).

“And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them” (Lk.15:2).

“And Jesus said unto him, [the criminal], Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Lk.23:43).

**3** (1:29) **God, Purpose—Saved, The:** God has one purpose for saving only the simple and humble people—to eliminate man’s boasting. Think for a moment: think of all the evil, meanness, and ugliness in the world on any given day. In fact, come closer to home: think of all the evil, meanness, and ugliness in any one city on any given day...

- |                        |                 |                         |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| • the murders          | • the greed     | • the stealing          |
| • the selfishness      | • the lying     | • the abuse             |
| • the corruption       | • the cheating  | • the deception         |
| • the immoral thoughts | • the cursing   | • the negative thoughts |
| • the immorality       | • the anger     | • the harsh speaking    |
| • the fights           | • the arguments |                         |

The list could go on and on, and it all happens every day. In addition, think how few people ever think about and acknowledge God and how little thought is given to Him even by those few. No matter his education, wisdom, science, technology, power, and heritage, man never has and never will be able...

- to control sin and evil in the world.
- to bring peace, assurance, and control to the human heart.
- to change the selfish hearts of men into hearts of love and sacrifice.
- to bring eternal life to a man beyond his few short years on this earth.

Now for the shattering question: What right does man have to glory? Why does man consider himself wise and mighty and noble? Why does man want to act...

- self-sufficient when he cannot control his own earthly behavior, much less his destiny?
- wise when what he learns is ever changing and being discarded or modified and developed, and he cannot even control what he learns?
- powerful when he cannot even stop a simple virus from downing his body, much less accidents, diseases, and death?
- noble, as though he were better than others when he is nothing but flesh and bone as all other men, and his ideas of upper and lower class are nothing more than *ideas* in his mind that are soon destroyed by God in death?

The question to the honest and thinking man of the earth is not, “Why does God not choose those who dwell in such superficial thoughts and behavior,” but “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (Heb. 2:6).

Man does not deserve God’s attention, much less His salvation. But God loves man, so He gives us both His attention and salvation. However, God does not put up with the foolishness of man’s depraved wisdom and ridiculous claims to *self-sufficiency and self-righteousness*. Man does not control his destiny. All he has to do is look at the behavior of men, and then look at the grave and be honest and thoughtful about the facts, and he has to confess his need for God.

This is the reason God has chosen to do the very opposite from what man thinks. He chooses as His followers and servants the people who are the very opposite from whom man chooses. God saves those and uses those whom men bypass, ignore, neglect, abuse, and misuse. Why?

“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world: hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (1 Cor.1:19-20).

“That no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Cor.1:29).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jn.2:15-17).

“Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Pr.16:18).

**Thought 1.** Note that some of the outstanding people of the world are saved. Some are truthfully honest and do think and search the Scriptures and God for the truth. Therefore, God saves them. God does not save a lowly person because he is lowly. He saves *a man* because the man's heart is humble.

**“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:4).**

**“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Mt.23:12).**

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Jas.4:10).**

**“Better it is to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud” (Pr.16:19).**

**“A man's pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Pr.29:23).**

**“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, and to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Is.57:15).**

**“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic.6:8).**

**4** (1:30-31) **Jesus Christ, Person—Salvation—Wisdom:** God's real wisdom is Jesus Christ, His only Son. Note “of Him” (ek autou); that is, *out of* God, out of His nature of love and salvation, He chooses you to be *in* Christ” (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Position in Christ*—Ro.8:1 for discussion). Again, the stress is that it is God who saves a person; the person does not save himself, no matter how capable he is or how much good he may do. How is God able to save men? By Christ. God took Christ and *presented Him* to the world as the wisdom of God.

1. Christ is the wisdom of God given to the world so that men might know the way, the truth, and the life of God. God sent Christ to earth as the Word (logos) of God. He was the perfect expression of what God wanted to say to man. Everything Jesus Christ said and did was exactly how God wants man to speak and do. Jesus Christ was the Word of God to man (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *The Word*—Jn.1:1-5 for discussion).

a. God sent Christ to earth as the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form.

**“[Christ] in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col.2:3).**

**“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col.2:9).**

b. God sent Christ to earth as the Revelation of God. God wanted man to see exactly who He is, what He is like, and how He expects man to live. Therefore, God revealed Himself to man in the person of Jesus Christ.

**“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn.1:3).**

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

**“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (Jn.14:9-10).**

**“I and my Father are one” (Jn.10:30).**

**“If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him” (Jn.10:37-38).**

c. Christ was the very embodiment of the glory of God.

**“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor.4:6).**

What all this means is that a man must come to Jesus Christ if he wishes to know God, for Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God revealed to the world. God has given His wisdom to the world through His Son, Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ...

- God's wisdom has spoken to the world.
- God's wisdom has revealed itself to the world.
- God's wisdom has lived before the world in human flesh.

Man now knows the way, the truth, and the life of God. Man is now without excuse.

2. Christ is the righteousness of God. Righteousness shows just how wise God really is. Man is not perfect, but imperfect and unrighteous. Therefore, man by his very nature cannot live in God's presence, for God is perfect and the very embodiment of righteousness. How then can man ever become acceptable to God and be allowed to live in God's presence? Jesus Christ is the answer, for He is the righteousness of God; that is, God sent Jesus Christ to earth to live the *perfect, ideal, and sinless* life. Jesus Christ never sinned, not even once. Therefore, He stood before God and before the world as the Ideal Man, the Perfect Man, the Representative Man, the Perfect Righteousness that could stand for and cover the righteousness of every man.

When a man believes in Jesus Christ—really believes—God takes that man's faith and counts it (his faith) as righteousness. The man is not righteous; he and everyone else knows it. But God counts his faith and belief as righteousness. Why would God do such an incredible thing? Because God loves His Son that much and God loves man that much. God loves so much that He will take any man who honors His Son by believing in Him and count that man's faith as though it were the real thing: righteousness. Very simply stated: Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God. He is the only way a man can become righteous and acceptable to God.

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb.4:15).**

**“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:25-26).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

3. Christ is the sanctification of God. Sanctification also shows just how wise God is. Sanctification means two things.
- a. Sanctification means to be set apart unto God. Jesus Christ set His life apart to live for God, and He lived for God perfectly and righteously. Therefore, His act of sanctification is able to stand as the Ideal, Perfect, and Representative sanctification for man. When a man believes *in* Jesus Christ, God takes that man's faith and counts it for the man's sanctification. God counts the man as one of His, as *set apart* unto Him.

**“By the which will [God's will] we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb.10:10).**

**“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Heb.13:12).**

**“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1 Pt.1:2).**

- b. Sanctification means holiness: to live a holy and righteous, pure and clean life. When a man believes in Christ, God does a most marvelous thing. God puts the Spirit of Christ—the very life, energy, and power of Christ—into the heart and life of the new believer. God sends the Spirit of Christ, who is the Holy Spirit, to actually live in the body of the believer. Therefore, the believer has a supernatural power to live for God. As he follows in the footsteps of Christ, living more and more like Christ did, he becomes more and more sanctified—set apart unto God, living a more holy life than the day before.

**“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor.3:16).**

**“Flee fornication. Every sin that man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor.6:18-20).**

**“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim.2:21).**

**“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb.12:14).**

**“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pt.1:15-16).**

4. Christ is the redemption of God. Redemption shows the wisdom of God to the world. As the Ideal, Perfect, and Representative Man, whatever Jesus Christ did would stand for man. Therefore, when Jesus Christ died, His death became the Ideal and Representative death for all men. This is what is meant when Scripture says that Jesus Christ died for man. He died as the Perfect and Ideal Man, as the Substitute and Representative Man for all men. As the Ideal and Perfect Man, He was able to bear the punishment for every man's sins. Through His death Jesus Christ redeems (delivers) us from sin, death, and punishment. He is the *redemption*, the deliverance of God for this world.

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).**

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col.1:14).**

**“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).**

**“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb.9:12).**

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).**

**“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev.5:9).**

5. The purpose of God in sending Christ to earth was to stir men to praise God instead of boasting in their own wisdom and self-sufficiency. (Cp. Jer.9:23-24.)

| CHAPTER 2  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <b>D. Answer Three: Sound Preaching, 2:1-5</b>  |  |
| <p><b>1 Sound preaching is not eloquence or human philosophy</b></p> <p><b>2 Sound preaching has one great theme: Jesus Christ &amp; Him crucified</b></p> | <p>And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.</p> <p>2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him</p> | <p>crucified.</p> <p>3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.</p> <p>4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:</p> <p>5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.</p> <p><b>3 Sound preaching is proclaimed with a great sense of inadequacy</b></p> <p><b>4 Sound preaching is not persuasive words, but a demonstration of the Spirit &amp; power</b></p> <p><b>5 Sound preaching leads to faith</b></p> <p>a. Not in man's ability</p> <p>b. In God's power</p> |

## DIVISION II

### THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21

#### D. Answer Three: Sound Preaching, 2:1-5

(2:1-5) **Introduction:** the Corinthian church was deeply divided. Two of the issues dividing it were a dispute over what kind of preacher should fill their pulpit, and which former minister had contributed the most to their church (cp. 1 Cor.1:11-16). The church desperately needed to understand what *preaching really was*. Only if they understood what God intended preaching to be could they hope to solve their differences. One of the strong solutions to division is sound preaching.

1. Sound preaching is not eloquence or human philosophy (v.1).
2. Sound preaching has one great theme: Jesus Christ and Him crucified (v.2).
3. Sound preaching is proclaimed with a great sense of inadequacy (v.3).
4. Sound preaching is not persuasive words, but a demonstration of the Spirit and power (v.4).
5. Sound preaching leads to faith (v.5).

(2:1-5) **Another Outline:** The Sound Preaching of Paul.

1. His approach: to preach (v.1).
  - a. Not with eloquence or philosophy.
  - b. With God's testimony.
2. His one great theme: the cross (v.2).
3. His great sense of inadequacy (v.3).
4. His speech and message (v.4).
  - a. Not with persuasive words.
  - b. In the Spirit and power.
5. His sole purpose: to build faith (v.5).
  - a. Not in man's ability.
  - b. In God's power.

**1** (2:1) **Preaching—Minister:** sound preaching is not eloquence or human wisdom or philosophy. This is Paul's personal testimony. The words "I" and "my" are used six times in these five brief verses, and note the opening phrase: "and I" (kago). It is emphatic. Paul stresses a critical fact: the concern of preaching is not to be eloquence or human wisdom or philosophy.

1. Sound preaching is not eloquence. The Greek word (*huperochē*) actually means superiority, elevation, preeminence, rising above. Remember Paul is speaking about words, not so much about himself, although the behavior of a person could be involved. Paul did not try to sound more superior, more elevated, and more eloquent in his preaching. He was not concerned in the least with his preaching rising above and being more preeminent and recognized than the preaching of others.

2. Sound preaching is not human wisdom or philosophy. Paul faced the same kind of situation that we face today, and in reality, the same kind of situation that every generation of believers face: a world that stresses the philosophy of humanism. The world, no matter its generation, is constantly seeking more and more wisdom, education, science, technology, and new and novel ideas, in particular ideas dealing with reality and truth. All of these pursuits are not only worthwhile, they are absolutely essential for man's welfare. The problem is this: man seeks these pursuits within the framework of this world. He forgets God entirely. As a result, the world's wisdom, education, science, technology, reality, and truth are *only* of this world. And, of course, the destiny of all that is within the world is corruption and death. There is no fulfilling foundation and no permanency to anything within the world. Everything within the world is unfulfilling within itself, passes away, and ceases to exist.

This is the reason Paul did not preach human philosophy or worldly wisdom. When Paul preached, he was not concerned with sounding like a philosopher or some deep thinker or some preacher and theologian with a new and novel idea or position.

3. Sound preaching is declaring the testimony of God. The word "testimony" (*marturion*) is the mystery or revelation of God. The glorious testimony or revelation of God is Jesus Christ and Him crucified (v.2). Preaching is not delivering eloquent speeches nor sound advice on...

- |                     |                       |                            |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| • self-development  | • education           | • philosophy               |
| • self-image        | • science             | • religion and its rituals |
| • positive thinking | • new and novel ideas | • history                  |

All of these have their place, and what truth lies within each needs to be taught; but they are not the subjects that are to be *preached by God's ministers* to a lost world that is reeling under the weight of lonely, empty, starving, and suffering masses of people. The genuine preacher of God is to preach the testimony (marturion, mystery, revelation) of God.

**2** (2:2) **Preaching—Minister—Jesus Christ, Cross:** sound preaching has one great theme—Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The phrase “I determined” (ekrina) means to have decided, to have made a decision. Paul made a *deliberate decision*, a *strong determination* to preach only Jesus Christ and Him crucified. His theme was not...

- Jesus the great model for men.
- Jesus the great teacher.
- Jesus the great man of purpose.
- Jesus the great example.
- Jesus the great martyr.

1. The message of Paul was Jesus Christ, *His Person as the Son of God*, who was made unto us “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (see note—1 Cor.1:30-31 for discussion).

2. The message of Paul was Jesus Christ *crucified*. Paul declares, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2). This is an emphatic, forceful statement:

- ⇒ The thrust of Paul’s preaching was the death of Jesus Christ.
- ⇒ The theme of Paul’s preaching was the death of Jesus Christ.
- ⇒ The message of Paul’s preaching was the death of Jesus Christ.
- ⇒ The principle of Paul’s preaching was the death of Jesus Christ.
- ⇒ The heart of Paul’s preaching was the death of Jesus Christ.

Paul concentrated on the death of Jesus Christ. The reason is clearly seen when we look at what Scripture says about the subject. (Also see *Jesus Christ, Death—Master Subject Index* for more discussion.)

- ⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are cleansed and freed from all sin.

“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mt.26:28).

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn.1:29).

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:3).

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb.9:22).

“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb.9:26).

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb.9:28).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 Jn.3:5).

- ⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are accepted and reconciled to God and have peace with God.

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:6-7).

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).

- ⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are justified.

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:9).

- ⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are eternally redeemed.

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Ro.3:24-25).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col.1:14).

**“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:5-6).**

**“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb.9:12).**

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers” (1 Pt.1:18).**

**“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev.5:9).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are delivered from death.

**“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:9-10).**

**“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb.2:9).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are delivered from condemnation.

**“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Ro.8:34).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are delivered from the curse of the law, that is, from death and separation from God.

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).**

**“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal.4:4-5).**

**“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col.2:14-15).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are delivered from the judgment and wrath to come.

**“And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Th.1:10).**

**“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him” (1 Th.5:9-10).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are delivered from this present evil (corruptible and dying) world.

**“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal.1:4).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that Satan’s power over death and the world is broken and destroyed.

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).**

**“And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev.12:11).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are healed.

**“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Is.53:5).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are given all things.

**“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Ro.8:32).**

## 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that those without strength are saved.

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

**“And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?” (1 Cor.8:11).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that the ungodly are saved.

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that sinners are saved.

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that the enemies of God are saved.

**“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:10).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that the unjust are saved.

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that all men are drawn to Christ.

**“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (Jn.12:32).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we have access into the holy presence of God.

**“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh” (Heb.10:19-20).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that the great love of God is revealed to us.

**“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are freed from a self-centered life and live for Christ.

**“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:10-11).**

**“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:15).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (1 Pt.4:1).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are enabled to live unto righteousness.

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

## 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are taught to love and sacrifice our lives for others.

**“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

**“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that our *consciences* are genuinely cleared so that we can serve God and bear fruit.

**“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).**

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

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we know the power of God.

**“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor.1:18).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are enabled to purge out the old sins.

**“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor.5:7).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are reconciled to men.

**“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us....And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby....For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph.2:13-14, 16, 18).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that Jesus Christ gained the right to be exalted as the Lord of the dead and the living.

**“For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Ro.14:9).**

**“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Ph.2:8-11).**

**“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:3).**

**“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb.12:2).**

⇒ It is by the death of Jesus Christ that the church of God was purchased.

**“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).**

**“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph.5:25).**

**3** (2:3) **Preaching—Ministers:** sound preaching is proclaimed with a great sense of inadequacy. There are probably four reasons why Paul felt so inadequate.

1. Paul's personal appearance was apparently not impressive, not to the Corinthians. Paul says that he was weak in body (2 Cor.10:10; 11:6), and that he suffered some physical infirmity (Gal.4:14; 6:11). This should not matter to a congregation of God's people, but it did to the Corinthians. Some among the Corinthians were more interested in the charisma, worldly ability, and preaching skills of a pastor than in his depth and knowledge of the Lord. Unfortunately, this seems to have been the emphasis among many people of the Corinthian church.

2. Paul may have been a small framed man and a man with the knowledge, gifts, and voice geared more to teaching than to preaching. When looking at the whole of Paul's life and what is said about him, this seems to be the case. However, the point cannot and should not be pushed. If the facts are accurate, then Paul would have sensed a deep inadequacy before the Corinthians because of their stress upon eloquence and charisma in speakers (1 Cor.2:4; 2 Cor.10:10; 11:6).

3. When Paul came into Corinth he was sensing *weakness* in the ministry, a great personal inadequacy. In the four cities where he had ministered prior to Corinth, he had faced great trouble in the ministry. In Philippi he had seen a promising beginning smashed by the Judaizers or religionists. Similar happenings occurred at Thessalonica and at Berea. And in the city from which he had just come, Athens, Paul experienced what some say was a failure. Athens was a great intellectual center, full of philosophers bristling about with the latest philosophies and world news. Paul had attempted to meet them on their own philosophic grounds. He had reduced Christianity to philosophic terms. He had tried to speak to them in the wisdom of the world, using their own terms and quoting their own authorities (Acts 17:22-31). His philosophical approach apparently failed to reach many for Christ (Acts 17:32-34). Thus, it seems that somewhere along the road, travelling between Athens and Corinth, Paul determined that forever after he would preach Christ and Christ alone, and he would preach in the simplest of words. He would never again wrap up the story of Jesus in the words of human wisdom and flowery speech.

4. Unquestionably, Paul sensed a spiritual inadequacy and unworthiness in serving the Lord. This is seen throughout his ministry. He knew that his sufficiency was in the Lord and in the Lord alone. He knew that whatever was done had to be done by the power of God's Spirit if it was to have lasting value. He knew that if anything was attempted in his own strength, it would fail and not last. Therefore, what Paul is describing is his *attitude*, his *state of mind*, which characterized his whole ministry. When he approached a person or a people to minister to them, he ministered to them in personal weakness and fear before the Lord, even to the point of trembling. He sensed a hesitancy, a nervousness, a tension, a trembling apprehension—all arising from a deep sense of inadequacy and of the eminent importance of the work.

**Thought 1.** No man should ever stand before a people in his own strength, stand before them depending upon...

- his appearance
- his charisma
- his ability
- his wisdom
- his novel ideas

The minister of God must know this: he cannot spiritually convert and change people. No person can deliver men from death and give them life that is both abundant and eternal. Only God can do that; therefore, the minister of God must live before God in weakness and in fear and trembling—always depending upon God's Spirit to equip him for proclaiming the gospel of God. God alone can give life and righteousness; God alone can bear the permanent fruit of life and true righteousness.

**“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor.9:27).**

**“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” (1 Cor.15:9).**

**“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph.3:7-8).**

**“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim.1:15).**

**4** (2:4) **Preaching—Ministers:** sound preaching is not persuasive words, but a demonstration of the Spirit and power. Several points need to be closely observed.

1. Note the words *speech* and *preaching*. A distinction is being made between daily speech or conversation and preaching. Paul's daily conversations focused upon Jesus Christ just as his preaching did. He is saying what he has already stressed: he was determined not to know anything among people save “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

**Thought 1.** What a dynamic example for us! Our lives and conversation should focus upon Jesus Christ—every day, all day long. When possible and *whenever opportunity can be made*, the theme of our conversation should be Jesus Christ and Him crucified...

- |             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| • at home   | • in preaching  |
| • at work   | • in teaching   |
| • at play   | • in discussing |
| • at school | • in sharing    |

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).**

**“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph.5:19).**

**“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col.4:6).**

**“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).**

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.1:13).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Dt.6:6-7).

“They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power” (Ps.145:11).

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Mal.3:16).

2. The word “enticing” (peithois) means persuasive, plausible. Paul’s witnessing and preaching was not based upon the enticing, persuasive, plausible arguments of man’s wisdom and philosophy.

3. The word “demonstration” (apodeixei) means to show forth with the most rigorous evidence and proof. The idea is that the evidence is presented so strongly that the truth is clearly seen.

4. The only way a person’s witness and preaching can be proclaimed so strongly is through the Holy Spirit and His power. The gospel of salvation can be convincing only when the Holy Spirit and His power demonstrates it.

**Thought 1.** Only the Holy Spirit can *convict*, *convince*, and *convert* a person to live for God. Only the Holy Spirit can impart life to a person. Therefore, the minister of God must surrender his life to the Spirit of God. He must be filled with the presence, fullness, and power of the Holy Spirit.

“And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (Jn.16:8-11).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us [the Holy Spirit]” (Eph.3:20).

“Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph.5:18).

**5** (2:5) **Preaching—Ministers, Purpose:** sound preaching leads to faith. Note a critical point: the wisdom of men cannot save man. Only the power of God can. It is of no value whatsoever for a man to know...

- that Jesus Christ really lived, that He was an historical person.
- that Jesus Christ is really the Savior, that he is truly the Son of God.
- that other religions and positions are not true.

A person’s salvation cannot stand in the human knowledge and wisdom of men. Human arguments and appeals may seem rational and logical, but they have no spiritual power. No man—no speech and no preaching—can convert a human soul and impart eternal life to it. Only God can do such a thing. Therefore, the minister of God must speak and preach *under* the influence and power of God’s Spirit.

**Thought 1.** *Anything short of God’s Spirit* places a person’s faith in the knowledge and wisdom of men. The crying need is for God’s people to be controlled by God’s Spirit so that God can demonstrate His power through them to a lost and dying world.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

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|---|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1 God's wisdom is only for those who seek to be perfect before God</b></p> <p><b>2 God's wisdom is not the wisdom of this world &amp; its leaders</b></p> <p><b>3 God's wisdom is the wisdom of God Himself</b></p> <p>a. The wisdom of God is a mystery<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p>b. The leaders of the world do not know the wisdom of God</p> <p>1) Proof 1: They crucified Jesus</p> <p>2) Proof 2: They have never seen nor heard the truth—it has never entered their hearts</p> | <p><b>E. Answer Four: God's Revealed Wisdom, 2:6-13</b></p> <p>6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:</p> <p>7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:</p> <p>8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.</p> <p>9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for</p> | <p>them that love him.</p> <p>10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.</p> <p>11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.</p> <p>12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.</p> <p>13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.</p> | <p><b>4 God's wisdom is revealed only by God's Spirit</b></p> <p>a. Only God's Spirit knows the wisdom &amp; things of God</p> <p>b. God's wisdom is revealed to believers</p> <p>c. God's wisdom is the message taught by the Spirit</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**E. Answer Four: God's Revealed Wisdom, 2:6-13**

(2:6-13) **Introduction:** one of the greatest causes of division is pride, acting superior. Pride is always a serious offense. It tends to categorize people and downgrade them, affecting their initiative and growth. It can eventually doom a person or a whole class of people into slavery. Pride, arrogance, superiority, thinking too highly of oneself—no form or shape of self-centeredness has any part in God's church. Yet, an intellectual pride had become deeply rooted in the Corinthian church. And pride—the wisdom of the world—was about to rip the church apart. The fourth answer to division is God's revealed wisdom.

1. God's wisdom is only for those who seek to be perfect before God (v.6).
2. God's wisdom is not the wisdom of this world and its leaders (v.6).
3. God's wisdom is the wisdom of God Himself (v.7-9).
4. God's wisdom is revealed only by God's Spirit (v.10-13).

(2:6-13) **Another Outline:** Knowing God's Revealed Wisdom.

1. What wisdom is (v.6).
  - a. Not the wisdom of the world.
  - b. The wisdom of God (1:30) (v.7).
2. Who knows wisdom (v.8).
  - a. Not rulers of the world.
  - b. Those who love God (v.9).
3. How one receives wisdom (v.10).
  - a. By revelation.
  - b. By receiving the Spirit of God (v.12).
  - c. By the taught or preached Word (v.13).
4. Who receives wisdom (v.14-16).
  - a. Not the natural man.
  - b. The spiritual man (v.14-16).

**1** (2:6) **God, Wisdom of—Gospel:** God's wisdom is only for those who seek to be perfect before God. Paul clearly says that he spoke "wisdom among them who are perfect." By "perfect" he means those who are concerned...

- about being perfect and acceptable to God.
- about being destined for perfection in heaven.

The word "perfect" (teleiois) means finished, complete. It means fully developed, grown, mature. It means to reach one's end. The person who *longs for heaven and seeks to reach* his end by being perfect before God is the person who focuses his life upon the wisdom of God. He is the only person who is interested in God and His wisdom. He is the person who speaks, proclaims, and talks about the wisdom of God. Men of the world have little if any interest in God and His wisdom. Their desire is to live and walk as they please, not to live and walk in the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God is *foolishness to them that perish*, but to us who seek to be perfect (the saved) it is the power of God.

**"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to**

nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Cor.1:18-21).

"Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1 Cor.14:20).

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed" (Ro.1:16-17).

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph.4:13-14).

**2** (2:6) **God, Wisdom of—World, Wisdom of:** God's wisdom is not the wisdom of this world and its leaders. The word "princes" refers to all the leaders of the world: rulers, scientists, philosophers, educators, judges, executives, and religionists. It refers to anyone with influence, anyone who thinks about the world and life and who draws serious conclusions about the purpose, meaning, and significance of things. (See note, *World, Wisdom*—1 Cor.1:19-20 for more discussion.)

1. What is the wisdom of the world and of its princes? The world's wisdom includes *many* approaches to finding the truth and meaning of life, many approaches to solving the terrible and devastating problems of evil and death in the world. A quick glance at the life-styles, religions, philosophies, and psychologies of life immediately show the wisdom of the world. However, the wisdom of the world and of its leaders boil down to two primary positions.

- a. The wisdom of the world says there is no God; He does not exist. Way back in time, as far back as the mind can go, *some thing*—element, molecule, atom, or gas—appeared.
- ⇒ From where?
  - ⇒ By what force?
  - ⇒ Under what conditions?

There was nothing—no place, no force, no conditions existing. The first *something* just appeared *out of nothing*, and from that first *something*, the worlds of the heavens and earth with their life forms evolved. Therefore, we find ourselves here upon earth, alive, having survived the struggle. Our task is to do our best to conquer all the forces of evil and to build the best world we can. Man's destiny is in his own hands.

- b. The wisdom of the world says God may exist, but He may not exist. We cannot know for sure. If He does exist, He is so distant and far away that men are left on their own. God has no concern about the world. Our task is to conquer the evil and negative forces of life through science, technology, education, and the religion of human effort. We are to use everything at our disposal and do the very best we can to conquer nature, disease, suffering, corruption, and death. We are to live a life that is as lawful and full as possible. If there happens to be a God, He would expect us to do this.

2. Note the word "world" (*aionos*). It means this age, this world that is passing on as fast as the wind which is here and gone ever so quickly. The wisdom of the world and of its leaders is here today and gone tomorrow. Man's ideas about God and truth fade and pass away almost as quickly as man himself does.

3. Note the word "nought." It means that the wisdom of the world's leaders are *coming to nought*—being brought to nothing. Their wisdom is as nothing, as non-existent—all their wisdom will fade away and cease to exist.

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Ro.1:22).

"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (1 Cor.1:19).

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought" (1 Cor.2:6).

"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain" (1 Cor.3:19-20).

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col.2:8).

"Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh" (Col.2:23).

"This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas.3:15).

"The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Is.29:14).

"For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jer.4:22).

"With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures. By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches....thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God" (Ezk.28:4-6).

**3** (2:7-9) **God, Wisdom of—Mystery—Man, Ignorance:** God's wisdom is the *wisdom of God Himself*. And note: God's wisdom is proclaimed in a mystery. This does not mean that God's wisdom is strange and mysterious, but rather that it involves facts that cannot be known by man, not by man's natural reason. God's wisdom has to be revealed; it is a mystery in that it can never be known unless God reveals it. No man can penetrate heaven to discover God and truth. If this material world is to know the spiritual world, then God, who is Spirit, has to reveal Himself and His spiritual world.

1. What is the wisdom of God? What is the wisdom preached by Paul, the wisdom that is to be spoken among those who are concerned with being perfect? It is the gospel of God, the good news concerning Christ and Him crucified.

The gospel tells how God went about reconciling the world to Himself and how man is to be reconciled to God. The gospel shows how wise God has been in dealing with man and his world. Therefore, the gospel—Christ and Him cruci-

fied—is the wisdom and mystery of God. It is the very wisdom which every man must possess if he wishes to know God and to live with God throughout eternity. (See note, *Jesus Christ, Cross*—1 Cor.1:19-20 for more discussion.)

2. The leaders of the world do not know the wisdom of God. They do not understand...
  - the origin of God and life.
  - the nature of God and life (the underlying reason why life is as it is).
  - the end or destiny of God and life.

The world and its leaders are at a loss to understand where we have come from, why we are here, and where we are going. There are two clear proofs of this fact.

- a. If the leaders had known the wisdom of God they would not have crucified “*THE LORD OF GLORY.*” Jesus Christ is the Lord of Glory, God Himself. He came to earth to save men, and He came not to save them for only seventy short years, but to save them eternally. Yet the leaders rejected and crucified Him. This they would not have done if they had known the wisdom of God.

**Thought 1.** The leaders in the day of Christ rejected Him. Their rejection symbolizes exactly what most leaders have done and always will do: reject Him. The world stands guilty before God—guilty of rejecting His wisdom (cp. Ro.3:9-19).

- b. The leaders of the world have never seen nor heard the truth: the truth has never even entered their heart. How do we know this? Because the truth of God is “the thing which God has prepared for them that love Him” (v.9). The truth and wisdom of God is the riches of His glory and grace—which He sent into the world through Christ—the most glorious wealth and benefits imaginable. But the wealth and gifts of God are found only in Christ Jesus. He came to earth to reveal the truth about man and his world. What is that truth? Man and his world had been created in perfection, but man has corrupted himself and his world through...
  - sin
  - deception
  - theft
  - neglect
  - lies
  - killing
  - immorality
  - indulgence
  - power
  - selfishness

Therefore, man has to repent and turn back to God if he wishes to live with God. But note how men received the wisdom and truth of God. They rejected and crucified Christ.

⇒ Their eyes could not *see the spiritual world.*

⇒ Their ears could not *hear the spiritual truth.*

⇒ Their hearts could not *conceive the spiritual truth*, the glory of the things God has prepared for them that love Him.

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Mt.13:15).

“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” (Jn.1:10).

“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” (Jn.4:10).

“Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also” (Jn.8:19).

“The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes” (Jn.9:30).

“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” (Jn.14:9).

## DEEPER STUDY # 1

(2:7) **Mystery** (musterion): a fact or truth that man is unable to discover by himself; a fact or truth that has to be revealed to man. It is a fact or truth that has been hidden and kept secret by God until it was time for it to be revealed. It does not mean something hard to understand or something strange and mysterious as a magical trick. It does not mean that there is something mysterious about God. It means some fact or truth...

- that is known only by God.
- that God reveals to man because He loves man and man desperately needs to know the truth.

There are several important mysteries revealed in the Bible.

1. The mystery of the gospel, that is, God’s wisdom which is *Christ crucified.*

“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor.1:23-24).

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory” (1 Cor.2:7).

**“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (Eph.6:19).**

2. The mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven. (See note—Mt.13:10-11; cp. Mt.13:1-52.)
3. The mystery of Israel’s blindness and restoration.

**“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (Ro.11:25-27).**

4. The mystery of the believers’ resurrection, which will enable them to live an incorruptible life with God.

**“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor.15:51-52).**

**“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Th.4:13-18).**

5. The mystery of God’s will: that He is to gather together and unify all things in Christ—unify them in a spirit of peace and harmony—all things, both visible and invisible.

**“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Eph.1:9-10).**

6. The mystery of the church and of God’s universal love: that both Jew and Gentile are included in the church.

**“(Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Eph.3:4-6; cp. v.7-12).**

**“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Ro.16:25).**

7. The mystery of the church: that the church is the bride and body of Christ.

**“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph.5:30-32; cp. v.22-33).**

8. The mystery of the indwelling Christ, of “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

**“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col.1:26-27).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

9. The mystery of godliness or of Christ; of God coming to earth in human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.

**“The acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and [even] of Christ....For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col.2:2, 9).**

**“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim.3:16).**

**“Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds” (Col.4:3).**

**“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor.5:19).**

10. The mystery of iniquity and of sin in the world and of man's disobedience to God.

**"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [hinders] will let [hinder], until he be taken out of the way" (2 Th.2:7).**

**"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph.2:2).**

11. The mystery of the seven stars or local churches and pastors.

**"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels [messengers, pastors] of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" (Rev.1:20).**

12. The mystery of Babylon in the end time.

**"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH....And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns" (Rev.17:5, 7).**

**4** (2:10-13) **God, Wisdom of—Spiritual Ignorance—Spiritual Dullness:** God's wisdom is revealed only by God's Spirit. Note three points.

1. Only God's Spirit knows the wisdom and things of God. Human reason can never discover God and the things of God. This is clearly seen by the man who is both honest and thinking.

⇒ No person knows what is really going on within a man except the man's own spirit. So it is with God. No man really knows God and the things of God except the Spirit of God.

Therefore, the world does not know God nor the things of God, for they must be *revealed*. They cannot be seen, heard, or conceived by the heart of man (v.9). They are only revealed by God's Spirit.

**Thought 1.** The one thing that man must always remember is this: he cannot penetrate the spiritual world. No person has ever seen God, no matter what some people may claim. If we are to ever know the spiritual world and dimension of being, God has to reveal Himself. This He did once-for-all in Christ Jesus, His *only* beloved Son.

**"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (Jn.1:18).**

**"And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape" (Jn.5:37).**

**"Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting" (1 Tim.6:16).**

**"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us" (1 Jn.4:12).**

2. God's wisdom (God and the things of God) is revealed to believers. This is the very reason God has given His Spirit to believers: that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

a. Only the Holy Spirit knows the things of God (1 Cor.2:11).

b. Only the man who receives Christ, who is born again by the Spirit of God, is quickened to understand spiritual things.

**"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God....That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn.3:3, 6).**

**"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you" (Jn.16:13-15).**

**"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God....But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor.2:12, 15-16).**

- c. Only the believer who *minds* spiritual things can understand the mature, deep things of God.

**"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Ro.8:5-7).**

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor.2:9-10).

“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man” (1 Cor.2:15).

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (1 Cor.3:1-2).

d. The natural man (any man not reborn by the Spirit of God) cannot know the things of God.

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor.2:7-8).

“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Cor.2:11).

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor.2:14).

“Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word” (Jn.8:43).

“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God” (Ro.3:11).

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Ro.10:3).

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).

“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim.3:7).

“They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course” (Ps.82:5).

“We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men” (Is.59:10).

“For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces” (Amos 3:10).

3. God’s wisdom is the message taught by the Holy Spirit. The message, God’s glorious wisdom and gospel, is not a message of man’s wisdom. God’s wisdom and gospel is the message of God’s Spirit Himself. The Holy Spirit teaches the wisdom and gospel of God. Note that the verse ends with the word “spiritual.” There is no object. This means a glorious thing: the Holy Spirit...

- combines spiritual things with spiritual people.
- combines spiritual things with spiritual things.

**Thought 1.** The Holy Spirit guides and directs us, teaching us to compare and combine spiritual things with spiritual things. We use the Word of God to interpret the Word of God. When we seek and read the instructions of God and do not understand something, we use other Scripture references and passages in the Word to interpret what is not clear. The Holy Spirit keeps us from all error as we follow His leadership.

“For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say” (Lk.12:12).

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn.14:26).

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor.2:13).

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).

“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1 Jn.3:24).

“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” (1 Jn.4:13).

“It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth” (1 Jn.5:6).

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1 The natural man</b><br/> a. He does not receive the things of the Spirit<br/> b. He considers them foolishness<br/> c. He is incapable—spiritually</p> <p><b>2 The spiritual man</b><br/> a. He discerns all things<br/> b. He is not understood by the natural man<br/> c. Reason: He has the mind, the spirit of Christ</p> | <p><b>F. Answer Five: Understanding the Spiritual Stages of Man, 2:14-3:4</b></p> <p>14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.</p> <p>15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.</p> <p>16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.</p> | <p><b>CHAPTER 3</b></p> <p>And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.</p> <p>2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.</p> <p>3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?</p> <p>4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?</p> | <p><b>3 The carnal man<sup>psi</sup></b><br/> a. He is not spiritual (mature); he is as a babe in Christ<br/> b. He has to be fed with milk, not the meat of the Word<br/> c. He is characterized by division<br/> 1) Envying &amp; strife<br/> 2) Acting as a mere man<br/> 3) Professing to be a follower of mere men—of earthly parties</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**F. Answer Five: Understanding the Spiritual Stages of Man, 2:14-3:4**

(2:14-3:4) **Introduction:** divisiveness is a terrible problem, one of the most damaging and devastating problems existing in the world. Divisiveness leads to anger, fights, divorce, murder, and war. One of the answers to solving divisiveness is to see ourselves as God sees us. When God looks at a person, He sees that person in one of three classifications.

1. The natural man (v.14).
2. The spiritual man (v.15-16).
3. The carnal man (Ch.3, v.1-4).

**1** (2:14) **Natural Man—Man, Spiritual Stages of:** there is the natural man or what the Greek calls the *psuchikos* man. The word “natural” (*psuchikos*) means a man who has physical life or who is living. The root word is *soul* (*psuche*), which simply means the life of a man, the consciousness, the breath, the energy, the being of a man. The *soul* is the animal life of a man. Men and animals are *breathing* and *conscious* beings. They are living souls. This is clearly pointed out in the creation of animal life. When God was creating the world and He had finished the creation of vegetation, He said:

“Let the waters bring forth abundantly ‘living souls’ [hephesh, Hebrew] that hath life” (Gen.1:20).

What God was saying is that the life He was then creating was different from the vegetation He had just created. The things that were now being created were “*living souls*,” things that breathe and possess consciousness—things that have “souls,” life, and consciousness within their bodies.

The point is this: the natural man is a *living soul*, an animal soul; he is a man who is living on this earth, just as an animal. However, *that is all he is doing*. He is living *in the flesh* only. He has gotten no further than the flesh, no further than his animal life. He has never progressed to the level of the spiritual. His mind and life, energy and effort are all focused upon...

- the physical
- the material
- the world
- the flesh
- the natural
- the human
- what can be seen
- what can be touched
- what can be heard
- what can be tasted
- what can be felt
- what can be possessed

There is another way to say the same thing which is extremely helpful. The natural man is the *Adamic man*, the man who has fallen from the perfection of his creation. The natural man is...

- the fallen and depraved man.
- the sinful and corrupt man.
- the aging and deteriorating man.
- the dying and doomed man.

The natural man is the morally corrupt man, the man whose spirit is dead to God. He is a man with a human nature, and the human nature is all he has. His nature is human nature *apart* from God. It is a Christless human nature, a nature that will not believe and obey and live for Christ. It is life lived without the presence and influence of Jesus Christ.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).

“This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (Jas.3:15).

“These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit” (Jude 19).

Three things are said about the natural man.

1. The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. The phrase “receive not” (dechetai) means that spiritual things are not welcomed as a guest, are not accepted. It means to refuse and reject. Spiritual things are of little if any concern to the natural man, for his mind is primarily upon this world and upon...

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| • bigger and better things  | • ambition and promotion |
| • acquiring more and more   | • socials and parties    |
| • desire and feelings       | • play and recreation    |
| • wants and cravings        | • comfort and ease       |
| • position and wealth       | • drinking and eating    |
| • attention and recognition | • dress and appearance   |

The natural man’s life and mind are spent focusing upon the natural, upon this world and not upon the spiritual; therefore, in God’s eyes he is classified as *the natural man*. His heart welcomes only the world; it is closed to God. God is not welcomed into his life. Therefore, he does not receive the things of the Spirit of God.

**“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Ro.8:7).**

**“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind” (Eph.4:17).**

**“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col.1:21).**

**“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled” (Tit.1:15).**

2. The natural man considers the things of God foolishness. The word “foolishness” (moria) means dull, absurd, distasteful. Remember the natural man lives primarily for the animal part of his nature: he lives primarily for what...

- looks good
- feels good
- tastes good
- sounds good

He lives primarily for his animal senses, primarily for what turns him on. It may be position, money, wealth, possessions, recognition, fame, influence, power, family, house, cars, sex, food, dress, popularity—an endless number of worldly and material things could be listed—anything that attracts and appeals to the animal nature within us as human beings. The man who gives in to these instincts and urges is the person who lives as the natural man. To him the things of God are secondary, of less importance. Why? Because he cannot see, feel, taste, hear, or prove spiritual things—not with his physical senses. Therefore, to his mind, it is utterly foolish to put spiritual things first.

**“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor.1:23-24).**

**“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (1 Cor.1:27).**

3. The natural man *cannot* know spiritual things. Note the word *cannot*. It is not only that the natural man will not and does not know spiritual things, but he *cannot* know them. He is incapable, unable, helpless to know them. He cannot discern spiritual things...

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| • their truth    | • their worth      |
| • their goodness | • their excellence |
| • their reality  | • their wealth     |
| • their virtue   | • their majesty    |
| • their hope     | • their glory      |

Why can the natural man not know spiritual things? Very simply, because they are spiritually discerned. The word “discerned” (anakrinetai) means investigated, judged, scrutinized, examined, estimated. Spiritual things have to be discerned by a *living spirit*, not by a natural man, not by a man who is primarily living by his animal nature. Spiritual things can be discerned only by a spirit that is living. Spiritual things can be...

- investigated only by a living spirit
- judged only by a living spirit
- examined only by a living spirit
- estimated and valued only by a living spirit

**“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Mt.6:23).**

**“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Ro.10:3).**

**“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).**

**“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).**

**“Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God” (Jer.5:4).**

**“And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Mic.4:2).**

**2** (2:15-16) **Spiritual Man—Man, Spiritual Stages:** there is the spiritual man or what the Greek calls the *pneumatikos* man. The word “spirit” (pneuma) is the word used for the Holy Spirit which means that the spiritual man is a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. A man is spiritual because the Holy Spirit dwells *in* him. He is not spiritual because he...

- has received some superior, human gift.
- has received some unusual ability.
- has become more intelligent than before.
- has become greater than he was before.
- has become better than he was before.

A man becomes spiritual because he has received the Spirit of God and is living under the influence of the Spirit of God. When man receives Christ Jesus as his Savior, Scripture says...

- that he is born again by the Spirit of God.

**“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn.3:5-6; cp. 1 Cor.3:16; 6:19).**

**“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pt.1:23).**

- that he minds the things of God, not the things of the flesh.

**“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:5-6).**

- that he is in the Spirit and that the Spirit dwells in him.

**“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you” (Ro.8:9).**

**“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).**

- that the Spirit imparts life to him.

**“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Ro.8:10).**

- that the Spirit quickens his mortal body.

**“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11; cp.1 Pt.3:18).**

**“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn.6:63).**

- that he can kill the sinful deeds of his body only by the Spirit.

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).**

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).**

- that the presence of the Spirit’s leadership in the man’s life proves that he is a child of God.

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).**

**“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:6).**

**“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1 Jn.3:24).**

**“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” (1 Jn.4:13).**

**“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth” (1 Jn.5:6).**

Three things are said about the spiritual man.

1. The spiritual man judges or discerns all things. The word judges means the very same thing as discern in the former verse. The man who believes in Jesus Christ experiences a most wonderful thing:

⇒ The Spirit of God enters and dwells within his body converting his body into a holy temple for God's presence.

**"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Ro.8:9).**

**"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor.3:16).**

**"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor.6:19).**

⇒ The man actually partakes of the divine nature of God and becomes a new creature, a new man.

**"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pt.1:4).**

**"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph.4:24).**

**"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col.3:10).**

The point is this: the man who is truly spiritual lives under the control of God's Spirit. God's Spirit lives within his body. Therefore, it is the *Holy Spirit of God* who *reveals the truth of spiritual things to the man*. This is critical to note: the ability to discern is not the man's; it is the Holy Spirit within the man.

**Thought 1.** There is no room for super-spirituality in God's church, for all that we have is of God; it is not of us.

2. The spiritual man is not understood by the natural man. Note how Scripture words this point: the spiritual man is "judged of no man" (v.15). This statement has been abused and misused to such a degree that some men have become not only laughingstocks, but stumbling blocks to the innocent. This is tragic, for the meaning is perfectly clear when *kept in the context* of this passage.

"No man" means the natural man, the man just talked about. The natural man has little concern and little knowledge of Christ and God; therefore, there is no human way he can understand the spiritual man. A man knows only that which he experiences and studies: common sense and honesty tell us this. There is no way a man can judge spiritual things unless he *experiences and studies* spiritual things. Therefore, the natural man cannot understand why any person would want to put his efforts into and waste his time upon matters that are "other-worldly." After all, we live in this world, not the other world, not yet. Hence, the natural man feels that our primary concern should be upon this world (this is true even with religionists). The natural man might argue that a little thought about spiritual things is acceptable, but not the focusing of a person's whole life. The point is that the natural man just does not understand the spiritual man. To him the spiritual man is a fool for passing up this world and all the *good things* this world has to offer.

3. The spiritual man has the "*mind of Christ*." This is the reason the believer can discern spiritual things: he has the "*mind of Christ*." This does not mean that the spiritual man knows all there is to know about Christ, but it means that his mind is focused upon God and the things of God just as the mind of Christ was. The Spirit of God pulls, draws, and stirs the mind of the genuine believer to spiritual things.

**"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Ph.2:5-8).**

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Lk.9:23-24).**

**"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Ro.8:5-6).**

**3** (3:1-4) **Carnal—Man, Spiritual Stages:** there is the carnal man (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Carnal*—1 Cor.3:1-4 for the meaning of the word carnal). Three things are said about the carnal man.

1. The carnal man is not spiritually mature; he is as a babe in Christ. Note that the carnal man is a true believer. He is a babe in Christ, but he is deformed just like a deformed baby. He should be more mature, more developed spiritually, but he has not grown in Christ. The carnal man does not know Christ and the things of God like he should. His mind and behavior are not focused upon Christ like they should be. He has been a believer for years, but he knows little about Christ and God.

2. The carnal man has to be fed with milk and not the meat of the Word. This does not mean there are two sets of teachings, nor that there are two sets of beliefs, one for the learned believer and another for the unlearned. The same gospel is preached to all, and the same Word is studied by all; but some have paid attention, studied, prayed, and served Christ more than others. Therefore, they naturally know more about God's Word, and know more about what it means to pray and walk in Christ. The spiritual believer knows and experiences more of the depth of spiritual things than the carnal believer, much more. Therefore, the carnal believer has to be fed the very basics and not the depths of God's Word.

**Thought 1.** The same is true with any endeavor of man. The more a person experiences and studies a field, the more he knows his field. Everyone either feeds on the “milk” or the “meat” of his field or endeavor.

“And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it” (Mk.4:33).

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (Jn.16:12).

“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (1 Cor.3:2).

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor.9:22).

“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men” (1 Cor.14:20).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Heb.5:12).

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pt.2:2).

3. The carnal man is characterized by division. Division is striking proof that a man or a people are carnal, whether the division be in a church or in a family.

a. Carnality is clearly seen in envying and strife. Envy leads to jealousy, and jealousy leads to division. When people become jealous of one another, they become divided and begin to strive or argue and wrangle with one another. The envy may be caused by...

- some position
- some recognition
- some promotion
- some possession
- some gift
- some wealth
- some attention
- some person

The list could go on and on, but the point is well understood. Envy leads to differences and strife, and strife leads to division. Such behavior is carnal, of the flesh, and it does not belong in the church.

b. Carnality is seen when believers begin to walk and act like men of the world. Men in the world live for the world, so they want and struggle for all they can get for the least amount of effort...

- the best position
- the most money
- the coveted possession
- the highest honor
- the equal recognition

c. Carnality is seen when believers begin to follow men and form cliques (see outline and notes—1 Cor.1:10-16 for discussion).

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Ro.6:6).

“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Ro.8:7).

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind” (Eph.4:17).

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:22-24).

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Col.2:18).

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:9-10).

“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled” (Tit.1:15).

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pt.4:1-4).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(3:1-4) **Carnal—Flesh—Natural Man:** William Barclay points out that there are two different words used in this passage to describe the carnal man (v.1, 3). *The Letters to the Corinthians*. “The Daily Study Bible.” Philadelphia, PA: The

Westminster Press, 1954, p.33). The Corinthians are called “carnal” (sarkinoi, v.1) which means flesh. The ending “inos” means “to be made of.” Paul is saying that the Corinthians were human beings, made of flesh. Their problem was that they were living as though they were nothing but flesh. They were still living at the human level of life. They had never gotten beyond the affairs and material things of this life. They acted as though this world was all there was.

The word “carnal” (sarkikoi, v.3) is also used. The ending “ikos” means to be “characterized by.” Paul is saying that the Corinthians were not only “made of flesh” but characterized and “dominated by the flesh.” They were allowing the flesh and its passions to captivate and control their behavior. They were living on the level of the flesh, dominated by it.

The word “flesh” is used to describe two different men.

1. There is the natural or Adamic man. (See note—1 Cor.2:14.)
2. There is the carnal or fleshly man. The carnal man follows the lower part of his nature. He follows the unregulated urges that are prone to sin and to center attention upon oneself. He lives a life that is opposed to God (Ro.4:14, 18). A carnal life refers to far more than just bodily or sexual sins. Gal.5:19-21 shows this. Bodily and sexual sins are included, but so are sins of the spirit such as greed, selfishness, hatred, pride, and idolatry. It also includes that part of man that subjects a person to a legal and enslaving spirit, a spirit that subjects him to rituals, ceremonies, rules, and regulations (Gal.3:3; 4:9). Simply stated, the man who is carnal is a man who lives after the flesh. He is a man who allows his lower nature, the worst part of his being, to influence and dominate his life.

The Bible says several things about the flesh.

1. The flesh has no good thing about it; it is opposed to doing good.

**“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Ro.7:18).**

2. The man who is *in the flesh* is under the influence of the flesh and cannot please God.

**“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Ro.8:8).**

3. The man who has the spirit of Christ is removed from being *in and under* the influence of the flesh. Such a man is said to be a transformed man, a new man—even a new creation.

**“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).**

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).**

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

**“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:22-24).**

4. The transformed man, however, can walk after the flesh—at least for a season. Such a man is said to be a carnal believer.

**“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death....That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Ro.8:2, 4-7).**

**“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?” (1 Cor.3:3-4).**

**“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (1 Cor.11:30-32).**

5. The regenerate man is strongly urged to walk “in the spirit.” Such a man is said to be a spiritual believer. (See note, *Spiritual Man*—1 Cor.2:15-16.)

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another” (Gal.5:16-26).**

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|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 Ministers are servants</b><br/> a. Are instruments of God<br/> b. Can help only as God gifts</p> <p><b>2 Ministers are nothing in comparison to God</b><br/> a. One plants—one waters</p> | <p><b>G. Answer Six: Seeing Who Ministers Really Are, 3:5-9</b></p> <p>5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?<br/> 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.</p> | <p>7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.<br/> 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.<br/> 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.</p> | <p>b. God alone causes growth &amp; is worthy of being followed</p> <p><b>3 Ministers are one—equal in God's eyes</b><br/> a. Both he who plants &amp; he who waters<br/> b. Each is personally responsible</p> <p><b>4 Ministers are co-workers with God</b><br/> a. To work for God<br/> b. To cultivate the field</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**G. Answer Six: Seeing Who Ministers Really Are, 3:5-9**

(3:5-9) **Introduction:** the Corinthian church was severely divided. The division focused primarily upon the former preachers of the church: Peter, Paul, and Apollos. The ministers themselves were not involved; it was the carnal believers in the church causing the problem. Some liked Peter and his preaching better and felt he was doing more for the Lord; others felt the same about Paul and Apollos.

The issue of which preacher was and is best for a church is always a critical issue. The reason is simply understood: every believer has his *favorite minister*, the minister who led him to the Lord or to a deeper commitment, or ministered to him and his family, or who really spoke to his heart when he preached. A minister who becomes deeply involved in a person's life is bound to mean a great deal to that person. This needs to be recognized; however, something else needs to be understood as well. Believers must not...

- pit one minister against another.
- exalt one minister over another.
- focus upon one minister's gifts and ignore the gifts of others.
- talk about and emphasize one minister over another.
- favor one minister over another.
- form a clique around a minister.

This had happened to the Corinthian church. Apparently they were trying to determine what kind of minister was best for them and their church. The discussions had flowed over into the homes and social gatherings, and the opinions had become so strong that cliques were actually forming and arguing against each other.

This passage gives the sixth answer to division within a church: seeing who ministers really are. This is a forceful message, a message that must be understood by both the church and its believers.

1. Ministers are servants (v.5).
2. Ministers are nothing in comparison to God (v.6-7).
3. Ministers are one—equal in God's eyes (v.8).
4. Ministers are co-workers with God (v.9).

**1** (3:5) **Ministers:** ministers of God are servants. The word "ministers" (diakonoi) means a servant, an attendant, or a waiter on tables. The stress is upon the lowly status of the service. Ministers are not *lords* over God's flock and church; they are the lowly servants. They are the servants of God and the servants of God's people. Two points of servanthood are stressed.

1. Ministers are only instruments of God. They are only the servants "by whom [or through whom] ye believe." To repeat, ministers are not the *lord* of people's lives. They are not the ones whom believers are to praise nor upon whom believers are to be focused. God is to be the focus of attention, word, and loyalty. No minister created the message of the gospel; God did. No minister saves the believer; God does. No minister leads a person to believe; God does. The minister of God is only the Lord's instrument and servant, not the Lord.

**"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (Jn.13:14).**

**"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (Jn.21:16).**

**"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers" (Ro.1:9).**

**"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim.1:12).**

**"Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles" (2 Tim.1:11).**

2. Ministers can help people *only* as God gifts them. The gifts of the ministry are not natural abilities and endowments. The gifts to proclaim the gospel and to minister to people are not of the preacher. They are spiritual gifts *given only*

by God, and the minister *can only serve effectively* when God gives him the gifts of His Spirit. Therefore, the man, the minister himself as a person, has nothing in which the people can glory. The gifts are of God and of God alone; therefore, the people are to focus their thoughts and praise upon God alone. (See notes, *Spiritual Gifts*—Ro.12:6-8; 1 Cor.12:8-11; Eph.4:11 for a discussion of the spiritual gifts.)

**“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey” (Mt.25:15).**

**“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith” (Ro.12:6).**

**“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor.4:7).**

**“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Cor.12:4).**

**“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph.4:11).**

**2** (3:6-7) **Ministers:** ministers of God are nothing in comparison to God (v.7). What does such a strong statement mean?

Simply this: no minister has any cause for glory, praise, honor, or recognition. There is no room, no reason for a minister to feel pride and self-satisfaction; no reason for a person or a people to idolize and follow a minister; no reason for a people to make a minister the cause of favoritism or of strife and division. Respect the minister, yes. Love him, yes. Esteem him ever so highly, yes; for the minister has an impossible task, the most difficult task upon earth. Consider any profession. If a man had to *speak at a conference* before one or two hundred of his professional peers, how much time would he take out of his weekly work schedule to prepare for his speaking engagement? What if he had to speak to the same group two times—three times—*all in the same week*? Just imagine! How much time would he have to take out of his regular duties to prepare? And not only that. What if the professional had to look after, care for, and minister to everyone of his professional peers of the conference—personally minister every time...

- one of them got sick and went to the hospital.
- one of their family members was hospitalized.
- a serious problem arose.
- counselling was needed.
- a major committee met.

And on top of this, the professional had to manage the conference, its committees, schedules, finances, building programs, whatever came up. And still more. He had to constantly be out visiting and enlisting new people to attend and join the conference.

Again, respect the minister of God. Love and care for him, for his call and task are impossible. But he is not to be idolized and followed as though he is the founder of your faith. A picture from farming shows exactly what our attitude toward ministers is to be. One minister of God planted the seed of God's Word in our lives. Another minister comes along and waters the seed. All the ministers that cross our paths contribute to our lives. They contribute either the seed of the gospel or the water of the Word. But note: it is God who gives the increase. No minister can make the seed grow. When dealing with growth, there is only one thing that makes anything grow:

- ⇒ energy
- ⇒ force
- ⇒ power

Growth is not caused by a man's hands. Spiritual growth is activated by God's energy, force, and power alone.

- ⇒ The minister who plants is nothing (v.7).
- ⇒ The minister who waters is nothing (v.7).
- ⇒ God who gives the increase is all (v.7).

Therefore, glorify and talk about God. Praise God and lift His name up, not the name of a minister. Whatever gifts the minister has are of God; and whatever planting and watering the minister did was by God's call and strength; and whatever growth was experienced was due to God. God alone is worthy to be followed; therefore, follow God, not a minister. Respect him and care for him and highly esteem him, for he labors abundantly for your sake. But honor and praise and follow God.

**“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.15:5-6).**

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th.1:11-12).**

**“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (Ps.29:2).**

**“O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together” (Ps.34:3).**

**“Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth” (Ps.57:5).**

**“Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders” (Ps.107:32).**

**“I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works” (Ps.145:5).**

**“O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth” (Is.25:1).**

**3** (3:8) **Ministers:** ministers are one; they are equal in God’s eyes. And they are to be seen *as one* and *equal* in the eyes of the church and its believers. Note two significant points.

1. Both the sower and the edifier, both he who plants and he who waters, are *emphatically said to be one*. All ministers are called...
  - by the same Lord.
  - to the same office: the office of minister.
  - to the same work: to serve God’s church.
  - to stand accountable before God and before God alone.

There is a spiritual unity between ministers. The work of the one who plants cannot be done without the work of the one who waters. Both are absolutely essential. They are not rivals, working against each other. They are planters and waterers, planting and watering lives for God. God called and uses them as He wills and He places them where He wants. If the church and its believers exalt or pit one minister against another, they are going against God’s purpose for His gospel and the church.

**“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5).**

**“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph.4:1-6).**

**“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:11-13).**

2. Each minister of God is personally responsible to God. Each man is to be rewarded for what he does, not for what another minister does. A man uses his own gifts; he does not try to use someone else’s gifts nor to be like someone else. God gave him specific gifts for special purposes, so he diligently labors to use his gifts as *God desires*. In fact, the minister is to be rewarded for how well he uses his gifts. Therefore, trying to be like another minister is not his task. His task is to be who God called him to be and to do as God gifts him to do.

Note: the minister shall be judged for his labor, nor for what men may term *success*.

**“He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt.25:22-23).**

**“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever” (1 Pt.4:11).**

**4** (3:9) **Ministers—Church—Spiritual Foundation:** ministers are co-workers with God. Three striking points are declared in this verse.

1. God is the source of all in the church. This is seen in the Greek text. God’s name comes first in this verse three different times:

- ⇒ “God’s fellow workers are we.”
- ⇒ “God’s husbandry are you.”
- ⇒ “God’s building are you.”

All is of God; God is all in all. He is the Source of all that concerns the church: the source of both its ministers and its people. Neither the ministers nor the people are to be exalted or praised above one another. God alone is worthy of our attention and thought, our glory and honor, our worship and praise, our service and ministry.

2. Ministers are co-workers, and they work together with God. They work with God, carrying out His will and doing what He wants done. Their concern is not what men think and want. Their mission is to serve right along by the side of God Himself.

**“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Mt.9:37-38).**

**“Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (Jn.4:35-36).**

**“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mk.16:20).**

## 1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-9

**“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).**

**“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building” (1 Cor.3:9).**

**“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor.6:1).**

**“So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us” (1 Th.2:8).**

**Thought 1.** Note that a *laborer* who does not labor is a paradox. A farmer who does not labor does not receive the reward at harvest time. There is nothing to receive.

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim.4:5).**

**“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Lk.12:48).**

3. The church is God’s field and building. The church is to bear fruit, and it is to make new additions to its structure. A field does not exist to lie unused. It exists to bear a harvest. The same is true of a building that is supposed to have additions added to it. The building will not have additions—not the kind of additions it should have—if it becomes unsafe for the contractor (minister) to work within its walls.

The church as a field must let the one who plants and the one who waters do their work or else...

- the field of the church lies useless to God.
- the building of the church lies unused for God.

**Thought 1.** Both ministers and believers are workers together with God. All have a part in God’s church and the crying need is for all to cooperate in building together.

**“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Mt.7:24-25).**

**“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).**

**“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph.2:19-22).**

**“Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim.6:19).**

**“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).**

**“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded” (1 Pt.2:6).**

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|---|--|--|--|
|   | <p><b>H. Answer Seven: Being a Wise Builder &amp; Laborer within the Church, 3:10-17</b></p>   | <p>shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.</p> |  |
| <p><b>1 There is the master builder &amp; the laborers</b></p>                                    | <p>10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth there on. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.</p> | <p>14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.</p>                                | <p>a. The day of inspection is sure</p>  |
| <p><b>2 There is the warning: Let every believer take heed how he builds</b></p>                  | <p>11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.</p>  | <p>15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.</p>       | <p>b. Every man's work is to be tried—by fire</p>  |
| <p><b>3 There is the only foundation: Jesus Christ</b></p>  | <p>12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;</p>   | <p>16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?</p>                           | <p>c. The believer whose works survive will be rewarded</p>  |
| <p><b>4 There is the structure: There are two possible materials—permanent vs. perishable</b></p> | <p>13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day</p>   | <p>17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.</p>  | <p>d. The believer whose works are burned will suffer loss</p>   |
| <p><b>5 There is the day of inspection</b></p>  |  |  | <p><b>6 There is the building identified: The temple of God, that is, the church</b></p> <p><b>7 There is the seriousness of defilement: Destruction</b></p> |

**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**H. Answer Seven: Being a Wise Builder and Laborer within the Church, 3:10-17**

(3:10-17) **Introduction—Church:** this passage pictures the building of the church. This is clearly seen in that Paul has just declared to the local believers in Corinth, “Ye are God’s building” (v.9; cp. v.16).

The church in Corinth was in severe straits. There were some *troublemakers* and *opinionated* cliques in the church who were about to destroy the church. Because of this they were endangering their eternal destiny, and they desperately needed to realize this. One of the answers to a divided church is for every believer to be a *wise builder and laborer within the church*.

1. There is the master builder and the laborers (v.10).
2. There is the warning: let every believer take heed how he builds (v.10).
3. There is the only foundation: Jesus Christ (v.11).
4. There is the structure: there are two possible materials—permanent vs. perishable (v.12).
5. There is the day of inspection (v.13-15).
6. There is the building identified: the temple of God, that is, the church (v.16).
7. There is the seriousness of defilement: destruction (v.17).

**1** (3:10) **Church:** there is the master builder and the laborers. The word “masterbuilder” (archtektion) means the superintendent or architect of the building project. Paul says that he was the one who planned the church at Corinth. He was the one who laid the foundation, who began and superintended the founding of the church. However, note three things.

1. Paul was a master builder because of the *grace of God*, not because of any personal ability or merit. The word “grace” means far more than just being called to found a church; it means to be enabled, empowered, and equipped to do the job. It was God’s power, God’s gifts, God’s abilities that were given to Paul to do the job. Paul was only the instrument through which God built the church.

Now note a crucial factor: Paul was not talking about a building. He was talking about people. The church was not a building; the church was a body of people who truly believed in Jesus Christ. God gave Paul the grace—the strength, power, and ability—to reach people for Jesus Christ and to *assemble them together* into a body to worship God and to honor His Son, Jesus Christ. Where they met did not matter. They could meet in a home, a hut, a cave, a field, a backyard, a public building, or a church building. What mattered was that they were one in their...

- trust in the Lord.
- belief and worship of God.
- purpose and mission to reach their neighbors and the world with the message of God’s great love.

2. Paul said he was a “*wise* masterbuilder.” The word “wise” means skillful. He did not approach the task and project unthoughtfully. He thought long and hard; he kept his mind upon the task. He did not allow the pleasures of the world to distract him; nor did he allow the desires of his own flesh, which sometimes ached for less demanding work, to interfere. Paul knew what God had called him to do, to plan and establish churches all over the world, so he did it as a “*wise*” architect and building superintendent.

3. Others built upon Paul’s work in Corinth. When Paul left Corinth, God raised up others to labor and to continue building the church. They would include...

- the ministers
- the leaders
- the teachers

- the members who served and carried on the ministry of the church in order to build it. This should include all members of a church, for all members are certainly to be building the church through their witness and service for the Lord. Every member is either building or destroying the testimony and strength of a church.

**Thought 1.** Think about an amazing thing. Every church has had a person who was the master builder, the architect, the founder of the church. Someone surrendered himself to God and went forth for God. Someone gave himself up to God to become a master builder, an architect, a pioneer, a builder of churches for God.

The all important question is: Where are the men and women today who will surrender their lives to God and be the master builders who go forth and build churches for God? People desperately need to be reached and assembled together under the love and mission of Christ.

“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt.16:15-18).

**Thought 2.** Another important question is this: How many church members are building up the church? How many are building wisely and skillfully upon the foundation that has already been laid?

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.2:5).

- 2** (3:10) **Church:** there is the clear warning—let every believer *take heed* how he builds upon the foundation of the church. The foundation has been laid, and it is strong. It shall never be moved. It is now to be built upon, but every-one in the church, minister and layman alike, must take heed how he builds upon it.

“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.6:1).

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.18:10).

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you” (Mt.24:4).

“And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given” (Mk.4:24).

“But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them” (Mk.13:9).

“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is [for the Lord’s return]” (Mk.13:33).

“Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have” (Lk.8:18).

“Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness” (Lk.11:35).

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).

“And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them” (Lk.21:8).

“Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon [upon Christ, the foundation of the church]” (1 Cor.3:10).

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor.10:12).

“And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it” (Col.4:17).

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim.4:16).

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Pt.1:19).

- 3** (3:11) **Jesus Christ, Foundation—Jesus Christ, Deity; Spokesman; Mediator—Church, Foundation:** there is the only foundation, Jesus Christ Himself. All other foundations are as *sinking sand*. They cannot stand up against the storms of life. No man—no matter who he is—can lay any other foundation that can last. All other foundations will crumble and be destroyed forever. What does it mean to say that Christ is the only foundation?

1. It means that Christ Himself, His person, is the only foundation upon which men can build their lives.

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man,

which built his house upon the sand: and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Mt.7:24-27).

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn.3:14-15).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn.8:12).

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he [the Son of God], ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (Jn.10:9).

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:5-6).

2. It means that the teaching or doctrine of Christ is the only foundation upon which men can build their lives.

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Mt.7:24).

“He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God” (Jn.3:34).

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn.6:63).

“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn.6:68).

“My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn.7:16-17).

“I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him” (Jn.8:26).

“As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things” (Jn.8:28).

“I speak that which I have seen with my Father” (Jn.8:38).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (Jn.8:51).

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak” (Jn.12:48-50).

“He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me” (Jn.14:24).

“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me” (Jn.17:8).

“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away” (Mk.13:31).

3. It means that Jesus Christ is the only foundation upon which men can build a true church.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste” (Is.28:16).

“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt.16:15-18).

“This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:11-12).

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Eph.2:20-21).

“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded [disappointed, shamed]” (1 Pt.2:6).

**4** (3:12) **Church—Teachers, False:** there is the structure. It can be built out of two possible materials: either permanent or perishable materials. There may be only one foundation, and it may be laid by Christ and His apostles, but there are many different kinds of materials within the market of the world. And the believer must choose which material he will use to build his part of the church.

1. There are the permanent and valuable materials, the materials that are not corruptible and do not deteriorate and decay like the things of this earth. Permanent materials last forever; they are incorruptible and undefiled and do not fade away. Scripture says they can be compared to gold, silver, and precious stones. What are the permanent materials? Scripture describes them in many ways. Several examples would be as follows.

- a. They are the fruit of the Spirit, the spiritual qualities that last beyond this life. Again, these are the things that the believer is to use in building the church.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

- b. They are the *the things* which are to be added to our faith. They are the lasting things that are so desperately needed by the church, and they are the things that the believer is to use in building the church.

**“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pt.1:5-11).**

- c. They are the souls and lives of men, women, boys, and girls who become living stones in the church.

**“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.2:4-5).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mt.16:26).**

2. There are the perishable and combustible materials. They are the materials and things of this earth that are corruptible; that rust, decay, and deteriorate. Scripture says they can be compared to wood, hay, and stubble. What are the perishable materials? Again, Scripture describes them in many ways.

- a. They are the treasures, wealth, and cares of this world.

**“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mt.6:19-21).**

**“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mk.4:19).**

- b. They are the works of the flesh.

**“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19-21).**

- c. They are the false teachings that are always dangerously floating around believers and the church.

**“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves....Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:15, 22-23).**

**“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men....But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mt.15:9, 13).**

**“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal.4:9).**

**“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col.2:8).**

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself” (1 Tim.6:3-5).

“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness” (2 Tim.2:14-16).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (2 Pt.2:1-3).

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them” (1 Jn.4:1-5).

**5** (3:13-15) **Judgment—Rewards:** there is the day of inspection. The building of the church will be inspected. Note four points.

1. The day of inspection is sure to come. The building was started in order to be finished. When it is finished, the inspector, the Lord Jesus Christ, will come to either approve or disapprove it.

“So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.1:7-8).

2. Every man’s work, the work of *every believer*, will be manifested and declared. No believer will be exempted. Every single believer will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and have his works tried and tested by the Lord. Every single work will be tested, and the truth and quality of his work will be exposed. This, of course, is a reference to the judgment seat of Christ (see note—2 Cor.5:10 for more discussion).

How will they be tested? Shockingly, by fire. In the Bible fire is constantly used as a symbol of judgment and terrible trial. The building is to be set afire, and only the permanent materials of the Spirit will survive the fire. All the materials of this earth will be burned and consumed and gone forever.

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Mt.16:27).

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Ro.2:16).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10).

“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Th.5:4).

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation....Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And

account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you” (2 Pt.3:3-4, 6-15).

3. The believer whose works survive the fire will be rewarded greatly, so greatly that it explodes the human mind.

**Rewards Dealing with our Nature and State of Being**

- ⇒ Being adopted as a son of God (Gal.4:4-7; 1 Jn.3:1).
- ⇒ Being made blameless and harmless (Ph.2:15).
- ⇒ Being given eternal life (Jn.3:16; 1 Tim.6:19).
- ⇒ Being given an enduring substance (Heb.10:34).
- ⇒ Being given a glorious body (Ph.3:11, 21; 1 Cor.15:42-44).
- ⇒ Being given eternal glory and honor and peace (Ro.2:10).
- ⇒ Being given eternal rest and peace (Heb.4:9; Rev.14:13).
- ⇒ Being given the blessings of the Lord (Pr.10:22).
- ⇒ Being given the knowledge of Christ Jesus (Ph.3:8).
- ⇒ Being given durable riches and righteousness (Pr.8:18).
- ⇒ Being made priests (Rev.20:6).
- ⇒ Being given a crown of incorruption (1 Cor.9:25).
- ⇒ Being given a crown of righteousness (2 Tim.4:8).
- ⇒ Being given a crown of life (Jas.1:12).
- ⇒ Being given a crown of glory (1 Pt.5:4).

**Rewards Dealing with Work and Position and Rule**

- ⇒ Being made exalted beings (Rev.7:9-12).
- ⇒ Being made ruler over many things (Mt.25:23).
- ⇒ Being given the Kingdom of God (Jas.2:5; Mt.25:34).
- ⇒ Being given a position of rule and authority (Lk.12:42-44; 22:28-29; 1 Cor.6:2-3).
- ⇒ Being given eternal responsibility and joy (Mt.25:21, 23).
- ⇒ Being given rule and authority over cities (Lk.19:17, 19).
- ⇒ Being given thrones and the privilege of reigning forever (Rev.20:4; 22:5).
- ⇒ Being given the privilege of surrounding the throne of God (Rev.7:9-13; 20:4).
- ⇒ Being made priests (Rev.20:6).
- ⇒ Being made kings (Rev.1:5; 5:10).

**Rewards Dealing with our Inheritance or Wealth**

- ⇒ Being made an heir of God (Ro.8:16-17; Tit.3:7).
- ⇒ Being given an incorruptible inheritance (1 Pt.1:3-4).
- ⇒ Being given the blessings of the Lord (Pr.10:22).
- ⇒ Being given durable riches and righteousness (Pr.8:18).
- ⇒ Being given unsearchable riches (Eph.3:8).
- ⇒ Being given treasures in heaven (Mt.19:21; Lk.12:33).

4. The believer whose works perished in the fire will suffer loss. Note: he will be saved, but he will suffer the loss of reward, appearing and looking like a burned out building.

**“Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents” (Mt.25:27-28).**

**“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward” (2 Jn.8).**

**“Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you” (Jer.5:25).**

**6** (3:16) **Church—The Temple of God—Holy Spirit:** there is the building identified. It is the temple of God, the church. This verse is sometimes applied to the individual believer as God’s temple. It is true that the believer is God’s temple, indwelt by God’s Spirit (cp. 1 Cor.6:19). However, this particular verse does not apply to the individual believer. Within the context of this passage, it is the church as a whole that is called the temple of God. Note two points.

1. There are two Greek words for temple. The first (heiron) refers to all the temple precincts. The second (naos) refers to the *sanctuary*, the shrine proper. It is naos, the *sanctuary*, the shrine proper used here.

2. The word “*temple*” is singular, but the word “*ye*” is plural. Scripture is saying, “*you* [all the Corinthian believers] are the temple and sanctuary of God in whom the Spirit of God dwells.” The stress is upon the presence of God: His very presence *dwells within* the sanctuary, within the shrine proper. The point is powerful: God dwells among all the believers of the church. The Spirit of God dwells within the church—in a very, very special sense—no matter where they meet. The church itself, the body of believers, is the sanctuary for God’s presence. (See notes—Jn.14:20; 20:22; 1 Cor.6:19; Eph.3:6; Col.1:26-27.)

This is extremely important. It is a truth that should be stressed just as much as the Spirit indwelling the body of the Christian believer, for defiling the temple or the church is to result in severe judgment (1 Cor.3:17). This is the very point Paul is making. The Corinthian church was being defiled by some. Some were *grumbling, misbehaving, and being divisive.*

They were in danger of the severest judgment. They needed to learn and fear, for they were defiling the very temple of God, the sanctuary in which God's own Spirit dwelt.

**“And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves. And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Mt.21:12-13).**

**“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor.6:16).**

**“In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph.2:21-22).**

**“But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (Heb.3:6).**

**“Ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.2:5).**

**7** (3:17) **Church—Judgment:** there is the seriousness of defiling the church. The person who defiles the church shall face terrible judgment. Note the two words “defile” and “destroy”: they both come from the same Greek word (phtheiro). The point is striking: the person who troubles the church will suffer the same kind of trouble himself. Whatever he sows, he is definitely going to reap. Troublemaking within the church destroys the spirit of unity and love within the church. To corrupt and destroy the church is to invite God to corrupt and destroy the troublemaker. Note that the punishment is not specifically described. It is simply made clear that he who does such a terrible thing as trouble a church will suffer a terrible punishment. He will be destroyed: wrecked, torn apart, ripped, devastated.

The church or temple of God can be destroyed in at least two ways.

1. Troublemakers can make it utterly impossible for the Spirit to work within the church. An attitude of disgust, a spirit of ill will, an unwillingness to learn—grumbling, griping, complaining, quarreling, arguing, divisiveness—destroy the spiritual fellowship of the church.

2. Troublemakers can split the church. Troublemakers hold opinions just like everyone else. However, there is one distinct difference: they become *opinionated*. Sometimes they try to hold their opinions to themselves, but their opinion is usually written all over their faces and in their speech and behavior. Sometimes they become so opinionated that they just burst at the seams to share their derogatory feelings, and before long others are following. The result is that the church begins to disintegrate into little parties and opinionated cliques. The church is then on its way to a series of disconnected groups and begins the march to ruin.

It is the Spirit of God alone that brings about a spiritual fellowship. Only as church members fellowship with the Spirit of God can they be drawn and bound together in a spirit of unity and oneness and love. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Fellowship—Acts 2:42*.)

Something else needs to be noted. The Spirit creates a spiritual fellowship of different personalities and opinions. And there are always different personalities and opinions, even when only two people meet together. It is a disturbance—whether by attitude, word, or act—that grieves and squelches the work of God's Spirit within the church.

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Ph.2:3).**

**“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Tim.2:14).**

**“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim.2:24).**

**“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Heb.12:15).**

**“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell” (Jas.3:6).**

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| <p><b>1 Watch self-deception</b><br/> <b>2 Renounce worldly wisdom</b><br/> a. It is only superficial<br/> b. It is not true wisdom<br/> c. It is foolishness to God<br/> d. It is ensnared by God</p> | <p><b>I. Answer Eight: Renouncing Self-Deception, 3:18-23</b></p> <p>18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.<br/> 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own</p> | <p>craftiness.<br/> 20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.<br/> 21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;<br/> 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;<br/> 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.</p> | <p>e. It is empty<br/> f. It is accountable to God<br/> <b>3 Renounce glorying in men</b><br/> a. All things belong to the believer<br/> <br/> b. Bel.'s belong to Christ; Christ belongs to God</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**I. Answer Eight: Renouncing Self-Deception, 3:18-23**

(3:18-23) **Introduction—Worldly Wisdom—Division:** in this passage Paul gives the root cause for the trouble with the Corinthians. It was pride—pride in who they were and in what they knew. Corinth was a center for intellectual pursuit and culture; and some in the church were glorying in being part of an intellectual, highly educated, and cultured society. They professed an intellectual, worldly wisdom; professed to know more than most, and this same attitude was carried over into the church. They professed to understand the Scriptures and the ways of God better than most. They thought themselves wise enough to judge the value of different church leaders. They prided themselves in their ability to judge the truth. They were taking different men and criticizing the way they preached and ministered. They were judging the rhetoric, the persuasiveness of their delivery, the logic of their arguments, the flowery descriptiveness of their sentences. They were judging the ability and the gifts of the men, and if they agreed that the abilities of the men were what the church needed at a particular time, they were cooperative. But if they disagreed, they were separating themselves and pulling little parties around them. They gathered themselves around Paul, Cephas, and Apollos; and some, with a spiritual air, just proclaimed that they gathered themselves around Christ.

One of the answers to the problem of divisiveness within the church is for a man to recognize that he has been deceived and to *renounce the self-deception*.

1. Watch self-deception (v.18).
2. Renounce worldly wisdom (v.18-20).
3. Renounce glorying in men (v.21-23).

**1** (3:18) **Deception, Self:** watch self-deception—"Let no man deceive himself." There is a background to this charge that helps the reader understand its importance.

The Corinthian church had some unusual advantages over many of the other churches:

- ⇒ They had access to the Scriptures, and they enjoyed the Scriptures and the ways of God.
- ⇒ They enjoyed philosophy and theology and were in a great city where both were freely encouraged and openly discussed.
- ⇒ They had the privilege of being ministered to by some of the most outstanding preachers, not only of their day, but of history (Paul, Peter, Apollos).
- ⇒ They had received an unusual outpouring of the gifts of God's Spirit (cp. Chapter 12-14).

However, the Corinthian church had a serious problem: the Corinthians wanted worldly recognition. They wanted to be known as intellectual, well-educated, and very capable in understanding the world and God. They enjoyed thinking through and rationalizing about God and the world, and they took great pride in their ideas and the ideas of their peers.

The result was tragic. They had begun to follow their own ideas and rationalizations and to disregard the will and Word of God. They had begun to exalt their own wisdom and to exalt men with unusual ability. They had begun to govern their lives by their own ideas instead of obeying God's Word. Very simply, they were exalting the wisdom and ideas of men over the wisdom of God. They were running the risk of destroying both themselves and the church. They were deceiving themselves.

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Lk.18:9).

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor.10:12).

"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal.6:3).

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (Jas.1:22).

**“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev.3:17).**

**“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered” (Pr.28:26).**

**“Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men” (Hos.10:13).**

**2** (3:18-20) **Wisdom, of Men:** renounce worldly wisdom. Worldly wisdom is *natural reason only*: it is the wisdom of men that seeks to know the *truth of the world and of God by natural reason only*. Men readily acknowledge the problem of evil and suffering in the world caused by such things as natural disasters, disease, hunger, selfishness, greed, violence, lust, anger, accidents, and prejudice. A few men even give their lives to the task of understanding and conquering the problems of evil and sin in the world. They commit themselves to seek the truth of the world, and in some cases of God, through such fields as science, education, technology, and religion. But they fail; they always fail. No matter how much worldly wisdom and efforts are put to these endeavors, man always comes up short in conquering and controlling evil and in discovering God.

The point is this: when a church begins to approach God and the problems of the world through worldly wisdom, the result is tragic. The church is taking a path that will destroy its witness and make it useless in the Kingdom of God. This was the path being chosen by the Corinthian church, and it is the path that is often chosen by too many churches.

Now, why does worldly wisdom fail to grasp the truth of the world and of God? There are three reasons given in this passage. (See note, *World, Wisdom of*—1 Cor.1:19-20 for a discussion of the world’s wisdom.)

1. Worldly wisdom is superficial: it only *seems* to be wise. The word “seemeth” (dokei) means to *think*. The man thinks himself to be wise and creative, knowledgeable and intelligent. He thinks he has a novel idea or concept of God and truth.

Note: most men think they are fairly wise and knowledgeable in how to handle their lives and affairs. Few think they will be totally unacceptable and rejected by whatever *Higher Being* there is. Such knowledge and wisdom exists only in the minds of men. It is not true. It is superficial knowledge, worldly wisdom. It only seems to be wise. This is clearly seen in three facts.

- a. Since God is—since God exists—no person can understand the world and God if he leaves God out of the picture. Even an atheist has to admit this: if God truly exists, then man must understand God in order to understand the world which God made. A person just cannot understand the world without understanding God, no matter who he is.
- b. No man has ever seen God, no matter what some men claim. No man has ever left the physical world—the physical dimension of being—and penetrated the spiritual world and seen God and returned to the physical world. This material, corruptible, imperfect world cannot penetrate the spiritual, incorruptible, and perfect world. It is totally and absolutely impossible for an imperfect being to see the Perfect Being (God) and live to tell about it. It is totally and absolutely impossible for an imperfect being to penetrate a perfect world. If he did, it would no longer be perfect.

**“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (Jn.1:18).**

**“And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape” (Jn.5:37).**

**“Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting” (1 Tim.6:16).**

**“And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Ex.33:20).**

- c. The only way God can ever be known is for God to reveal Himself. The only way the truth of a perfect world can be known is for God to reveal it.

This is the very point of this Scripture. Any wisdom that seeks to know God apart from His revelation is superficial. It is a man who only thinks that he is wise: he is only wise in worldly matters; he does not know the real truth.

**“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Ro.1:22).**

**“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col.2:8).**

**“This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (Jas.3:15).**

**“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge” (Jer.4:22).**

2. Worldly wisdom is not *true wisdom*. Note the words, “Let him become a fool, that he may be wise.” This simply means that a person must become what the world calls “*a fool*” if he wishes to know God and the real

truth of God's world. The world hears about the revelation of God and calls it *foolishness*. In the eyes of the world it is *utter foolishness*...

- to talk about God really existing and loving the world, loving the world so much that He would actually send His Son into the world.
- to talk about the basic problem of the world being the presence of evil and sin within the heart of man instead of education and social improvement.
- to say that God had to take care of the problem of evil by having His Son die upon a cross for the sins of the world.
- to talk about the heart of man having to be changed in order for him to be reconciled to God and live in peace.
- to talk about being saved, born again, made into a new creature, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and resurrected some day.
- to talk about God making a new heavens and earth.

All this is utter foolishness to the world. But note something: all this is exactly what Jesus Christ taught. It is the very revelation of God—the very message that God sent to the world through His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the revelation, the Spokesman of God to the world.

**“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him” (Jn.3:34).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (Jn.8:51).**

**“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the world that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn.12:48).**

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

**“He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me” (Jn.14:24).**

**“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me” (Jn.17:8).**

**“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor.1:18).**

**“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor.1:21).**

**“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor.1:23-24).**

**“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:1-2).**

### 3. Worldly wisdom is foolishness to God (v.19).

a. It is foolishness because evil, selfishness, and sin do exist within the heart of man. No matter who the person is, the person's heart has the seed of sin, corruption, aging, deterioration, decay, and death in it. All men sin and die. Honesty, reason, experience, sight, feeling, and hearing tell us the terrible truth of the fact.

b. It is foolishness because there is only one way imaginable that a sinful and imperfect creature could ever be acceptable to a perfect God: the perfect God would have to love the sinful creature so much that He would just accept him. But, even if He loved the sinful creature that much, two things would be necessary.

⇒ First, someone would still have to pay the penalty for man's sin. Why? Because God is perfect and righteous and just. If He laid aside and forgot His perfect justice, He would then become unjust and imperfect. It would be acting against His nature. Therefore, God's justice has to act and condemn man's sin.

⇒ Second, a perfect Being would have to take man's sin upon Himself and die for man. Why a perfect Being? Because no sinful creature is acceptable to God. The only Person acceptable to God is the Ideal, Perfect Person. Therefore, whoever sacrificed Himself for sinful man would have to be the Ideal, Perfect Person.

Of course, this means that only God Himself could pay the penalty for man's sin. And that is exactly what He did. God came to earth in the person of His Son and revealed the truth to man, and then died for man.

Now, note the wisdom of what God has done: the love and justice of sending His Son into the world to save man. Note that this is the only conceivable way man could be saved when dealing...

- with God who is perfect and man who is imperfect.
- with heaven which is the incorruptible spiritual world, and earth which is the corruptible physical world.
- with how *sinful man* can approach a *perfectly holy God*.

- with how a perfectly holy God could accept an unholy man.
- with how a perfect and loving God could save an imperfect and rebellious man.

This is the reason that all approaches to God other than through His Son Jesus Christ are foolishness to Him. This is the reason the Scriptures proclaim that God “takes the wise in their own craftiness,” and “the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain [empty].” He knows the thoughts of every man, the utter emptiness of man’s worldly approach to understanding the truth of God and the world.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (Jn.3:16-17).

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation....For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:19, 21).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent” (1 Cor.1:18-19).

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor.1:21).

“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Cor.1:23-25).

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:1-2).

“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory” (1 Cor.2:6-7).

“But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor.2:9-10).

**3** (3:21-23) **Glorying—Inheritance—Reward:** renounce glorying in men. This is a crucial point for believers to heed. To glory in men means to trust men, to look upon men as the answer and source of life and blessing.

This is just too much trust, too much confidence to put in men. Some men can and should be trusted, but even they are not the answer and source of life and true blessing. They should not be glorified. The believer is to glory only in God. Only God is to be exalted, praised, and worshipped.

However, there are two other reasons why believers are not to glory in men—two extremely important reasons.

1. All things belong to the believer. The believer actually possesses all things, and to glory in any other man is to minimize his own dignity and exalted position.

a. Preachers, no matter who they are, belong to the believers. All preachers exist to serve and minister and meet the needs of God’s people. If a church or a believer takes advantage of only a few preachers or of only one or two types of preachers, the church and the believer are limiting their chances to be enriched and blessed. They are limiting their growth.

b. The world, the physical universe, belongs to believers. God is going to remake the universe, that is, the heavens and the earth; and believers are to inherit it all, ruling and administering the functions of it all with Christ Jesus. (See note, *Rewards*—1 Cor.3:13-15 for discussion. Read 2 Pt.3:3-4, 7-16 for a descriptive picture of the end time event, an event clearly understandable in light of the atom and its explosive power. While reading, remember that this event was revealed to the world just a few years after the ascension of Jesus.)

c. Life belongs to the believers. This means real life, abundant life—a life with purpose, meaning, and significance—a life that triumphs and gains the victory over the trials and sufferings of this life.

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn.10:10).

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor.9:8).

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).

**“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).**

- d. Death belongs to the believers. That is, death has no sway or hold over the believers, but contrariwise, the believer holds death in his grip through the Lord Jesus Christ. Death has been conquered by Christ.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:25-26).**

**“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pt.1:11).**

- e. Present and future things belong to the believers. The believer is the heir of the world, the heir of God Himself.

**“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Ro.4:13).**

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).**

**“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).**

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).**

2. Believers belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. Three points need to be noted.
- Believers possess all things *only* because of Christ—only because of what He has done for them. Without Christ they have no more than what the world has: an existence of pressure, tension, questioning, wondering, apprehension, uncertainty, insecurity about the future, and sure death.
  - Believers owe their lives to Christ, not to any man, even if he happens to be the most spiritual and the greatest preacher and leader to walk across the face of the earth. Believers are not to live carnal lives, following after and glorying in men, no matter their wisdom, intelligence, and ability—not even if they have the greatest spiritual gifts ever possessed by men. “Ye are Christ’s” is the proclamation to believers.
  - “Christ is God’s.” This does not mean that Christ is not divine, that He is less than God. It refers to His function and ministry as Savior. He came to earth to save men in *subjection* to God’s will. Both God the Son and God the Father willed for Jesus Christ to subject Himself to God the Father and to come to earth as a Man in order to save the world. As the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ *served* God; therefore, He too, as our Savior, was obedient to God. “Christ is God’s” in the sense that He obeyed God as our Savior. They both love us with a supreme, perfect love—a love unimaginable and unsurpassed.

⇒ “Therefore, let no man glory in men” (v.21).

**“How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” (Jn.5:44).**

**“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Ro.12:16).**

**“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor.8:2).**

**“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away” (1 Pt.1:24).**

**“For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth” (Ps.10:3).**

**“Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish” (Ps.49:12).**

**“For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him” (Ps.49:17).**

| CHAPTER 4  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>1 Count ministers for what they are</b><br/>                     a. Ministers of Christ<br/>                     b. Stewards of God<br/>                     c. Required to be faithful</p> <p><b>2 The judgment &amp; approval of men matter little</b></p> | <p><b>J. Answer Nine: Letting God Judge Ministers, 4:1-5</b></p> <p>Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.<br/>                     2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.<br/>                     3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's</p> | <p>judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.<br/>                     4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.<br/>                     5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.</p> <p><b>3 The judgment of Christ is all that matters</b><br/>                     a. The Lord alone has the right to judge a man<br/>                     b. Believers are not to judge anyone<br/>                     1) No believer can know all—the hidden things<br/>                     2) No believer can know the motives within a person</p> |

**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**J. Answer Nine: Letting God Judge Ministers, 4:1-5**

(4:1-5) **Introduction:** one of the serious problems in the Corinthian church concerned former ministers. Some of the church members were esteeming one minister above the other ministers. They were judging the gifts, ministry, and effectiveness of their former ministers; and the inevitable happened:

- ⇒ Some of the people had been helped and blessed by Apollos, so they spoke up for Apollos.
- ⇒ Others had been helped and blessed by Cephas, so they spoke up for Cephas.
- ⇒ Still others had been helped and blessed more by Paul, so they defended Paul.

The matter became critical, for the people began to judge the ministers' preaching style, ability, eloquence, charisma, intelligence, gifts, call, and success—the whole scope of their ministry. Little groups were buzzing about talking up the merits of their favorite minister. Deep feelings settled in, and the fellowship of the church was threatened.

What was to be done? Paul gives eleven solutions to a divided church. One solution is the message of this passage, and it is a message desperately needed by the church: let God do the judging of ministers.

1. Count ministers for what they are (v.1-2).
2. The judgment and approval of men matter little (v.3).
3. The judgment of Christ is all that matters (v.4-5).

**1** (4:1-2) **Ministers:** first, count ministers for what they are. Three things should always be kept in mind about ministers.

1. Ministers are *ministers of Christ*. The word "minister" (*huperetes*) means an *under-rower*. It refers to the slaves who sat in the belly of the large ships and pulled at the great oars to carry the boat through the sea. Christ is the Master of the ship and the minister is *one of the slaves of Christ*. Note: he is only one of many under-rowing servants. Remember also that slaves in the belly of the ship were bound by chains. They were allowed to do nothing but serve the master of the ship. The minister is a bound slave of Christ: he exists only to row for the Master. He does not and cannot serve anyone else.

**Thought 1.** No minister is to be elevated above other ministers or servants—not his eloquence, ability, personality, charisma, or any other trait. No matter how much the minister has meant to a person's life, he is only the *under-rower*, a slave of the Master of the ship; and he is only one of many other under-rowers and servants. Believers are not to judge and elevate ministers above each other.

2. Ministers are stewards of God. The word "steward" (*oikonomos*) means the overseer of an estate. The steward was always a slave, subject to a master, but he was *placed in charge* of the other slaves throughout the master's house or estate. He controlled the staff and ran the whole operation for the master. He was set over others, yet he himself was still a slave of the master. His work was not closely supervised; therefore, he had to be trustworthy and responsible. Note what the minister is made a steward over: the mysteries of God. A mystery is not something hard to understand. Rather, it is something that has been hidden and kept secret. It is something that was undiscoverable by human reason, but now is revealed by God. It is crystal clear to those to whom it is revealed, but it is completely alien to those who do not receive it. What are the mysteries of God? They are the truths—the glorious truths—of God's Word. Who are the ones to whom the mysteries are revealed? The stewards, the ministers, the believing servants of Christ.

There are several mysteries now revealed to the believer. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Cor.2:7 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** Every minister is to be esteemed highly for his work's sake. He is *only* a servant of God's, but he is the servant whom God has made steward over His household, over His church and His people. He has been honored by God: he has been made responsible for the imperishable mysteries of God, the great truths of God's Holy Word. The minister does not deal with perishable things such as money and possessions, but with the eternal things of God Himself, the eternal truths that God wants proclaimed to the world.

“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Cor.3:6).

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not” (2 Cor.4:1).

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:18-21).

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Eph.3:7).

“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Col.1:23).

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim.1:9-11).

“For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Tit.1:7-9).

3. Ministers are required to be faithful. This is the one essential for the minister. There is no other requirement of him.
- a. The minister is not required to be eloquent, brilliant, intelligent, loaded with ability, or successful. He is required to be *faithful*.
  - b. The minister is not required by God to be an administrator, counsellor, visitor, door-greeter, or socializer—as important as these ministries are.
  - c. The minister is required to be *faithful* in ministering the mysteries of God. He is held accountable and shall be judged for how well he ministers the mysteries of God:
    - ⇒ He must not hold back or fail to share the mysteries of God.
    - ⇒ He must not substitute some other message for the mysteries of God.
    - ⇒ He must not mix some other message with the mysteries of God.

The minister of God must be faithful to his call. He is the minister of Christ and the steward of the mysteries of God. He must—absolutely must—proclaim those mysteries.

“For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is [still] committed unto me” (1 Cor.9:17).

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal.1:6-9).

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation [stewardship] of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God” (Col.1:25).

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (1 Th.2:4).

“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:11-12).

“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:2-3).

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pt.4:10).

**Thought 1.** Believers are not to judge ministers, thinking and talking about the gifts and abilities of one over another. They are not to think too highly of a minister nor too lowly. They are to count ministers for just what they are.

- 1) The servants of God.
- 2) The stewards of the mysteries of God.
- 3) The servant who has been made a steward for *one purpose only*: to be faithful to the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2** (4:3) **Ministers—Judging Others—Criticism:** second, the judgment or approval of ministers by men matters little. Note: criticism and disapproval hurt and cut the heart, but they do not matter at all in the judgment of God. Man’s judgment of God’s minister has no bearing whatsoever upon what God will do with the minister. The congregation or some

clique in the church may cut the minister to shreds, and they may break his heart, but they have absolutely nothing to do with the judgment of the man's faithfulness and unfaithfulness.

Men may put God's minister on trial. He may be "judged" (anakrino), that is scrutinized, investigated, questioned, and cross-examined either to his face or behind his back. He may be judged as to his eloquence, intelligence, ability, or whatever else some may or may not like. But none of it matters to God—not one word, not even one critical or negative thought.

Note something else: Paul does not even judge himself. Paul knew precisely what every honest and thinking person knows.

- ⇒ No minister can honestly judge his own ministry: its true success; his motives for every single thing he has done; how much fruit he has really been borne in people's lives and how much should have been borne.
- ⇒ A person who begins to judge his own works either begins to think too highly of himself or too lowly. To varying degrees he becomes prideful or discouraged.

Paul, of course, is not talking about a minister evaluating his ministry for the purpose of strengthening it. He is talking about passing judgment upon his ministry in comparison to other ministries and as to its fruitfulness. Is his ministry as good as someone else's? Is it as fruitful? Are his motives as pure as they should be in the work which he does? Is Christ as pleased with his ministry as he is with the ministry of others?

This is the kind of thing Paul does not judge, and believers are not to judge. No man has the right to judge such things.

**"Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Mt.7:1).**

**"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Ro.2:1).**

**"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Ro.14:13).**

**3 (4:4-5) Ministers—Judging Others:** third, the judgment of Christ is all that matters. Note two points.

1. The Lord alone justifies a man and his ministry. This is a significant statement by Paul. He knows of no place he is coming up short in the ministry. To his knowledge he is faithful in the ministry and pleasing to the Lord. But he is not justified and approved by his judgment. The Lord Jesus alone can put the stamp of approval upon his ministry. No man is able or competent in judging the fruitfulness, dedication, and success of a ministry. Only Christ can judge a man and the faithfulness of his life and ministry.

2. Therefore, believers are to judge nothing. They have no right or prerogative to judge.
- a. No believer can know the hidden things of darkness within a man. Only Jesus Christ can bring the secret, hidden things to light.
  - b. No man knows the real motives within a man. Only Christ can reveal the motives and counsels of the human heart.

**"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Lk.12:2).**

**"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor.4:5).**

**"If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity" (Job 10:14).**

**"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Ps.19:12).**

**"Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" (Ps.90:8).**

**"For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes" (Jer.16:17).**

**"And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face" (Hos.7:2).**

There is to be no judgment of ministers nor of anyone else until the Lord returns. He and He alone has the right and is capable of judging ministers and believers. Both ministers and believers will have the praise of God when Christ returns and judges their work, not before. No matter how successful men may judge one another to be—no matter how much praise men may heap upon one another—no person will have the praise of God until Christ returns and judges the secret things of a man's heart and life. This is the reason men are not to judge the ministers and servants of God.

**"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Ro.14:4).**

**"There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (Jas.4:12).**

**"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer.17:9-10).**

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| <p><b>1 The ministers, Paul &amp; Apollos, illustrate a point</b><br/> a. Stop comparing &amp; judging men: Elevating them above what Scripture says<br/> b. Stop being puffed up against one another</p> <p><b>2 First, God causes the differences between men</b></p> <p><b>3 Second, you are showing superiority</b></p> | <p><b>K. Answer Ten: Not Comparing and Judging Ministers, 4:6-13</b></p> <p>6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.</p> <p>7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?</p> <p>8 Now ye are rich, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.</p> | <p>9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.</p> <p>10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.</p> <p>11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;</p> <p>12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:</p> <p>13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day.</p> | <p><b>4 Third, true ministers are set forth last</b><br/> a. They are appointed to death &amp; made a spectacle to the world<br/> b. They are expected to serve &amp; to be put last</p> <p><b>5 Fourth, true ministers serve—no matter the cost</b></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**K. Answer Ten: Not Comparing and Judging Ministers, 4:6-13**

(4:6-13) **Introduction—Judging Others—Pride:** worldly men measure, judge, boast, and pride themselves in their superior gifts and achievements. Some in the Corinthian church had begun to make the same mistake. They were judging the gifts of believers and preachers; therefore, they became guilty of the same offense as worldly men. They were usurping the authority of God alone to gift and judge men (cp. v.6). They were, in reality, nothing more than *puffed up air bags*. And no matter the church, when a lot of “puffed up” talk begins to swirl around, disturbance and divisiveness set in; the fellowship and life of the church become threatened.

One of the answers to divisiveness is believing and accepting the fact that we must not compare ministers.

1. The ministers, Paul and Apollos, illustrate a point (v.6).
2. First, God causes the differences between men (v.7).
3. Second, you are showing superiority (v.8).
4. Third, true ministers are set forth last (v.9-10).
5. Fourth, true ministers serve—no matter the cost (v.11-13).

**1** (4:6) **Pride—Ministers:** the ministers, Paul and Apollos, illustrate a point. Very simply, what Paul had been saying about himself and Apollos was only an illustration for the Corinthian deliverers to apply to themselves. Paul had just declared two pictures to show who he and Apollos were (cp. Cor.4:1-2).

- ⇒ They were *mere servants* of Christ. They were *only the under-rowers*, the slaves in the belly of the ship who serve the Lord and Master of the ship.
- ⇒ They were *mere stewards*, the *slaves* given the enormous responsibility to oversee the property of the Lord and Master of the estate. And because they were stewards and had been given this enormous responsibility, they were expected to be faithful and were held accountable for their faithfulness.

The point is this: Paul was not writing to teach himself and Apollos who they were and what their calling was. He and Apollos knew who they were, and they knew their calling. He was writing to teach the Corinthians (and all other churches) who their ministers were and how they were to be treated. Two lessons in particular needed to be learned.

1. Believers must stop comparing and judging their ministers and elevating them above what Scripture says. Some in the Corinthian church were judging some ministers to be better and more capable servants of God than others. They were judging and elevating men over other men. They felt themselves so spiritual that they could rank the servants of God and judge the most effective speakers and teachers.

2. Believers must stop being “puffed up” against one another. The very reason a believer judges one minister superior to another is because the believer receives more from the preaching and life of a particular minister—more than he receives from any others. This is understandable, for every minister means a great deal to those who are reached for Christ through him and who receive special attention from him during crises. However, a serious sin occurs when the believer begins to think that no other minister can preach and minister like the favored minister. The person or persons who begin to elevate one minister above another are “puffed up.”

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- ⇒ He thinks he has received truths from the favored minister that others have not received; that if others have not received as much as he has, they are lacking in their blessings and growth.
- ⇒ He thinks he is more capable in ranking *God's servants* and judging their gifts as speakers, teachers, and ministers.

Note the words "*puffed up*" (phusiousthe). The phrase means to be inflated. It is a picture of puffed up air bags. The point is, the judging of ministers and the feelings that one can judge ministers is nothing but hot air in *puffed up* balloons. It is meaningless. It means absolutely nothing to God. (Cp. "puffed up" in 1 Cor.4:18-19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4.)

**"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Mt.23:12).**

**"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes" (Ps.118:9).**

**"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help" (Ps.146:3).**

**"Cease, ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Is.2:22).**

**"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jer.9:23-24).**

**"Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jer.17:5).**

**2** (4:7) **Self-exaltation—Boasting:** first, God, not man, causes the differences between men. Note the three piercing questions of Scripture that drive the point home.

1. Who makes *you* to differ from another? What makes you think you have superior judgment to others? What makes you think you have received enough spiritual growth and insight that you can judge God's ministers? What gives you the right to feel you have received more than others because you sat under some minister? What makes you think you are more spiritual than other believers? Who is it that has made you spiritual?

2. What do you have that you did not receive? What is your spiritual gift? Did you create it or was the gift given to you by God? If you are spiritually mature, did you earn the maturity, or did God by His grace grow you? If you have spiritual insight, does it come from God or from your working it up? Were you saved and brought into the family of God by your own efforts or by the grace of God? When you sit under ministers, do you have infinite knowledge to see the whole scope of their lives and ministries? Did you choose them or did God? Did you work them up and gift them or did God give you the privilege to sit under them and to learn from their particular gift? What do you have or possess that you did not receive? Life? A body? A mind? A spirit? The ability to think and work and play and live? Breath? Another day without being snatched and taken away? Salvation? The privilege of knowing God and His dear Son? Spiritual growth and maturity? The Word of God? Preaching? Teaching? The church? Ministers? Did you receive all this as a gift from God? Or did you work it all up and take it unto yourself?

3. Now, if you *received* it all—all the blessings of life and of Christ and of the church—why are you boasting of being *super-spiritual*? Why are you acting superior to other believers? Why are you playing *lord*—as though you have the right to take God's place and judge His ministers and people? There is no doubt: you did not *work up* the spiritual life with all its ministers, believers, churches, gifts, and blessings. You received it all: the simple privilege of being one member of God's great family. Now, you are *one* of God's dear children, but you are *only one*. Why, then, do you act as though you are the *lord* over some of God's dear sons and daughters. Why do you glory in exalting yourself as the person with the spiritual maturity to judge who should and should not serve? Who has and does not have the better gifts? Who is and is not effective? Who fulfills and does not fulfill God's purposes? Who should and should not serve here and there? Why do you exalt yourself and make yourself superior? Is God not able to handle the gifts and affairs of His ministers and people and church? Why do you glory as though you are the judge who is to hand out approval and disapproval?

**"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Lk.18:9).**

**"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor.10:12).**

**"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal.6:3).**

**"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (Jas.1:26).**

**"But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" (Jas.4:16).**

**"Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain" (Pr.25:14).**

**"It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory" (Pr.25:27).**

**"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered" (Pr.28:26).**

**"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High" (Is.14:13-14).**

**"Ye have ploughed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men" (Hos.10:13).**

**3** (4:8) **Pride:** second, you are showing superiority. Some believers were acting as though their lives were full, that is, fully filled and satiated. The idea is perfected and complete. They were acting as though they were perfect and mature,

and had the right to pass judgment upon God's people. They felt they lacked nothing—no gift, no insight, no knowledge, no spiritual understanding. They were acting as though they were reigning as kings in God's church. They were acting as though God had already given them their spiritual reward and exalted them to rule over the believers of the church.

Paul says this: he wishes they were reigning as kings, for then the ministers of God would be reigning with them. It would mean that God had already created the new heavens and earth and rewarded the believers, exalting them to their promised reward.

**Thought 1.** Super-spirituality, a person thinking that he is spiritually superior and full, needing little if anything, is an extremely dangerous state.

**“Woe unto you that are full for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep” (Lk.6:25).**

**“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev.3:17).**

**“They are enclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly” (Ps.17:10).**

**4** (4:9-10) **Ministers:** third, true ministers are set forth last. The phrase “set forth” (*apedeixen*) means more than to be seen or exhibited. The picture is that of doomed gladiators being taken to the arena. God has set forth the minister as a doomed gladiator to serve the world no matter the cost. Note two points.

1. The minister is “appointed to death” (*epithanatiou*). This is a continuation of the picture of the doomed gladiator. He is marched through the city streets and before the screaming mobs of the arena. He is made a spectacle before the world and he has to endure it, for he has no choice.

Paul sees ministers as being spectacles. They are being marched across the scene of world history to carry on their combat as ordained by the Emperor and King. They are mere spectacles to the world and to angels and men, with few ever understanding and fully accepting them. And from among the few who do accept them, some eventually withdraw and turn against them.

**Thought 1.** Note the contrast Paul is drawing between the attitude of the Corinthians and that of himself and the other ministers of God. The Corinthian believers were living in full satisfaction and comfort while the ministers of God were suffering as the spectacles of the world.

2. The minister is expected to serve and to be put last. This is enlarging what has just been said.
  - a. The minister is counted as a fool for Christ's sake because of His strong devotion to Christ. The world and too often believers look at the minister as a *radical fool*. But not too many believers are considered to be fools. Most believers are accepted by the world and among other believers and considered wise.
  - b. The believers are thought to be strong, for they receive the fullness of Christ without suffering too much and without having to go on and on hour after hour and day after day. But not ministers. They are weak in that they sometimes suffer the withdrawal and hesitancy of people to associate with them, the looks and stares, the lack of understanding, the abuse, the rejection, the talk and rumors and gossip, the disapproval and the rejection, the ridicule and sometimes the physical persecution and martyrdom.
  - c. The believers are thought honorable and usually respected; but ministers are too often treated as some kind of different person, in a different kind of profession—the kind of person and profession other people would not want nor choose for their life's work. Ministers are too often without honor among the world and, tragically, among believers.

**Thought 1.** Again, note the sharp contrast between the attitude of too many believers and the true minister. This was the problem with the Corinthians, and it is the problem with too many believers and churches.

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

**“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (Ro.8:36).**

**“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake” (2 Cor.4:5).**

**“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**5** (4:11-13) **Ministers:** third, true ministers serve—no matter the cost. True ministers are the servants of Christ, and the stewards of God's gospel (mysteries); therefore, they *pay any price* to share the gospel and to minister to people. Paul says that he and the apostles were bearing these very sufferings “even unto this present hour.”

- ⇒ They sometimes lacked food, water, and clothing (cp. 2 Cor.11:27; Mt.25:36; Jas.2:15).
- ⇒ They were buffeted and beaten with fists, that is, pushed about, slapped (cp. 2 Cor.12:7; Acts 23:2).
- ⇒ They had no home (cp. Mt.8:20; 10:23).
- ⇒ They were not a burden to the church even if it meant that they had to labor at secular jobs in order to preach the Word and minister (cp. Acts 18:3; 20:34; 1 Th.2:9; 2 Th.3:8; 1 Cor.9:6; 2 Cor.11:7).

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- ⇒ They were reviled or railed at, but they blessed (cp. 1 Pt.2:23; 3:9; 4:14-16).
- ⇒ They were persecuted, but they suffered it (cp. Lk.6:28).
- ⇒ They were defamed or slandered, but they beseeched or exhorted and met slanderous behavior with kindness.
- ⇒ They were made as the filth (the refuse, rubbish, garbage) and the scum of the earth.

**Thought 1.** What are we doing for Christ today? How much are we suffering to preach the gospel and to minister to people? How many preachers and how many believers have honestly given all *they are and have* to share the gospel with the world? How many have sacrificed and given so much that they can eat only one or two meals a day? How many have only a few clothes hanging in the closet? How many cars are in the garage? How much money is in the bank? How many of us have really sacrificed all *we are and have* like the apostles did?

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).

“He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Mt.10:39).

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Mt.19:29).

“For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16).

“For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor.12:10).

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).

“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience” (Jas.5:10).

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| <p><b>1 God's minister does not shame, but he warns his people as children</b></p> <p><b>2 God's minister shows a fatherly spirit, not an instructor's spirit</b></p> <p><b>3 God's minister sets an unmatched example</b></p> <p><b>4 God's minister provides for the growth of his people</b></p> | <p><b>L. Answer Eleven: Seeing &amp; Understanding the Spirit of God's Minister, 4:14-21</b></p> <p>14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.</p> <p>15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.</p> <p>16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.</p> <p>17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and</p> | <p>faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.</p> <p>18 Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.</p> <p>19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.</p> <p>20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.</p> <p>21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?</p> | <p><b>5 God's minister wishes to be with his people</b></p> <p>a. He longs to help them</p> <p>b. He expects to discipline—to handle the troublemakers</p> <p>c. He will discipline because the Kingdom of God demands it</p> <p>d. He appeals for self-correction</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH, 1:10-4:21**

**L. Answer Eleven: Seeing and Understanding the Spirit of God's Minister, 4:14-21**

(4:14-21) **Introduction:** this passage is the eleventh answer to division within the church. Paul has discussed the subject of division thoroughly, and his discussion leaves any church without excuse for allowing itself to become divided. This is a section of Scripture that needs to be preached and studied time and again to protect the fellowship and mission of the church. The eleventh answer to division is the need to see and understand the spirit of God's minister.

1. God's minister does not shame, but he warns his people as children (v.14).
2. God's minister shows a fatherly spirit, not an instructor's spirit (v.15).
3. God's minister sets an unmatched example (v.16).
4. God's minister provides for the growth of his people (v.17).
5. God's minister wishes to be with his people (v.18-21).

**1** (4:14) **Minister:** the spirit of God's minister does not shame people, but it warns them. Paul had been strong with the Corinthian church (cp. Chapters 1-4). Some people were about to split and destroy the church; its very life and witness for Christ were threatened. Strong warning was necessary, for some were running the risk of facing the severe judgment of God (1 Cor.3:17). But note: the warning was not given to shame the guilty, but to warn them. The warning was given in the spirit of a father—in the very same spirit that a father warns his sons of the consequences if they continue to do wrong. The father is firm and decisive, and he means exactly what he says, but he still loves his sons. He warns them to keep them from destroying their lives, not to shame and embarrass them.

**Thought 1.** All ministers and congregations desperately need to understand the true spirit of a genuine minister.

- 1) No genuine minister would ever fail to warn his child of the consequences of misbehavior.
- 2) No wise child (congregation) would ever reject or attempt to silence the warning of a loving and caring father (minister).

**"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence" (Is.62:6).**

**"Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken" (Jer.6:17).**

**"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me" (Ezk.3:17).**

**"But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand" (Ezk.33:6).**

**"To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor.2:16).**

**"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb.13:17).**

**2** (4:15) **Minister:** the spirit of God's minister is that of a fatherly spirit, not that of an instructor's spirit. The "instructor" (paidagogos) of Paul's day was a trusted slave who was placed in complete charge of a child's welfare and growth. He was even in charge of escorting the child to school and seeing that no harm came to him. He was responsible for the growth and development of the child until he was grown. Paul says that the Corinthian church had an unlimited number of capable instructors and teachers, but he alone was their spiritual father. He was the one who brought them

to Christ Jesus for life, and gave birth to the church. He was the one whom God had been using and was still using to oversee the growth of the church. Paul was stressing that he as the minister of the church bore more concern, tenderness, and care for the church than others.

**Thought 1.** The church must have many instructors, true teachers who take new and immature believers under their care to make sure they grow and develop. However, the minister of God must be more than an instructor who makes disciples. He must be a minister with the *spirit of a wise father*, a spirit that shows...

- love, but also justice.
- care, but also discipline.
- interest, but also self-development.
- giving, but also demands.
- acceptance, but also disapproval.
- praise, but also warning.

**“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jer.3:15).**

**“And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord” (Jer.23:4).**

**“Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? and he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:17).**

**“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).**

**“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1 Pt.5:2).**

**3** (4:16) **Minister:** the spirit of God’s minister sets an unmatched example. “Be ye followers of me.” The Greek word for “followers” (*mimetai*) means *imitators*. “Be ye *imitators* of me.” Every father should live such a life that his children could follow in his steps. This is what Paul was saying. He had lived a life of commitment and self-denial for the Lord Jesus Christ. He had given all he was and had to Christ. He was saying: “Follow me—imitate me! Commit your life to Christ; deny yourself completely—give all you are and have to Him. Help me in evangelizing and meeting the desperate needs of the world for Him. The world is starving and dying from sin, hunger, disease, cold, heat, loneliness, and purposelessness; and they are doomed to die in both this world and the next. Follow me! Help me to reach this world for Christ Jesus our Lord.”

**“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor.11:1).**

**“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example” (Ph.3:17).**

**“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Ph.4:9).**

**“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost” (1 Th.1:6).**

**“For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you” (2 Th.3:7).**

**“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.1:13).**

**4** (4:17) **Minister:** the spirit of God’s minister provides for the growth of his people. Note the stress of this verse. Paul says, “Timothy shall remind you of my ways in Christ.” Paul was being attacked by some within the church who represented both the right and the left. The right included those who were *strict traditionalists and conservatives*, those who followed and exalted Peter as the epitome of preachers. The left included those who were more liberal minded and interested in the wisdom of the world, those who followed and exalted Apollos as the greatest of preachers.

It must be noted that the preachers themselves were not personally involved in the division. None of them were at Corinth when the arguing and divisions within the church began. The controversy concerned them, but they were not and would not have been involved in it. They were right where they should have been: out on the highways and byways of the world witnessing for Christ. (See outline and notes—1 Cor.1:10-16 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** What a contrast between the preachers and their so-called followers! The so-called followers were professing the merits of the preachers, but were not following their example! How easy it is to profess and not to do.

Straightening out the mess within the church was in the hands of Paul, who was, so to speak, their present minister. He was away on a mission tour at this particular time, but he was responsible for the church and its welfare. Being unable to leave the mission tour, he did the next best thing. He sat down and wrote the church, dealing with their divisions; and then he sent his letter with one of his most able assistants, Timothy. *Timothy was to stay with the church* until the divisiveness was eliminated and Christ was once again enthroned in His rightful place in the believers’ hearts and lives.

**Thought 1.** Every minister of the gospel must be driven to provide whatever is needed for the growth of his people. Every true believer has been chosen by God to serve Christ Jesus the Lord. Therefore, if there is anything in the life of a believer that hinders his growth and service, the matter is serious to God. It must be dealt with and straightened out no matter what it is. But note: it is not only the minister's duty to provide for the growth of the believer. He can do nothing unless the believer will receive his ministry. The believer must be a humble follower of God who loves his minister and who is vitally interested in serving his Lord. (To be honest, any person's profession of Christ that comes short of being committed to and obeying Christ is suspect. The genuineness of the divisive person's conversion is even questionable. Within the church, as among any two persons, differences and problems arise; but genuine believers still love each other and work through the problems—rather quickly.)

**“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs [meet their needs for growth]. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:15-17).**

**Thought 2.** Note the kind of minister Paul provided for the Corinthian church.

- 1) Timothy, a “beloved son”: a young minister who loves and is willing to learn just as the son of a father (older pastor) is willing to learn.
- 2) Timothy, faithful in the Lord: a young minister who is faithful...
  - in prayer (1 Tim.2:1-2).
  - in the study of the Word (2 Tim.2:15; 3:15-17).
  - in witnessing (2 Tim.1:7-8).
  - in service and ministry (1 Tim.1:18-19; 4:14-16).

**5** (4:18-21) **Ministers—Call:** the spirit of God's minister is to be with his people. Remember the situation in the church. The church was divided into four cliques (see outline and notes—1 Cor.1:10-16). It was the kind of situation that many desire to flee and ignore or overlook. Keep in mind that Paul himself was under attack (see note, *Paul, Accusations Against*—2 Cor.1:12-22 for more discussion). Note the words of this verse: “some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.” Apparently they felt the criticism and accusations against Paul were true, so he would not dare face them. However, note four points.

1. Paul has a longing to be with his dear church and people and to help them through this troublesome time. He says forcibly: “I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will.” He is the Lord's servant, so he has to go where the Lord leads him. But his prayers will be pleading for God to let him return to Corinth so that he can do all he can to help them.

2. Paul expects to deal with the troublemakers, to exercise whatever discipline is necessary. False charges were being made against him, and as always, rumors were flying (see note, *Paul, Accusations Against*—2 Cor.1:12-22 for a complete list of the accusations and rumors). Paul says this: when he arrives, he will not be interested in the accusations of his accusers, but in their power, that is, in what they can back up and prove with evidence. He will expose the accusers and their carnal, worldly character—expose them for what they are: troublemakers.

3. Paul gives the reason why he will discipline the troublemakers: because the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. That is, the Kingdom of God, the rule and reign of God within a life, does not exist within a man because he says it does. When God rules in a life, it is in power. The old life that makes accusations and spreads rumors about people has been put to death. God's rule of love reigns in a life.

The point is direct: the accusers were professing to be citizens of God's kingdom, to have surrendered their lives to Christ, but their profession was word only—only a false profession. The power of God's kingdom, of His rule in a life, was not seen in their lives. They were not demonstrating love and peace nor the building up of God's church and its minister, but the very opposite. They were gossiping, causing rumors, making accusations, disturbing people, causing division, and about to destroy the church. Therefore, Paul says that he will not flee the problem. Rather, he will deal with it. In fact, the Kingdom of God, the very welfare of the kingdom, demands it. God's kingdom and its rule of love must reign in the church and be kept as pure as possible.

4. Paul appeals for self-correction: “What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” The decision is always up to the troublemakers and the church. Disturbances within the church must never be allowed to fester and continue. They must always be dealt with and solved, so that the church can *concentrate* on its mission to reach and minister to a world that is lost and dying in hunger and thirst both spiritually and physically. The world's people must be reached and given life both in this world and in the next. The glorious gospel of salvation must be carried to them. Therefore, the church must straighten itself out so that it can be about its task. If it does, Paul says that he will come to them in love. If it does not, then he will come in discipline.

**Thought 1.** Paul loved the Lord, and he loved the people under his care. He existed only to serve the Lord and the Lord's people. Therefore, his heart reached out to help believers no matter their state or circumstances. If they rejoiced, he rejoiced with them; if they hurt, he hurt with them. No matter what they were experiencing, he was upon earth to help believers through whatever they faced: differences, divisions, immaturity, weaknesses, poverty, danger, persecution. His sole purpose for living was Christ and people: to serve Christ by reaching and ministering to people. He was the minister of God; therefore, Paul did not run from problems. He simply lengthened and intensified his prayers, and he searched the Word of God and the Spirit for answers. Then he arose and walked out of his study and prayer closet to deal with the problems. He walked out under the assurance, confi-

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dence, security, and power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, he knew that whatever happened was under the control and will of God. If the people responded to God's will, God would bless and honor them; if they rejected God's will, God would judge them. In either case, God would take care of his dear minister, for His minister had done his duty.

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:1-2).**

**“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor.5:18).**

**“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Eph.3:7).**

**“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).**

**“Whereunto [the gospel] I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim.1:11).**

**Thought 2.** Note that the love of a minister is just like that of a father. True love is not a thing of indulgence and license that allows selfishness and wrong, dirt and ugliness, sin and shame to run loose and rampant at will. True love cares about the consequence of a person's behavior; therefore, true love exercises firm correction and discipline that is sure to save and keep the loved person from harming himself.

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| <p><b>1 There was the shameful sin: A case of fornication, of public incest</b></p> <p><b>2 There was the church's</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 5</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>III. THE MORAL LAXITY IN THE CHURCH, 5:1-6:20</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A. The Case of Shameful Sin in the Church (Part I): How to Handle a Sinful Brother in the Church, 5:1-5</b></p> <p>It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.</p> <p>2 And ye are puffed up, and</p> | <p>have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.</p> <p>3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,</p> <p>4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,</p> <p>5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.</p> | <p><b>attitude: Inflated self-complacency</b></p> <p><b>3 There was the discipline of the offending brother</b></p> <p>a. To be disciplined in Christ</p> <p>b. To be disciplined by the church in a special gathering</p> <p>c. To be disciplined by delivering him to Satan</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MORAL LAXITY IN THE CHURCH, 5:1-6:20**

**A. The Case of Shameful Sin in the Church (Part I): How to Handle a Sinful Brother in the Church, 5:1-5**

(5:1-6:20) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Church Problems:** Chapters 5 and 6 deal with four moral problems in the Corinthian church. There was serious complacency and laxity in the church toward morality.

1. The Case of Shameful Sin in the Church (Part I): How to Handle a Sinful Brother in the Church, 5:1-5.
2. The Case of Shameful Sin in the Church (Part II): What the Church Must Do to Handle Shameful Sin in Its Midst, 5:6-13.
3. The Case of Legal Dispute, 6:1-8.
4. The Case Against Unrighteous Character, 6:9-11.
5. The Case Against the Indulgence of the Human Body, 6:12-20.

(5:1-5) **Introduction:** many churches have members who become involved in shameful sin. When this happens, what should the church do? Ignore it? Pray about it and hope that God will take care of the matter? Or, take action and do everything possible to restore the brother to Christ?

This passage (5:1-5) and the next (5:6-13) handle the ever sensitive subject of church discipline, a subject that is critically needed if the church is to keep a strong witness for the Lord.

1. There was the shameful sin: a case of fornication, of public incest (v.1).
2. There was the church's attitude: inflated self-complacency (v.2).
3. There was the discipline of the offending brother (v.3-5).

**1** (5:1) **Sin—Fornication:** there was the shameful sin—a case of fornication, of public incest in the church. Note that there is no word or conjunction connecting this passage with Chapter Four. Paul jumps right in and abruptly begins to handle this shameful problem: "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you." Shocking, shameful, despicable, and disgusting is the idea. Imagine! A son is living with his step-mother, his father's wife, and it is public knowledge. Everyone, both in the church and in the community, knows all about it.

1. The word "have" indicates some form of permanent relationship. The son had either married her or was living with her.
2. The son was a member of the church. Note that he was a prominent member who was known by everyone; a member who was faithful enough to be known as a member of the church. There is even some indication that he was a leader in the church (v.2, 6).
3. The unbelievers of the world (Gentiles) do not approve of nor accept incest. They might not live pure and clean lives, but they utterly reject incest as being anywhere close to acceptable behavior. Therefore, the testimony of the church was being tragically ruined.

**Thought 1.** Think of the incest and the child abuse within families: parent sinning with child and child with child. How many belong to the church? This message is for how many sitting before us week after week?

**"And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet" (Ro.1:27).**

**"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [homosexuals], nor abusers of themselves with mankind" (1 Cor.6:9).**

“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Cor.6:18).

“And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed” (2 Cor.12:21).

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness....[but] they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19, 21).

“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:19).

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Th.4:3).

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ....Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 4, 7).

**2** (5:2) **Church, Problems—Church Discipline:** there was the church’s attitude—a shameful self-complacency. Note the phrase “puffed up.” The Corinthian church was apparently “puffed up” for two reasons.

1. The church thought of itself as a strong and spiritual church, a church greatly blessed by God. This had been the very sin Paul was attacking in the first four chapters. The believers of the church thought they were spiritual; they revelled in their conceit and pride as a so-called strong church, but they were not. They were allowing a shameful sin to exist in their midst. Instead of being puffed up, they should have been mourning. The word “mourned” (ἐπένθησα) is the word used for grieving and mourning over the dead. They should have been so grieved that they would be driven to intense prayer. Their need was not to be glorying in their so-called spirituality and strength as a church; their need was to mourn over the sin in their midst, begging God to help them restore the fallen brother or to remove him and the sin from their fellowship through love and correction.

2. The church was “puffed up” because of the man who was guilty of the shameful sin (see note—1 Cor.5:6 for discussion).

**Thought 1.** The church is not to be complacent in dealing with sin and evil. This is the whole thrust of this passage and of all Scripture. No church can erase sin completely from its midst, for there are no perfect people. But clear and unquestionable sin and evil must be dealt with and corrected. A complacent, easygoing attitude toward sin will destroy both lives and churches. Practically every society has rules that govern its members, and the most respected and honored societies deal with the members when its membership rules are continually broken. The church, above all societies, must not be complacent and easygoing in dealing with sin that damages the church and lives and is clearly visible to all. (See outline and notes—Mt.18:15-20 for the steps to correcting offending brothers. Jesus spelled out exactly what is to be done, and the wisdom of what He taught is clearly seen.)

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Mt.18:15-17).

“Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Lk.17:1-3).

“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim.5:20).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

“This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Tit.1:13).

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).

“A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject” (Tit.3:10).

**3** (5:3-5) **Church Discipline:** the discipline of the offending brother. Paul was away on a mission tour; therefore, he was not able to personally deal with the offending brother nor the church. However, his spirit overflowed with love for the church; it was as though he was with them “in spirit.” Therefore, he had already judged the matter. He had made a decision about what needed to be done, and it was too important a matter to leave hanging until he returned. Three things were to be done.

1. The offending brother was to be disciplined “in the name of *our* Lord Jesus Christ.”

# 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5

Note the word “our.” Jesus Christ is our Lord, my Lord, the church’s Lord, and the Lord of the offending brother. Paul says...

- it is *your Lord* who is being hurt and cut; His name which you are damaging.
  - it is for *your Lord* that this discipline must be carried out.
  - it is *our Lord* who alone can use the discipline to awaken the sinful brother’s conscience to repent and to seek reconciliation with God.
2. The offending brother was to be disciplined by the church in a special called gathering. This seems to be what is meant by the words “when ye are gathered together.”
- ⇒ Note: Paul says that he would be meeting with them “in spirit.” His heart and prayers would be with them as they handled this most difficult matter.
  - ⇒ Note a crucial fact. The church was instructed to clean itself up before it disciplines the sinning brother. (See outline and notes—1 Cor.5:6-13. As stated, this is a critical point and must be heeded before discipline is ever carried out.)
3. The offending brother was to be disciplined through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was to be delivered to Satan...
- for the destruction of the flesh.
  - that his spirit might be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, what does this mean? There are two major interpretations of the discipline.

1. The discipline means that the man must be excommunicated from the church (vs.2, 7, 13). The idea is that outside the church, that is, outside in the world, is the domain of Satan; whereas in the church is the domain of God (Jn.12:31; 16:11; Acts 26:18; Eph.2:12; Col.1:13; 1 Jn.5:19). The man is to be sent back to Satan’s world to which he belongs. Perhaps such discipline would humiliate him and bring him to his senses. It was a discipline not only to punish him, but to awaken him to righteousness. It is a judgment that takes away a person’s Christian privileges with the hope that the discipline will stir him to repent.

2. The discipline means something more than excommunication. It is the miraculous subjection of the person to the power of Satan. The flesh is to be delivered over to sickness and, if repentance does not follow, then death. Physical consequences are seen to be the result of spiritual failings (see outline and note—1 Cor.11:27-30). In Acts 5:1-11, Ananias and Sapphira are extreme examples. It is further argued that mere excommunication would not have the effect of destroying the flesh.

It should be noted that this punishment is seen as remedial. The flesh is destroyed so that the spirit may be saved. There is no question that Paul means “saved” in the fullest sense, for he adds “in the day of the Lord.” Paul expects to see the offender in the final day of judgment. The same words are also used of Hymeneus and Alexander whom Paul delivered unto Satan so that they might learn not to blaspheme (1 Tim.1:20).

This passage needs to be studied carefully, for the church desperately needs to exercise discipline more than it has in the past in order to strengthen its witness for the Lord. Note three more facts.

1. The actual discipline of the offending brother is carried out in “the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is the power of Christ that executes judgment upon the flesh and upon the spirit. Note this, for it is extremely important. All the church does is what it can do: make the decision that the brother’s sin must be dealt with and then, in a heart broken and full of love, pronounce that he has to leave the church. Any physical or spiritual punishment is in the hands of the Lord, not in the hands of the church.

2. The actual steps to be used in dealing with an offending brother were spelled out in great detail by our Lord Himself, and the wisdom of His love is clearly seen in His instructions. Every church should do exactly what He said, and if the offending brother still refuses to repent, then the church should act. (See outline and notes—Mt.18:15-20. The Lord’s instructions should definitely be closely studied with this passage.)

3. In comparing Scripture with Scripture, it seems that Paul meant something more than excommunication. Scripture definitely teaches that there is a spiritual power that inflicts punishment upon sin. However, this should not be surprising in our day and time, for modern medicine and psychology tell us that misbehavior even causes physical, emotional, and mental punishment. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Jn.5:16 for more discussion.)

**“For this cause [continuing in sin] many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (1 Cor.11:30-32).**

**“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (Jn.15:2).**

**“Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:9-11; cp. Acts 5:1-11).**

**“Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim.1:20).**

**“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him” (Heb.12:5; cp. v.6-11 for a complete picture).**

**“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev.3:19).**

**“Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law” (Ps.94:12).**

**“My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Pr.3:11-12).**

**“O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing” (Jer.10:24).**

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|   | <b>B. The Case of Shameful Sin in the Church (Part II): What the Church Must Do to Handle Shameful Sin in Its Midst, 5:6-13</b>                                 | fornicators:<br>10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.<br>11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.<br>12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?<br>13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. | <b>not entirely</b>  |
| <b>1 The church must learn something: A little leaven (sin) leavens the whole</b> | 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?   |  | <b>5 The church must separate itself from sinners who call themselves brothers</b>                   |
| <b>2 The church must purge out the leaven (sin)</b>                               | 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:                       |  |  |
| <b>3 The church must keep the feast, that is, it must clean itself out</b>        | 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. |  | <b>6 The church must judge only those "within" the church; God judges those "without" the church</b> |
| <b>4 The church must separate itself from the world, but</b>                      | 9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with  |  |  |

**DIVISION III**

**THE MORAL LAXITY IN THE CHURCH, 5:1-6:20**

**B. The Case of Shameful Sin in the Church (Part II): What the Church Must Do to Handle Shameful Sin in Its Midst, 5:6-13**

(5:6-13) **Introduction:** this passage is a continuation of the former passage (v.1-5). The subject is church discipline, a subject that is critically needed if the church is to be what it should be before the Lord and the world. What is the church to do when shameful sin is found in the life of a member?

1. The church must learn something: a little leaven (sin) leavens the whole (v.6).
2. The church must purge out the leaven (sin) (v.7).
3. The church must keep the feast; that is, it must clean itself out (v.8).
4. The church must separate itself from the world, but not entirely (v.9-10).
5. The church must separate itself from sinners who call themselves brothers (v.11).
6. The church must judge only those "within" the church; God judges those "without" the church (v.12-13).

**1** (5:6) **Church Problems:** the church must know something—a little leaven (sin) leavens the whole lump. The leaven or sin of the Corinthian church was its "glorying." The church thought of itself as a strong and spiritual church, a church greatly blessed and gifted by God. Every conceivable gift of the Spirit had been given the church, and the members revelled and gloried in their gifts and blessings (see notes—1 Cor.1:5-7; 1:12; 1:26; 2:6-13; 3:18-23; 4:1-5; 4:6; 4:7; 4:8; 5:2. A quick glance at these notes will give an overview of the glory and pride of the Corinthian church and of the glory and pride that can seep into any church.)

The depth of sinful pride, however, is when a church begins to pride itself in the fact that certain community leaders belong to its fellowship. This was apparently one of the terrible sins of the Corinthian church.

The church was "glorying" because of the man who was guilty of the shameful sin (v.6). The church, of course, would not have been glorying in the sin of the man. Their glorying was in the man himself: his stature, his prestige, who he was, the money he could give, the contribution he could make, his leadership, and perhaps his wealth. The word for "glorying" (*kauchema*) indicates this rather strongly. It means that they were glorying, boasting, and taking pride in the man despite the known fact of his sin. Perhaps he was a man of outstanding leadership in the community or the city of Corinth. Perhaps he had become a leader of one of the factions in the church. Whatever the case, the church overlooked his sin and took great pride in the fact that a man of his stature would join and become a part of their fellowship.

**Thought 1.** Too often, a church overlooks the sin and sinful lifestyle of a man because he is a leader in the community, government, or business. In fact, too often a church glories in the fact that the man is a member of its fellowship. As Scripture declares: "Brothers, these things ought not to be."

The point is this: the church must wake up and learn something. A little leaven (sin) leavens the whole lump. Leaven is a type of sin in the Bible. Therefore, if the man and his shameful sin are allowed to remain in the church, the sin of the man will spread. If the church accepts the man who is living in clear sin, others will begin to feel that they, too, can be acceptable even if they sin. If there is no restraint upon sin, then sin will grow. If sin is accepted, then sin, not righteousness, rules. If righteousness is not the basis of acceptance, then righteousness does not reign, but sin reigns. If the church accepts the person who lives in clear sin, then the church is letting sin rule, and sin will spread. The man who lives *for sin* influences others to live *for sin*.

Note what Scripture says: it takes only a *little* leaven, not much, for sin to grow. Accepting just one man who lives *for the world and for sin* will cause others to begin living worldly and sinful lives.

**“But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died” (Ro.14:15).**

**“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal.5:7-9).**

**“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire” (Mt.18:6-8).**

**“Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary [perfumer] to send forth a stinking savor: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor” (Eccl.10:1).**

**“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes” (Song of Sol.2:15).**

**2** (5:7) **Church, Duty:** the church must purge out the leaven (sin). There are two reasons why the church and its believers must purge all sin out of their lives.

1. Believers are new creatures. The picture is that of the Jewish Passover Feast. The Jewish family was required by law to remove all leaven out of the house before celebrating the Passover. They were even required to light candles and search throughout the house for crumbs of leaven that might have fallen on the floor and under tables and other furniture. The purging of all leaven was symbolic of the people purging the *corrupting influence* of sin out of their lives.

Note the statement: “Ye are unleavened.” The believers of the church were already unleavened; they were new lumps, new creatures; therefore, they must not run outside the family into the world and bring the *old leaven* back into the family. The believer has become a “new creature” in Christ. His *old sins* and *old man* have been cast out of the house; therefore, he is not to let the old sins back into his life nor back into the family of God, that is, the church.

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

**“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal.6:15).**

**“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:22-24).**

**“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:9-10).**

2. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us and for the church. This, too, is a picture of the Passover Feast. In the Jewish Passover Feast, every family slew a Passover lamb and its blood was painted on the door framing above the main entrance into the house. This symbolized that the family believed the Word of God, that God would save the family from judgment when God saw that the blood of the Passover lamb covered its house.

The point is striking: the Passover lamb of the feast and of the Old Testament symbolized God’s great Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore, we must purge the leaven, the sin and its corrupting influence, out of our lives. We must purge all sin out and take the blood of Jesus Christ and cover ourselves and our houses if we wish God’s judgment to pass over us.

Now note the point: if we continue *to practice and to accept sin*, it proves that we do not really believe that the blood of Christ cleanses us. Accepting and living in sin proves that we have no interest in being free from sin. Accepting and living in sin proves that we love sin—that we like what sin can do for us so much that we are unwilling to purge it out of our lives and church. If we allow the old leaven, the old sin in our lives and churches, it shows that we have little interest in a clean and pure life. It shows God that we care little for the cleansing power of the blood of Christ our Passover. The point is forceful, and it is a warning. Therefore, we must purge out the old leaven, the old sins from both our lives and our church.

**“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, And saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn.1:29).**

**“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor.5:7).**

**“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal.1:4).**

**“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

**“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).**

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).**

**“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).**

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev.1:5).

**3** (5:8) **Church, Duty:** the church must keep the feast, that is, it must clean itself out. The point is as clearly stated as possible: the church must keep itself clean and pure. It must not allow malice and wickedness into its fellowship. It must live a life of sincerity and truth. Note five points.

1. The word “malice” indicates that some in the church were apparently opposing the shameful man’s presence in the church. But those who supported the man stood their ground, and malice set in between the two groups.

2. The word “wickedness” (ponerias) means more than just sin and coming short. It means taking pleasure in evil. The church must purge itself of its pride in prestigious men who were living in shameful sin. Such wickedness must be purged out.

3. The word “sincerity” (eilikpinias) means pure, clear, transparent. It is something through which the sunlight can pass indicating a flawless purity.

4. The word “truth” (aletheias) means unadulterated, conformed to the nature of whatever is true. God is truth; therefore, it means to be like God. It means to live and do the truth; therefore, the church must do precisely what is right. It must discipline both itself and the shameful man. The church must purge out the sin within itself.

5. The words “let us keep” are in the present tense, which means continuous action. The church *must continue* to keep the feast, continue to purge out the old leaven of sin and its corrupting influences. It must not only discipline itself and the man who is living in shameful sin, it must continue to keep itself pure, to continue celebrating the feast of purity before God.

“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation [behavior] in the world” (2 Cor.1:12).

“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ” (2 Cor.2:17).

“This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Ph.1:9-10).

“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Tit.2:7).

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn.3:18).

**4** (5:9-10) **Church, Duty:** the church must separate itself from the world, but not entirely. Paul had apparently written an earlier epistle or letter to the Corinthians. He had charged them to do exactly what he was now saying: do not keep close company with those who live *for sin and this world*. The word “company” (sunanamignusthai) means to mix up. Paul had mentioned four types of shameful sins that were to be kept out of the church and separate from believers.

1. The church was not to become mixed with the *fornicators* of this world. The word “fornication” means all kinds of immoral sexual acts. It includes adultery, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, and all forms of sexual deviation. Those who practice immorality are not to be part of the fellowship of the church. Believers are not to keep close fellowship with them.

“And likewise also the man, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Ro.1:27).

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [homosexuals], nor abusers of themselves with mankind” (1 Cor.6:9).

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness....they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19, 21).

“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:19).

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Th.4:3).

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ....Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 4, 7).

2. The church was not to become mixed up with the *covetous* (pleonektais) of this world. The word means those who seek for more and more while millions within the world are dying from sin, hunger, disease, and poverty. This is a sin that is especially despised by God (see outline and notes—Mt.19:16-22; 19:23-26; Lk.16:19-31).

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Ex.20:17).

“For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth” (Ps.10:3).

“For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely” (Jer.6:13).

“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezk.33:31).

“And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage” (Mic.2:2).

“Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!” (Hab.2:9).

3. The church was not to become mixed up with the *extortioners* (harpaxin) of the world. These are the thieves, hijackers, grafters, and those who take advantage of the poor in order to get more gain for themselves. Again, these are especially despised by God because of their unreal view of the world, a world that reels under the weight of so many gripped by poverty, disease, sin, and death.

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” (Mt.23:25).

“And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you” (Lk.3:13).

“How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?” (Ps.82:2).

“He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor” (Pr.14:31).

“An unjust man is an abomination to the just” (Pr.29:27).

“Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!” (Is.10:1-2).

“In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbors by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord God” (Ezk.22:12).

“Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat; ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them” (Amos 5:11).

4. The church was not to become mixed up with the *idolaters* (eidololatrais) of the world. The word means those who either worship false gods or do not have a right relationship with God. Idolatry, of course, includes all unbelievers; for any person who does not truly worship God is worshipping something else, some idol, even if the idol is self and the possessions of this world.

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 Jn.5:21).

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” (Ex.20:4).

“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them” (Dt.11:16).

“There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god” (Ps.81:9).

“I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another [not even to self], neither my praise to graven images” (Is.42:8).

Now, note the point. The church and its believers cannot go out of the world; therefore, some contact with the unbelievers of the world is necessary. This is understandable to any thinking and honest person. However, it is also understandable that the church must not become *mixed up* with the shameful sinners of the world. The church and its believers must be separate in their behavior and fellowship. The church and the believers are to be holy and pure and righteous before God and to hold up the banner of holiness and purity and righteousness before the people of the world. Believers are *in the world*, but they must not be *of the world*.

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (Jn.15:19).

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph.5:11).

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 Th.3:6).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

**5** (5:11) **Church, Duty:** the church must separate itself even from shameful sinners who call themselves “brothers.” Note the difference between this charge and the former command. The former charge has to do with the sinner out in the world. This charge has to do with the sinner in the church. Sometimes a professing believer returns to the shameful sins of the world and stays there, refusing to repent. Of course, the church is to seek to restore the man; the church is to take the steps spelled out by Christ (see outline and notes—Mt.18:15-20 for a clear discussion of what a church should do when a professing brother sins). However, if the man refuses to respond and repent after the gracious attempts at restoration have been made, the church has no choice but to separate itself from the man.

Note that two sins are added in this verse.

- ⇒ The railer (loidoros) is a person who rants and scolds; reviles and abuses; uses insolent, abusive, and slanderous language.
- ⇒ The drunkard is a person who intoxicates himself with alcoholic beverages and drugs, a person who deadens his faculties through alcohol and drugs.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).

“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn.3:18).

“And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues” (Ps.78:35-36).

“Fervent lips and a wicked heart are like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross” (Pr.26:23).

“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not” (Ezk.33:31-32).

**6** (5:12-13) **Church, Duty:** the church must judge only those “within” the church; God judges those who are “without,” that is, the unbelievers. No believer and no church is to try to exercise discipline upon unbelievers out in the world. Judgment of unbelievers is in God’s hands. However, the church is to exercise discipline within the church. Therefore, the shameful sinner who refuses to repent must be dismissed from the church. (See notes—Mt.18:15-20; 1 Cor.5:3-5 for detailed discussion of what the church is to do with offending believers.)

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Mt.18:15-17).

“Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Lk.17:1-3).

“And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem” (Acts 16:4).

“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim.5:20).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

“This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Tit.1:13).

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).

“A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject” (Tit.3:10).

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb.13:17).

| CHAPTER 6  |   |   |
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| <p><b>1 Quest. 1: Do you dare go before the unjust world instead of saints to settle legal matters between Christian brothers?</b></p> <p><b>2 Quest. 2: Do you not know your high &amp; exalted authority?</b></p> <p>a. You shall judge &amp; govern the world</p> <p>b. You shall judge &amp; govern the angels</p> <p><b>3 Quest. 3: Do you choose</b></p> | <p><b>C. A Case of Legal Dispute, 6:1-8</b></p> <p>Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?</p> <p>2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?</p> <p>3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?</p> <p>4 If then ye have judgments</p> | <p>of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.</p> <p>5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?</p> <p>6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.</p> <p>7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?</p> <p>8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.</p> <p><b>4 Quest. 4: Is there not a wise man in the church?</b></p> <p><b>5 Quest. 5: Why not give in—suffer being cheated rather than running the risk of cheating a brother?</b></p> |

**DIVISION III**

**THE MORAL LAXITY IN THE CHURCH, 5:1-6:20**

**C. A Case of Legal Dispute, 6:1-8**

(6:1-8) **Another Outline:** A Case of Legal Dispute.

1. The legal dispute should be settled by saints (v.1).
2. The saints have the highest exalted authority (v.2).
3. The standards of Christians are different from the standards of the world (v.4).
4. The great Christian principle: the believer ought to suffer wrong rather than do wrong (v.6).

(6:1-8) **Legal Disputes:** this passage deals *only with disputes between Christian brothers*. It says nothing about going to court against unbelievers, the heathen. Note that Paul uses a progressive argument. He progresses from question to question, building reason upon reason until he reaches the great Christian principle itself: the believer ought to suffer wrong rather than run the risk of doing wrong.

1. Question 1: Do you dare go before the unjust world instead of saints to settle legal matters between Christian brothers (v.1)?
2. Question 2: Do you not know your high and exalted authority (v.2-3)?
3. Question 3: Do you choose unbelievers as judges who have no standing in the church (v.4)?
4. Question 4: Is there not a wise man in the church (v.5-6)?
5. Question 5: Why not give in—suffer being cheated rather than running the risk of cheating a brother (v.7-8)?

**1** (6:1) **Legal Suits—Court—Justice:** the first question—do you dare go before the unjust world instead of saints to settle matters between Christian brothers? The thought in the Greek is forceful: How dare you—you who are the saints of God—go to law before the unjust of the world!

Believers are not to be disputing and arguing over rights and authority nor over the things and possessions of this world. They are to be working and using what they earn for Christ and His cause to reach the masses of humanity who are lost and dying from starvation, disease, poverty, and sin.

This was not the case within the Corinthian church, however. The church was divided, and there were apparently some who had sought legal judgment against some others. Whether the judgment involved rights within the church or actual property, or a dispute over some matter between two or more individuals is not known. There was simply a problem of legal dispute, and the opposing parties had sought secular judgment.

Note that the two conflicting parties were believers; the secular judges were unbelievers. Note also that the secular judges are called “the unjust.” This does not mean that the world’s judges were legally unjust, that is, that the believers might not get a fair trial. It is only referring to unbelievers as a class of people who are unjust or unjustified before God. It is contrasting the church with the world, the believer with the unbeliever. Believers are to settle their disputes between themselves within their own Christian society and be governed by the life of Christ and the law of God. In God’s eyes it is wrong for *believers* to go to law against each other before the world’s judges. There are at least three reasons why it is wrong.

1. Believers who settle differences before the world reproach and damage the name of Christ and the testimony of the church. There is no disputing this fact. It happens every time; there is no escape from the terrible tragedy: the name of Christ is always hurt when believers *carry their differences* before the world.

**Thought 1.** The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (trust), meekness, and self-control; and it is the fruit of the Spirit that is so desperately needed by the world. But what the

## 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-8

world receives from *disputing Christians* is anything but love and the fruit of God's Spirit. There is a devastating difference between the testimonies of peace and conflict, joy and tension, love and anger. Just picture the scene, the awfulness of the scene as God sees it: two believers, two people who really trust God, *standing before* a judge who rejects and rebels against God. And they are asking him to judge between them instead of asking God or some Christian leader to help them see the matter clearly. Just imagine what God thinks of the two conflicting brothers!

2. Believers who settle differences before the world fail the Lord and fail Him miserably. How? They fail to govern their affairs by the *life of Christ and the law of God*. They go before unbelievers who do not govern affairs by the law of Christ nor by the law of God. Believers are to live by Christ and His Word, not by the standards and rules of the world. Believers are to salt and permeate the world, not the other way around. Believers are to be the standard for the world; they are not to accept and live by the standards of the world.

**“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).**

**“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

3. Believers have both the Holy Spirit and Christ-centered leaders to help them determine God's wisdom. Every genuine believer is indwelt by the Spirit of God, and has leaders within his church who can give him spiritual counsel. God has given His Spirit to His people for the very purpose of guiding and teaching them. He has also given spiritual leaders for the same purpose. It is God's will for believers who have conflicts to seek the guidance of His Spirit and church.

**“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas.1:5).**

**“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).**

**“But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn.14:26).**

**“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his....For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:9, 13).**

**“Which thing also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor.2:13).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

**“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).**

**Thought 1.** The church and its believers must begin to live as God and His Word instructs. A different lifestyle must be seen; a Christian lifestyle of love and purity, care and concern, discipline and godly justice must be held up ever so highly for the world to see. It is the only conceivable way the world can ever see real love and godly justice and have its desperate needs met. In particular the leaders of the church and its believers must surrender their lives and give all they have to live as God instructs. They are especially held accountable to see to it that the love and wisdom of God are ministered to His people.

**“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Ro.13:8-10).**

**2** (6:2-3) **Reward—Believers, Position:** the second question—do you not know your high and exalted authority? These two verses state clearly that believers are to judge *all disputes* between themselves. They are to judge “the smallest matters” (v.2) and the “things that pertain to this life” (v.3). There is one supreme reason believers are not to go before the world for judgment:

⇒ Believers are to judge and govern the world. In fact, they are to even judge and govern angels in the next world.

Therefore, conflicting believers lower themselves, lose their dignity as saints, and walk out of their exalted position when they secure a verdict from the world.

1. The word “judge” means the right and power to govern, administer affairs, rule, hold authority, supervise, oversee, and judge. This glorious right and power is to be given to the believer when Christ returns to rule and govern the whole universe. Paul is telling believers that they shall direct and oversee the world and angels. Christ told the apostles that they shall govern and oversee Israel (Mt.10:28). The assignment of responsibility, duty, and work is taught throughout Scripture. There is to be *judging*, that is, governing, supervision, and oversight throughout eternity. All this activity and responsibility is, of course, for and under Christ.

For some unknown reason we so often picture *eternal life* as some dreamy sleep or semi-conscious type of existence or some future existence that puts us on a fluffy cloud. Eternal life is often pictured as floating around in an eternal state of inactivity. Why man cannot accept the simple statement of Christ that life is to be eternal is difficult to understand. Eternal life is life that goes on and on. There is, however, one basic difference: life shall be perfected, perfected in body, mind, and spirit. It is life lived in the midst of a new heaven and earth (perfected)—life lived before Christ and responsible to Christ in all that is assigned (Jn.3:16; 5:24; Ro.8:19-23; 2 Pt.3:9-18; 1 Jn.5:11-13; Rev.21:1).

2. The rule and reign of believers is a fact. It is a fact so sure and certain that the Bible speaks of it in the present. The words “the world shall be judged by you” are literally “is being judged.” The rule and reign of the believer is an absolute fact.

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mt.19:28. See note—Mt.19:28.)

“And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father” (Mt.20:23).

“That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk.22:30).

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (Jn.5:22).

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:17).

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:6-7).

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us” (2 Tim.2:12).

“For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb.2:5-9).

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father” (Rev.2:26-27).

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Rev.20:4).

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Rev.21:1).

“And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city” (Is.1:26).

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Is.65:17).

“Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (Dan.7:22).

**3** (6:4) **Church, Problems:** the third question—do you choose unbelievers as judges? In the Greek this sentence is emphatic: the unbelievers are...

- as nothing in the church.
- of no account in judging matters in the church.
- not held in high esteem within the church.
- of no standing in the church.

The unbelievers do not live by the life of Christ nor by the standards of God. How then can they stand before believers and judge matters in *the spirit of Christ and by God's standards*? Just think how far these Corinthian believers had fallen from their exalted position given them in Christ! Just think how far some believers and churches have fallen in our day from their exalted position in Christ Jesus our Lord!

**4** (6:5-6) **Church, Problems:** the fourth question—is there not a wise man in the church? The need is for shame and embarrassment. Anyone who would walk off from an exalted position and turn away from the wisdom of God in order to secure advice from a person with no standing in God's government needs to be shamed. The question is dramatic and

pointed: is there not a single wise man among you? No, not even one that can arbitrate and give a simple judgment when conflicts arise? The thrust is twofold:

1. There is no excuse for conflict among brothers, for believers going to law against one another.
2. There is especially no excuse for conflicting brothers going to law before the unbelievers of the world.

**“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor.3:3).**

**“But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers” (1 Cor.6:6).**

**“But now are they many members, yet but one body” (1 Cor.12:20).**

**“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord” (Ph.4:2).**

**5** (6:7-8) **Church, Problems:** the fifth question—why not give in? Why not suffer being wronged and cheated rather than running the risk of wronging and cheating a brother? Note two points.

1. The word “fault” means defeat. The very fact of engaging in legal disputes is a defeat, clear evidence of hurt and damage. Just think of who is hurt and damaged when believers engage in legal disputes:

- ⇒ The parties themselves suffer pain, tension, anger, and an innumerable list of other hurtful emotions.
- ⇒ The church suffers the loss of its testimony for Christ and the pain of being known as hypocritical.
- ⇒ The unbelievers suffer by being turned off by those who profess love, joy, and peace, and yet who show the very opposite. They suffer having their opportunity to be saved erased even more. How many unbelievers have been doomed because of the irresponsible behavior of believers before the world?
- ⇒ Christ suffers because His people are not holding high the banner of His witness, but rather are causing it to be distasteful and cursed.

What an indictment against any believer who causes so much suffering!

**“And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also” (Lk.6:29).**

**“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Ro.12:17).**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

**“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Pt.3:9).**

**“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD” (Lev.19:18).**

**“Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee” (Pr.20:22).**

**“Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work” (Pr.24:29).**

2. Some of the Corinthian believers were guilty (v.8). They wanted their rights and more. They wanted some of the things which their brothers had; therefore, they went after them. Note: they did not steal them outrightly; they sought them by legal means. They used the legal system of the world to *defraud* their brothers. The world called it legal, but it was cheating and stealing to God. It was sin, a terrible injustice.

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” (Mt.23:25).**

**“Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right” (Pr.16:8).**

**“The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death” (Pr.21:6).**

**“As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool” (Jer.17:11).**

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| <p><b>1 A shocking but critical question</b></p> <p><b>2 The deceptive sins that stimulate the flesh: Are often thought not to be fatal</b></p> | <p><b>D. A Case Against Unrighteous Character, 6:9-11</b></p> <p>9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,</p> | <p>10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.</p> <p>11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.</p> | <p><b>3 The deceptive sins that seek gain: Are often thought not to be fatal</b></p> <p><b>4 The power of Christ</b></p> <p>a. A revolutionary conversion: "Such were"<br/> b. Now you are washed<br/> c. Now you are sanctified<br/> d. Now you are justified</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MORAL LAXITY IN THE CHURCH, 5:1-6:20**

**D. A Case Against Unrighteous Character, 6:9-11**

(6:9-11) **Introduction:** this is a shocking passage, for it deals with sins that most people think would never cause God to condemn and reject them—sins that are acceptable and practiced to minor degrees by many in society. Yet God pulls no punches: no church membership, no religion, no profession, no good works—nothing can save a person if he practices these sins.

1. A shocking but critical question (v.9).
2. The deceptive sins that stimulate the flesh: are often thought not to be fatal (v.9).
3. The deceptive sins that seek gain: are often thought not to be fatal (v.10).
4. The power of Christ (v.11).

**1** (6:9) **Kingdom of God:** this is a shocking but critical question that must be made known to every person. "Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" People must know the facts: if God is righteous, then people must live righteous lives in order to be accepted by Him. However, people ignore the fact of God's righteousness and His demand for righteousness. People divorce their behavior from religion. People...

- profess religion
- practice religion
- talk religion
- defend their beliefs about religion

However, they go ahead and live like they want regardless of their religion. If they want to do something, they do it feeling that God will forgive them. There are few people who think that God will reject them. They feel that they will have done enough good to be acceptable to God...

- enough kindness
- enough religion
- enough works
- enough service

In the final analysis, most people just think that God will accept them. This attitude comes from a false concept of God, a concept that looks upon God as a father who is indulgent and who gives his children the license to do *some wrong*.

This is a fatal mistake. It was the mistake that some of the Corinthian church members were making, and it is the same mistake that teeming multitudes of religious people have made down through the centuries.

**"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" (v.9).**

Believers are to inherit a kingdom, a new heaven and earth where God will rule and reign. They are to be given eternal life and given the glorious privilege of being citizens in God's kingdom and world. They are to live with Him and serve Him in perfection for all eternity. (See note, *Reward*—1 Cor.6:2-3; Lk.16:10-12 for more discussion.) But this glorious privilege is to be given only to genuine believers, those men and women who have truly given their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ—given their lives to live as Jesus Christ says to live. No matter how religious a person is—no matter how much zeal a person may have in keeping religious rituals and in attending services and in giving to charity—if he does not live a pure and righteous life, he "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

**"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" (v.9).**

**2** (6:9) **Sin—Deception:** the deceptive sins that stimulate the flesh are often considered not fatal. The reason is clearly seen. Note that all the sins mentioned in this verse are sins that arouse man's flesh. He derives great pleasure from them. It is man's nature to desire the arousal of his flesh; therefore, man tends to think that meeting the needs of his nature is not wrong. He tends to think that he cannot be blamed for doing what is natural, even if

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he does perhaps go overboard every now and then. The point is this: a person who practices these sins is *unrighteous* in God's eyes. He "shall not inherit the kingdom of God. *Be not deceived.*"

1. *Fornicators* "shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived." *Fornicators* (pornoï) are those who engage in all forms of sexual and immoral acts. It includes pre-marital sex, adultery, abnormal sex, and all other kinds of sexual vice.

**"And likewise also the man, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet" (Ro.1:27).**

**"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind" (1 Cor.6:9).**

**"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness....[but] they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal.5:19, 21).**

**"Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph.4:19).**

**"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph.5:3).**

**"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Th.4:3).**

**"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ....Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 4, 7).**

2. *Idolaters* "shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived." *Idolaters* (eidololatrai) are not just people who worship idols and images of metal, wood, and stone. In the Scripture idolatry is the sin of the mind and body against God. Idolatry is basically two things.

a. Idolatry is working up concepts and ideas of God that are not true—ideas that are not true to the revelation of the Scriptures and of Jesus Christ. Men have concepts and ideas of what God is like. If their ideas are not what Scripture and Jesus Christ say, then they are worshipping an idol of their own mind. This is easily understood by the honest man. What man has ever seen God? Have you? Have I? No, for God is invisible. He is of another dimension of being entirely, the spiritual dimension. Therefore, if God is to be known, He has to love us enough to reveal Himself. And note: once He has revealed Himself, any idea or concept other than what He has revealed *becomes* an idol.

This is the very point: God has loved the world. He has revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ and through His Word, the Holy Scripture. Therefore, an idolater is anyone who strikes out on his own and works up concepts and ideas of God that are against what Jesus Christ and the Scripture reveal.

**"Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements [human notions, ideas], whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Gal.4:8-9).**

**"Among whom also we all had our conversation [behavior] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph.2:3).**

**"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools....Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature [even man himself] more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever" (Ro.1:22, 25).**

**"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (1 Pt.4:3).**

b. Idolatry is putting something else before God. As Scripture says, covetousness is idolatry. An idolater is a person who gives his mind and body—thoughts, time, energy, efforts, loyalty—to something other than to God. Idolatry is the sin of the mind and body against God; it is the failure to look up to God and acknowledge Him; the failure to give one's life to Him including one's thoughts, time, energy, and effort—one's loyalty and worship. Idolatry is putting other things before God:

- |              |              |               |            |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| ⇒ money      | ⇒ recreation | ⇒ power       | ⇒ luxury   |
| ⇒ profession | ⇒ popularity | ⇒ recognition | ⇒ pleasure |
| ⇒ family     | ⇒ fame       | ⇒ possessions | ⇒ position |
| ⇒ cars       | ⇒ property   | ⇒ food        | ⇒ esteem   |

“Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry” (1 Cor.10:14).

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry....they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19-21).

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph.5:5).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience” (Col.3:5-6).

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).

“For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev.22:15).

3. Adulterers “shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived.” *Adulterers* (moichoi) are those...
- who are sexually unfaithful to their wife or husband.
  - who look on a woman or a man to lust after her or him. Looking at and lusting after the opposite sex in person, magazines, books, on beaches or wherever is adultery. Imagining and lusting within the heart is the very same as committing the act.

“But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:28).

“And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices” (2 Pt.2:13-14).

“Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Ex.20:14; cp. Lev.20:10).

“The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face. In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light. For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death. He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards. Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned” (Job 24:15-19).

4. The effeminate (malakoi, women homosexuals) and the abusers of themselves with mankind (arsenokoitai, men homosexuals) “shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived.”

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet” (Ro.1:26-27).

“And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed” (2 Cor.12:21).

“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:19).

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7).

**3** (6:10) **Sin—Deception:** the deceptive sins that seek gain are often considered not to be fatal. Again, the reason is they are so common among mankind. Many people practice these sins to varying degrees, accepting them as common and understood behavior. Granted, the degree of committing the sins is minor for most people; nevertheless, many still stand guilty before God, and Scripture says they “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

1. Thieves “shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived.” The word used here for thieves (kleptai) does not mean just the *professional thief* who lives by stealing. It means the petty, sneak thief: the shoplifter, the person who steals things here and there.

“Thou shalt not steal” (Ex.20:15).

“When thou comest into thy neighbor’s vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel” (Dt.23:24).

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath

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fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Ro.13:8-9).

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph.4:28).

“Not purloining [stealing], but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Tit.2:10).

“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters” (1 Pt.4:15).

2. The covetous “shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived.” The “covetous” (pleonektai) are those...

- who always want more and more.
- who are never satisfied with what they have.
- who want more and more to spend in pleasure and luxury.
- who crave after possessions, pleasure, fame, power.
- who bank and store up and hoard, ignoring and neglecting the desperate needs of teeming millions who are dying from hunger, disease, poverty, and sin. (See outline and notes—Mt.19:16-22; 19:23-26; Lk.16:19-31 for more discussion.)

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Ex.20:17).

“For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth” (Ps.10:3).

“For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely” (Jer.6:13).

“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezk.33:31).

“And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage” (Mic.2:2).

“Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!” (Hab.2:9).

3. Drunkards “shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived.” “Drunkards” (methusoi) are people who take drink and drugs to affect their senses for lust and pleasure; who seek to be tipsy or intoxicated; who seek to loosen their moral restraints for the sake of bodily pleasure.

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lk.21:34).

“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying” (Ro.13:13).

“Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor.6:10).

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess” (Eph.5:18).

“For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night” (1 Th.5:7).

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Pr.20:1).

“Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine” (Pr.23:29-30).

“Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!” (Is.5:11).

**“For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry” (Nah.1:10).**

4. Revilers “shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived.” Revilers (loidoroi) are people who abuse others through scolding, ranting and raving, insolent and abusive language, cursing and slanderous language.

**“As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God” (Ps.42:10).**

**“They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkard” (Ps.69:12).**

**“The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law” (Ps.119:51).**

**“And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him” (Lk.16:14).**

**“And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God” (Lk.23:35).**

5. Extortioners “shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived.” Extortioners (harpages) are persons who take money and things from others either by scheme or force. They take advantage of the poor, the ignorant, the innocent, the unsuspecting, and sometimes even family and friends. They use whoever and whatever means they can to get what they want. They grasp to get more and more.

Now note the conclusion of this list of sins: none of these persons “shall inherit the kingdom of God.” It does not matter what we think or say. God is as clear as He can be: the persons who practice these sins “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

**4** (6:11) **Conversion—Salvation—Jesus Christ, Power:** there is the power of Christ. Note four points.

1. “Such were some of you” is abrupt and forceful. It is a revolutionary statement. Some of the Corinthians had been living in the terrible sins just mentioned, but no more. They had been converted and radically changed by Jesus Christ.

Note that the word “but” is repeated three times in this verse. It stresses the revolutionary change that the power of Christ works in a life that truly gives itself to Christ.

2. The word “washed” (apelousasthe) means to wash off, to wash away. It means that a person comes to Jesus Christ to have his sins washed away, and when he comes, Jesus actually washes his sins away. The word is in the Greek aorist tense which is the past tense; that is, it is referring to their conversion experience. When the believer is washed from sin he is supposed to be washed and cleansed. Sin and its defilement are supposed to be washed away forever. By the power of Christ, the believer is supposed to stay away from the dirt and the filth of the world.

**“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (Jn.15:3).**

**“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).**

**“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).**

**“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor.7:1).**

**“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph.5:25-26).**

**“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (Jas.4:8).**

**“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev.1:5).**

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

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).**

**“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (Ps.51:2).**

**“Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake” (Ps.79:9).**

**“O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?” (Jer.4:14).**

3. The word “sanctified” is also in the aorist tense. It, too, refers to the believer’s salvation experience. The Lord Jesus Christ set the believer apart unto God, and the experience was supposed to be a once-for-all event. The believer is not to return to the world and to its polluting sins. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Sanctification*—1 Cor.1:2 for meaning and discussion.)

**“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn.17:17).**

**“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor.1:30).**

**“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim.2:21).**

**“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Heb.13:12).**

**“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1 Pt.1:2).**

4. The word “justified” is probably the most glorious and unbelievable truth known to man. In the simplest of terms, this is what justification means: God takes a person’s faith in Jesus Christ and *counts* his faith as righteousness (see notes—2 Cor.5:18-19; 5:21; Ro.4:1-3; 4:1-2; 5:1 for detailed discussion). When a person genuinely believes in Jesus Christ, God *credits* that person’s faith *as righteousness*. The person is not righteous; he knows he has no righteousness of his own. He knows he is imperfect. He knows he is short of God’s glory as a sinful human being. But he truly believes that Jesus Christ died for his sins, and he wants to surrender his life and worship to Jesus Christ. Such belief honors God’s Son (whom God loves with an eternal love), and because it honors God’s Son, God accepts that person’s faith for righteousness. Therefore, the person becomes acceptable to God. (In a discussion of justification a person’s belief—the right kind of belief—is critical. See DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.2:24; Ro.10:16-17.)

Note the words “in the name of the Lord Jesus.” To believe “in the name of the Lord Jesus” means that the person stakes his life upon Jesus. He trusts Jesus Christ...

- to take care of his past: his sins and guilt, his rebellion and rejection of God.
- to take care of his present: his life and welfare while on this earth.
- to take care of his future: his eternal destiny and the inheritance of eternal life and God’s kingdom.

**“And he [Abraham] believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6).**

**“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).**

**“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Ro.3:28).**

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

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| <p><b>1 Principles of Christian liberty</b><br/> a. Do only the expedient<br/> b. Do nothing that enslaves</p> <p><b>2 The body is not designed for desires &amp; urges</b><br/> a. Not for the stomach, that is, food<br/> b. Not for sex, that is, gratification<br/> c. But for the Lord<br/> d. The body's destiny: To be resurrected</p> <p><b>3 The body is designed to be a member of Christ</b><br/> a. The body is not</p> | <p><b>E. A Case Against the Indulgence of the Human Body, 6:12-20</b></p> <p>12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.</p> <p>13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.</p> <p>14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.</p> <p>15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the</p> | <p>members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.</p> <p>16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.</p> <p>17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.</p> <p>18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.</p> <p>19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?</p> <p>20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.</p> | <p>designed to be the member of a harlot</p> <p>b. The person joined to Christ is one Spirit<br/> c. The person of immorality sins against his own body<sup>DS1</sup><br/> d. Concl.: Flee fornication</p> <p><b>4 The body is designed to be the temple of the Holy Spirit</b><br/> a. He is within the body<br/> b. He is the gift of God<br/> c. He claims the body<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p><b>5 The body and spirit are both designed to glorify God</b></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MORAL LAXITY IN THE CHURCH, 5:1-6:20**

**E. A Case Against the Indulgence of the Human Body, 6:12-20**

(6:12-20) **Introduction:** the human body is abused more than any other single thing on earth. Men develop and expend most of their resources on “things” and machines that damage and kill the human body. In comparison, little is spent on saving and nurturing the human body. If there is any single thing that proves man’s utter depravity, it is how he treats his own human body. The present passage deals with this problem. It is God’s case against the indulgence of the human body.

1. Principles of Christian liberty (v.12).
2. The body is not designed for desires and urges (v.13-14).
3. The body is designed to be a member of Christ (v.15-18).
4. The body is designed to be the temple of the Holy Spirit (v.19).
5. The body and spirit are both designed to glorify God (v.20).

**1** (6:12) **Liberty, Christian:** the principle of Christian liberty and freedom or the idea that “all things are lawful to me” is a subject that desperately needs to be discussed. People always have and always will look upon the desires and urges of the body...

- as normal functions.
- as natural instincts.
- as needing to be fulfilled.

Therefore, they set out to fulfill the desires of their body. In fact, their body—its beauty and health and satisfaction—becomes the primary purpose of their lives. They work, eat, sleep, and socialize to fulfill the body’s desires and urges. Whatever their bodies desire is what they go after, and they see absolutely nothing wrong with satisfying their desires, for the desire is a natural function of their body.

The point is this, and it is surprising to many in the world: the Scripture not only agrees with a person’s liberty and freedom, it teaches personal liberty and freedom. Personal liberty is taught throughout Scripture under the subject of Christian liberty.

Now note the clear statement: “All things are lawful unto me.” God has made man and his body, and He has made everything in the world, and it is all good. Therefore, all things are lawful to a person. However, there are two restrictions that are clearly seen and logical to a thinking and honest person.

1. The first restriction is that all things are not *expedient* (sumpherei). The word means helpful, worthwhile, advisable, and profitable. For example, it is helpful to eat fish; it is unprofitable to eat poison berries. It is advisable to keep active for the sake of the body; it is harmful to lie around and become inactive. Note that doing any of these activities is lawful, but two of them are not good and profitable.

2. The second restriction is that all things are not wise: some things enslave; they do not build self-image and self-respect. Note the strong statement of Paul: “All things are lawful to me, but *I will not be brought under the power of any.*” No man is to become a slave to anything on this earth. Man is supposed to control all things upon earth and to be enslaved by none of them: not food, drink, drug, substance, desire, urge, or anything else. Man is to preserve his self-control; he is to control the substances of this earth and not be controlled by them. The health of his body and its emotions, of his mind and its intelligence, of his spirit and its destiny depends upon his controlling his body and not allowing it to become enslaved to the things of this earth.

**Thought 1.** Indulging the appetites of the body is one of the great sins of believers. No matter what society may accept and we may think, it is a gross sin to allow our bodies to become enslaved by any substance or thing on this earth.

**“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Ro.6:12).**

**“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate [controlled, disciplined] in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor.9:25).**

**“...meekness, temperance [self-control]: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:23).**

**“That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate [self-controlled], sound in faith, in charity, in patience” (Tit.2:2).**

**“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations” (1 Pt.1:5-6).**

**2** (6:13-14) **Body:** the body is not designed for desires and urges. In Paul’s day what we call fornication and immorality was an acceptable practice within society, and the practice was carried over into the church by some of its members. The members were apparently using the argument of the society of their day. Note that the argument was the age old argument that is so often heard in every generation. Glance at the verse again and watch the natural progression of the argument that we so often hear:

⇒ Just as the body desires food and must have food for normal functioning, so the body desires sex and must have sex for normal functioning.

⇒ The desires of the body are normal and natural; therefore, satisfying the normal function is only the natural thing to do. It could not be wrong, no matter who says it is.

Every generation has its own way to express the same argument:

⇒ “I’m just doing my own thing.”

⇒ “I’m just doing what comes naturally.”

⇒ “I’m just following my instincts.”

Note what Scripture says about this argument.

1. The body is not designed for the stomach nor for food. Contrariwise, the stomach and food are designed for the body. Therefore, the body is to control the stomach and food. It is not to become the slave...

- to the urges and desires of the stomach.
- to the appeal of the looks, smell, and taste of food.

The body is to be fed as needed and looked after. Therefore, the body is to use its stomach to fulfill its function as part of the body, but it is not to become the slave to the stomach and food. It is not to lose control and give in to indulgence. This is clearly seen in another point as well. The stomach and food are only temporary. The day is coming when their function will be destroyed, that is, brought to nothing and no longer needed. Men will be transformed and their bodies perfected. (Cp. Ph.3:20-21.)

The point is this: the stomach and food have their purpose; therefore, they are to be used for that purpose and for that purpose alone. They are to feed the body, not control the body. Man is not to indulge his stomach and give in to its urges, letting it enslave his body.

**“Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Ph.3:19).**

**“He that laboreth, laboreth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him” (Pr.16:26).**

**“And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite” (Pr.23:2).**

**“All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled” (Eccl.6:7).**

2. The body is not designed for fornication and sexual gratification. Sex is part of life, and it has its place in carrying on the human race and in building an intimate and strong union and foundation *for the family*. But again, sex was given for the body; the body was not created for sex. Sex belongs to the body; the body does not belong to sex. The body is not to be given over as a slave to sex; sex is to serve the body. The body is to control sex, not sex the body.

**“And likewise also the man, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet” (Ro.1:27).**

**“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind” (1 Cor.6:9).**

**“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness....[but] they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19, 21).**

**“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:19).**

**“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).**

**“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Th.4:3).**

3. The body is designed for the Lord and the Lord for the body. Note two things carefully:

- a. God created the body of man to worship, praise, and serve Him. This is the first reason these bodies of ours exist.

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Mt.4:10).

“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:7).

“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (Ps.29:2).

“O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth” (Ps.96:9).

“Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy” (Ps.99:5).

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Is.43:10).

- b. God created the body of man for the Lord to dwell in. This is the meaning of the phrase: “the Lord for the body.”

4. The body is destined to be resurrected; it will not lie in the grave forever. Just as God raised up the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, so He shall raise up our bodies from the dead.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live....Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jn.5:25, 28-29).

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn.6:40).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:25-26).

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor.15:20; cp. v.12-56).

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” (1 Th.4:14).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pt.1:3).

- 3** (6:15-18) **Body:** the body is designed to be a member of Christ. This point is emphatic: note the three forceful questions.

⇒ “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” (v.15).

⇒ “Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?” (v.15).

⇒ “Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body?” (v.16).

The point is critical, so think: ask yourselves these questions. Recall, remember—regain the knowledge of what the Lord teaches. “Your bodies are the members of Christ.” What does this mean? Three things:

⇒ The believer’s body belongs to Christ. Christ died for the believer; He redeemed the believer, paying the ransom for his body. Therefore, the believer owes Christ his life and body (1 Cor.6:20).

⇒ The believer actually receives the divine nature of God when he is converted. He becomes a partaker of God’s very own nature (2 Pt.1:4; cp. 1 Pt.1:23).

⇒ All believers form the body of Christ on earth today. They are united around Christ, around His Spirit, mind, purpose, cause, objective—His life—all that He is.

“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (Jn.14:20).

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (Jn.17:23).

“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Ro.8:10).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col.1:27).

“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1 Jn.3:24).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).

Now, note the points.

1. The body is not designed to be the member of a harlot nor of any other immoral partner. The body was made to be the member of Christ, *which means* that we are to honor Him with our bodies. We are to take the sexual drive and energy of our bodies and use them *in His name or as He instructed*:

- ⇒ either we dedicate our lives solely to Him as eunuchs,
- ⇒ or we marry and build a family with the dynamic virtues of love and care, trust and loyalty.

We are members of Christ, representatives of Him on this earth; therefore, we are not to be joined to an harlot, to any illicit partner. We are not to become one flesh with anyone other than a legitimate spouse, for we are members of Christ and His cause upon this earth.

2. The person joined to the Lord is one spirit. The point is graphic: the believer's union with Christ is much stronger than any physical relationship. How? Christ and the believer become *one spirit*, and that spirit connects them in the greatest possible union.

- ⇒ The believer receives the mind of Christ.

**“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor.2:16).**

- ⇒ The believer receives the Holy Spirit of Christ (see note—1 Cor.6:19 for discussion and verses).

3. The conclusion of this point is imperative: flee fornication (all forms of immorality), for the person of immorality sins against his own body. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Cor.6:18 for discussion and verses.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(6:18) **Immorality—Body**: there are five reasons why sexual immorality is a sin against a person's own body.

1. It lowers the person to the level of an animal. It is simply the wrong view of a man. It views man as a beast, ignoring man's spirit. It declares that life is to be lived on the level of passion and instinct, ignoring the life of the spirit.

2. It looks upon the other person only as an instrument, a tool to satisfy urges and passions. It ignores the satisfaction and peace of heart and mind.

3. Sexual immorality corrupts the temple of God. The Bible teaches that man is a child of God's by creation. He possesses spirit as well as physical urges. And when a man truly believes in Christ, Christ is said to dwell *within* him. This makes the human body the very temple of Christ's presence, which means that the body belongs to Christ. It actually is the body of Christ. Therefore, if a believer commits immorality, he is joining the very body of Christ to an harlot.

4. The *true virtues* of man's basic nature are deeply affected. For example, man's basic nature is...

- to love and to be loved.
- to give and to receive.
- to live and let live.
- to be loyal and trustworthy.

The list could go on and on. But note something: when a person has an immoral relationship, every one of the basic virtues of man's nature is disturbed. His whole body is affected. His love, loyalty, and life are not focused; they are scattered. All that he is can never again be focused upon one person. One person will never again have his complete love, complete loyalty, or complete life. By nature the man knows this, and it causes reactions in his body: emotional, mental, and physical reactions—all to varying degrees. Nevertheless, the reactions exist.

5. The emotional and mental makeup of a person is affected more deeply than by any other sin. When a person commits an immoral act, he soon feels and senses guilt when he is all alone thinking about his life. The person may not call it guilt; he may say that he just *feels bad*. But the *bad feeling* or guilt is a natural result of immorality.

Why does immorality cause a man to sense guilt? Because it is a violation of the law of God. God has built man to take care of his body, of his family, of his society, and to protect the bodies and families of others.

If a person takes a virgin or the wife of someone else, he endangers that person and that family. He damages...

- the person's body: her emotional, mental, and physical nature.
- the family's unity and cohesiveness. He damages the trust and oneness the spouses have in each other, and he damages the security of the children.

A *sword of divisiveness* sets in, and feelings of guilt and disturbance take over. Loyalty is weakened in the person, the family, and in society.

**4** (6:19) **Body—Holy Spirit, Temple of**: the body is designed to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. (See note, *Church—1 Cor.3:16* for more discussion.) This is one of the glorious truths of both Scripture and the Christian experience. The word “body” is singular: each believer is a temple of the Spirit of God.

1. The Holy Spirit actually dwells *within* the body of the believer.

“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:17).

“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (Jn.14:20).

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor.6:19).

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor.6:16).

“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph.2:22).

“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (2 Tim.1:14).

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).

2. The Holy Spirit is the gift of God. A man does not receive the Spirit of God by working for Him. He receives the Spirit of God as a gift from God.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing [the presence and blessings of the Spirit] shall come from the presense of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

3. God lays claim to the body. Believers do not own their bodies, not any more. Jesus Christ bought our bodies. Therefore, we are now the servants of God. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Ransom*—1 Cor.6:20 for discussion.)

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(6:20) **Ransom—Redemption:** the word “bought” (egorasthete) means to buy in the marketplace of slavery. The idea is that Jesus Christ has paid our ransom and bought us...

- out of our enslavement to sin.
- out of our enslavement to death.
- out of our enslavement to hell.

His death met all the demands of God’s perfect justice. God’s justice was completely satisfied with Jesus Christ...

- taking our sin upon Himself.
- dying for us.
- suffering hell or separation from God for us.

Therefore we are freed, liberated from sin, death, and hell. We are now free to live righteously and eternally in God’s presence—all because Jesus Christ paid our ransom. He is our redemption. (See note—2 Cor.5:21; Eph.1:7.)

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col.1:14).

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb.9:12).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev.5:9).

**5** (6:20) **Body:** the body and spirit are both designed to glorify God. Note that a temple has no other purpose for existing except to house God’s presence. It has but one function—*receptivity*. Note that the function is *not activity*. All activities of a temple should be to merely prepare for the reception of God’s presence. The case for taking care of the human body has been stated as clearly as it can be. The body and the spirit of man have been created by God to glorify God. They both belong to God through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (Jn.15:8).

“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.15:5-6).

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).

“Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th.1:11-12).

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.2:5).

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|   | <p><b>CHAPTER 7</b></p> <p><b>IV. THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING MARRIAGE,<sup>DS1,2</sup> 7:1-40</b></p> <p><b>A. The Question About Celibacy &amp; Marriage, 7:1-7</b></p>  | <p>4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.</p> <p>5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.</p> <p>6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.</p> <p>7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.</p> | <p><b>4 There is to be mutual ownership of one another's body</b></p> <p>a. Each has equal rights over the other's body</p> <p>b. Each belongs to the other so fully that to withhold is an act of <i>fraud</i></p> <p>c. Each must give consent to abstain—only for prayer</p> <p><b>5 There is the gift of marriage &amp; the gift of being single</b></p> |
| <p><b>1 There are special situations for not marrying</b></p> <p><b>2 There is a condition necessitating marriage</b></p> <p><b>3 There are mutual duties within marriage</b></p> | <p>Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.</p> <p>2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.</p> <p>3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.</p> |   |  |

**DIVISION IV**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING MARRIAGE, 7:1-40**

**A. The Question About Celibacy and Marriage, 7:1-7**

(7:1-40) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Marriage—Celibacy—Immorality—Society:** Corinth was a cesspool of immorality, one of the most immoral cities in the world of its day. All forms of sexual deviations ran rampant and were openly displayed. Loose living was the practice of spouse and neighbor, friend and stranger. Practically everyone dressed to draw attention and to attract, and they peppered their conversation with insinuations to let each other know that they were available and desired. A decent person could not walk down the street without being eyed and thought about by the tempter or temptress. Sex was the goddess of Corinth society. It permeated the government, commerce, recreation, and religion of the Corinthian. It abounded everywhere. (See Introduction, *Special Features*—1 Corinthians.)

Now, imagine a church of the Lord Jesus Christ sitting in the midst of such an immoral society. Imagine men and women desiring to live pure and godly lives for the Lord Jesus Christ. Imagine the temptations they would face, the pressure to look, touch, and experience; and it was out of such a life that so many had been saved. Think of the enticing temptations and pull that would confront them to return to the world.

Because of all this—the pressure of the temptations that abounded at every bend—the Corinthian believers began to search for the best way to handle the situation. The conclusion of some believers was that celibacy was the best way. They felt that never to touch a woman (or man) was the surest way to stay pure and gain the strength to conquer the temptation. By controlling himself, a person would eventually become so strong that the temptations would have no effect upon him. The idea caught hold, and some, apparently a fair number, began to practice celibacy. There is even indication that some married men and women began to practice celibacy either within the marriage or by leaving their spouses (cp. vs.3-5).

The matter of handling the temptation of fornication and of celibacy had become such an issue that the church needed guidance. Therefore, they wrote and asked Paul what the Lord had taught regarding fornication, celibacy, and marriage. Note Paul's immediate words: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote me." Beginning here in Chapter 7, Paul is answering specific questions the church had written and asked him.

(7:1-7) **Introduction:** the church needs to be concerned about marriage. Believers must understand God's concept of marriage, for marriage is God's institution. He created both man and woman and gave them the union of marriage. Even if society falls apart in the divorce courts of the world, and immorality and cohabitation run rampant, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ must hold high the truth of the marriage bond and union, the truth as it was ordained by God. This passage answers some very practical questions that often nag and cause problems both for the single adult and the married partner.

1. There are special situations for not marrying (v.1).
2. There is a condition necessitating marriage (v.2).
3. There are mutual duties within marriage (v.3).
4. There is to be mutual ownership of one another's body (v.4-6).
5. There is the gift of marriage and the gift of being single (v.7).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(7:1-40) **Scripture, Inspiration:** throughout this passage Paul is giving a command without directly quoting Christ (cp. vs.6, 10, 12, 25, 40). The Lord had said nothing about this matter. Paul is not disclaiming inspiration, but he is actually claiming the same authority as the Lord's own words. Of course, this does not void the apostolic teaching in any sense.

**1** (7:1) **Celibacy—Marriage—Moral Purity:** there are *special situations* for not marrying. There are situations that require celibacy. The word “good” (*kalon*) means advisable, advantageous, expedient, profitable, wholesome. There are times when it is wise not to marry and to take on the responsibilities of marriage. Paul mentions two of the situations in this chapter.

1. First, some “present distress” made it advisable for the unmarried believers not to marry (v.26). What the distress was is not known, but the application to us is clearly seen. There are times when marriage is unwise because of situations arising from the persecutions of Christians, world wars, economic collapse, revolutions, death, obligations, disease, sicknesses, and accidents.

2. Second, God’s will and call need to be closely considered. God calls some men and women to remain unmarried. As Paul says: “that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction” (v.35). Note that Jesus Christ Himself taught celibacy in obedience to God’s call:

**“For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it” (Mt.19:12).**

Now note Paul’s exact words: “It is good [wholesome, pure] for a man not to touch a woman.” This deals with all touching and not just celibacy. It means that single men and women are not to go too far on dates or to cohabit with each other. There is to be no immoral sin between the singles of God’s church.

**“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:28).**

**“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman” (1 Cor.7:1).**

**“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Th.4:3).**

**“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Rev.14:4).**

**2** (7:2) **Marriage—Celibacy:** there is a condition necessitating marriage. Note three points.

1. This verse is a command; it is to be the rule of the church.

2. *Every* man and *every* woman is to be married. “Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” The reason is clearly stated: to avoid fornication. Sex is the gift of God; it is the way God has made us. It is the way God has ordained for a man and woman...

- to propagate and carry on the human race.

- to grow in intimacy, building a solid foundation for the family, society, and human survival.

Therefore, every believer is commanded to marry. There are only two exceptions to the rule, both of which are given in the previous verse (1 Cor.7:1).

3. This teaching is not a low view of marriage; it is extremely wise advice. Note two points.

a. Paul is not discussing the Scriptural teaching on marriage. His views and doctrine on marriage are the highest teachings imaginable (see outline and notes—Eph.5:22-33).

In this particular passage Paul is dealing with specific problems of temptation and fornication, and how to handle the temptation in a most vile and immoral society: Is celibacy or marriage the better answer?

b. It is extremely wise for every man and woman to marry unless God has given them control over sexual desire. In a world of where sex is worshipped and flaunted, it is *almost* impossible to remain pure apart from God’s presence and power in life—unless the person is married and has a good, wholesome, and giving marriage.

**“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen.2:24).**

**“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the LORD” (Pr.18:22).**

**“Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished” (Jer.29:6).**

**“Let the deacons [lay believers] be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well” (1 Tim.3:12).**

**“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully” (1 Tim.5:14).**

**“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb.13:4).**

**3** (7:3) **Marriage:** there are mutual duties within marriage. Note two significant points.

1. The words “due benevolence” (*ten opheilen*) mean the debt; to render what is due. The husband and wife owe some things to the other.

⇒ Both have rights; each can expect to receive some things from the other.

⇒ Both have the responsibility to pay to the other exactly what is due.

2. The word “render” is continuous action. The rights and duties of each are to be continually fulfilled. (Note: this verse is usually interpreted to refer only to sexual rights and duties within marriage. However, it is certainly applicable to all the rights and duties of husband and wife. The lesson is the same.)

**Thought 1.** Some of the Scriptures that speak to the duties of husbands are these:

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife” (Mk.10:7).

“But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife” (1 Cor.7:11).

“Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children” (2 Cor.12:14).

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph.5:25).

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph.6:4).

“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach” (1 Tim.3:2).

“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (1 Tim.3:4).

—“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pt.3:7).

“And thou shalt teach them [the Holy Scriptures] unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Dt.6:7).

“When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken” (Dt.24:5).

“Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth” (Pr.5:18).

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Pr.22:6).

“Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun” (Eccl.9:9).

**Thought 2.** Some of the Scriptures that speak to the duties of wives are these:

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband; But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife” (1 Cor.7:10-11).

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Eph.5:22; cp. Col.3:18).

“Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things” (1 Tim.3:11).

“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (2 Tim.1:5).

“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Tit.2:4).

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives” (1 Pt.3:1).

**4** (7:4-6) **Marriage:** there is to be mutual ownership of each other’s body in marriage. Note the clarity and forcefulness of this verse. The reason is obvious throughout society. Far too many marriages have dissatisfying sexual relationships; therefore, seeking sexual satisfaction elsewhere has become so common that it has become an acceptable practice in some circles and societies.

As stated, God is clear and forceful in His instructions. And what He has to say in these few verses could go a long way in solving many of the problems existing in so many marriages.

1. Both the husband and wife have equal rights over the other’s body. Neither spouse has full authority over their body—not in God’s eyes. The body of each belongs to the other; each has obligations to the other. That is part of the marriage union wrought by God. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Cleave*—Mt.19:5 for detailed discussion on the critical importance of this point.)

2. Both the husband and wife belong to each other so fully that to withhold is an act of *fraud*, of cheating the other of what he is due. Each owes his or her body to the other.

3. Both the husband and wife must consent to abstain—only for fasting and prayer. This is the only exception given by Scripture. So long as health allows, the married couple is to cleave together, fulfilling God’s purpose of growing more and more into the intimate family structure that is so desperately needed...

- by society
- by children
- by the church
- by government

However, note that a husband and wife must not stay apart for too long a period because of temptation. This is crucial to note, for Satan is strong in his temptations, especially in a sex crazed society. Yet, this is a common mistake made in many marriages.

**Thought 1.** Any thinking and honest person knows that the closer the union and preciousness between the husband and wife, the stronger the love and loyalty and security of the family and its society and church and government. The crying need today is for husband and wives to straighten out their marriages by surrendering their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ and by living as He said to live. Only His presence and power can straighten out a marriage.

Note the supreme importance of prayer in the life of a family. It is the only exception accepted by God for a married couple to stay apart.

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself” (Eph.5:28).

“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Eph.5:33).

“Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them” (Col.3:19).

“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb.13:4).

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Gen.2:18).

“And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death” (Gen.24:67).

“Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned” (Song of Sol.8:7).

**5** (7:7) **Marriage:** there is God’s gift of marriage and God’s gift of being single. God is the One who should determine if a believer should marry or stay single. Paul had remained single because of God’s gift, and in light of the present distress (perhaps persecution lay over the horizon), he wished every person could be as he was, single. However, every man must do as God gifts him.

“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor.7:1-2).

“I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn” (1 Cor.7:8-9).

“I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be [remain single]. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you” (1 Cor.7:26-28).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (1 Tim.4:1-3).

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Rev.14:4).

# 1 CORINTHIANS 7:8-16

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| <p><b>1 The unmarried &amp; the widows</b></p> <p>a. The best course: To remain single</p> <p>b. The command: To marry if they burn with passion</p> <p><b>2 The married Christian couple &amp; divorce</b></p> <p>a. Divorce forbidden to the wife</p> <p>b. Remarriage forbidden: But can be reconciled to spouse</p> <p>c. Divorce forbidden to the husband</p> <p><b>3 The married Christian with an unbelieving spouse</b></p> <p>a. Stay together—if the</p> | <p><b>B. Specific Questions About the Unmarried, Divorced, &amp; Mixed Marriages, 7:8-16</b></p> <p>8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.</p> <p>9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.</p> <p>10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:</p> <p>11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.</p> <p>12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell</p> | <p>with him, let him not put her away.</p> <p>13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.</p> <p>14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.</p> <p>15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.</p> <p>16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?</p> | <p>unbelieving spouse consents</p> <p>1) One's life influences the spouse</p> <p>2) One's life influences the children</p> <p>b. Separate—if the unbelieving spouse wishes</p> <p>1) One is not bound if the spouse departs</p> <p>2) One should separate to keep peace</p> <p>c. The reason for cooperating with the unbelieving spouse: His or her salvation</p> |
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## DIVISION IV

### THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING MARRIAGE, 7:1-40

#### B. Specific Questions About the Unmarried, Divorced, & Mixed Marriages, 7:8-16

(7:8-16) **Introduction:** this passage deals with three specific questions concerning marriage.

1. The unmarried and the widows (v.8-9).
2. The married Christian couple and divorce (v.10-11).
3. The married Christian with an unbelieving spouse (v.12-16).

**1** (7:8-9) **Marriage—Widows—Singles—Paul:** first, the question concerning the unmarried and the widows. The unmarried most likely refers to widowed men and to the divorced men and women of the congregation. Virgins and unmarried men are dealt with elsewhere in this chapter (v.1, 2, 25, 25-38). The church had a question about temptation and those who had experienced sexual relations. What was the best way for these to combat temptation in a sex-crazed society?

1. The best course of action would be for them to remain single. Why?
  - ⇒ Because of the “present distress” (v.26).
  - ⇒ Because they would be able to give the Lord their full attention “without distraction” (v.35. See note—1 Cor.7:1 for more discussion.)

Note: Paul says that he was unmarried in the context of this discussion, the discussion of the divorced and widowed. Does this mean that he was either widowed or divorced? Probably, for Paul was most likely a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews, and all members of the Sanhedrin were required by law to be married (see note—Acts 26:9-11).

2. The unmarried and widows were to marry if they burned with passion.
  - a. This is a command; it is a duty, an obligation for Christians. If they cannot control their passion, they are to marry.
  - b. There is only one exception for not marrying: God's will. God calls some men and women to live a single and dedicated life for His service. But if God calls a person to live a life of dedication, He will give the person the power to control his passion. Again, if God has not called and given the power to control his passion, the believer is to marry.

**“For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it” (Mt.19:12).**

Now note Paul's exact words: “It is good [wholesome, pure] for a man not to touch a woman.” This deals with all touching and not just celibacy. It means that single men and women are to guard against going too far on dates or to cohabit with each other. There is to be no immoral sin between the singles of God's church.

**“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:28).**

**“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman” (1 Cor.7:1).**

**“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Th.4:3).**

**“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Rev.14:4).**

**2** (7:10-11) **Marriage, of Believers—Divorce:** second, the question concerning married Christian couples and divorce. Note three clear commands. Paul says the commands come directly from the Lord’s teaching Himself (cp. Mt.5:32; 19:3-9; Mk.10:2-12; Lk.16:18).

1. Divorce is forbidden to the wife. The Christian wife is not to divorce her Christian husband. They are both believers with the mercy and power of Christ at their disposal. They are to subject themselves to Christ, and come before Him daily...

- in patience.
- in searching the Scriptures for what marriage is to be.
- in repentance for any sin and seeking His forgiveness.
- in trust that the Lord will give His power to straighten things out.
- in respect of God’s will and the commitment made to each other.

2. Remarriage is forbidden to the Christian wife. Scripture recognizes that not every one, including believers, will seek the Lord enough to work out their differences. When these divorce, what should they do? Remain single or remarry? Jesus Christ said they are not to remarry. They can be reconciled to their husbands, but they cannot remarry.

**“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband” (1 Cor.7:10).**

**“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Eph.5:22; cp. Col.3:18).**

**“Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things” (1 Tim.3:11; cp. Tit.2:40).**

3. Divorce is forbidden to the Christian husband. Although it is not spelled out, all that has been said concerning the Christian wife applies to the Christian husband.

**“Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth” (Pr.5:18).**

**“Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labor which thou takest under the sun” (Eccl.9:9).**

**“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder” (Mk.10:7-9; cp. Gen.2:23-24).**

**“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph.5:25).**

**“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pt.3:7).**

**3** (7:12-16) **Marriage, Mixed—Unbelieving Spouses:** third, the question concerning Christians who are married to unbelieving spouses. Note: Paul says that this particular issue was never discussed by the Lord; therefore, there are no direct commandments of the Lord to share. However, he would issue the commands, which he made clear was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (cp. v.40. See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Scripture, Inspiration—1 Cor.7:1-40.*)

Apparently there were many mixed marriages in the Corinthian church. But note: they were not believers marrying unbelievers. They were heathen who had become believers. Scripture never sanctions a true Christian marrying an unbeliever, for marriage is *sacred* to God (v.39).

It seems that some in the church were saying this: once a person gave his life to Christ, he was not thereafter to live with an unbeliever. They were saying that he as a new believer was to divorce the unbelieving wife or husband.

What should a Christian who is married to an unbeliever do: stay married or divorce? Scripture gives three instructions.

1. Stay together. The believing spouse should stay, but *only* if the unbelieving spouse is willing. The reason is clearly seen.

a. The believer will influence his or her spouse for Christ.

⇒ The word “sanctified” does not mean that the believer’s faith saves the unbelieving spouse. Nowhere does Scripture teach that one person can believe and trust Christ *for* another person. A person is saved only by *personally believing* in Christ himself. Every person stands personally before God as an individual.

⇒ The word “sanctified” means that the marriage is set apart unto God. If the unbeliever is willing to remain with the believer, the marriage is not to be dissolved. Simply stated, God accepts the marriage of a mixed couple if the unbelieving spouse is willing to accept the fact that his wife or her husband is a Christian *who lives for the Lord*. The unbeliever must support his spouse in her loyalty to Christ and His church.

b. The believer will influence the children.

Note what Paul says: if God did not accept the marriage, then the children would be illegitimate in God’s eyes. However, since the unbeliever supports his Christian spouse, God accepts his support as “sanctification” of the marriage and family. Of course, this includes the children.

Note how the believer affects both the spouse and the children. The presence of the believer in the family touches the whole family for God, as long as the unbeliever lends his support to the Christian. The whole family is accepted by God as a legitimate family, a family set apart for Him and His cause.

2. Separate if the unbelieving spouse wishes. If the unbelieving spouse leaves the believer, the believer is to let him leave. The bond of marriage is broken. “A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases” (v.15. Note that this seems to be saying that the believer is free to remarry.)

The point is that God has called us to *peace*. This probably refers to all that has been said thus far in this chapter. Peace is certainly the purpose of God in the believer’s life: peace with God and peace with each other. If a husband or wife will not live in peace and support his or her spouse in carrying the gospel of peace to the world, the spouse is to continue living for God even if it means divorce. The glorious gospel of peace is God’s message to the world!

3. The reason the believer is to cooperate with the unbelieving spouse is clear: the unbelieving spouse may be won to Christ by the believer.

**“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [behavior] of the wives” (1 Pt.3:1).**

**“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more” (1 Cor.9:19).**

**“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life: and he that winneth souls is wise” (Pr.11:30).**

**“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan.12:3).**

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| <p><b>1 Fact 1: God calls people from all lots in life, from all conditions &amp; levels of society</b></p> <p><b>2 Fact 2: Religious distinctions do not matter</b></p> <p>a. What matters: Not external rituals</p> <p>b. What matters: The heart—the keeping of God’s commandments</p> | <p><b>C. The Question About the Christian and His Lot in Life, 7:17-24</b></p> <p>17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.</p> <p>18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.</p> <p>19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.</p> | <p>20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.</p> <p>21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.</p> <p>22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant.</p> <p>23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.</p> <p>24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.</p> | <p><b>3 Fact 3: Vocations &amp; social conditions do not matter</b></p> <p>a. Even the most horrible condition—slavery</p> <p>b. The believer’s high exaltation</p> <p>1) Enslaved to Christ</p> <p>2) Purchased by Christ</p> <p><b>4 Fact 4: Be faithful in your lot</b></p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING MARRIAGE, 7:1-40**

**C. The Question About the Christian and His Lot in Life, 7:17-24**

(7:17-24) **Introduction:** the message of the gospel is the most glorious message imaginable. The gospel proclaims...

- that true believers are set free by Christ, free from sin, death, and condemnation.
- that true believers can have abundance of life now and throughout all of life.
- that true believers shall inherit eternal life.
- that true believers shall have the privilege of ruling and reigning with Christ forever.
- that the Lord Jesus Christ shall return.
- that God is no respecter of persons; all men are equal before Him.
- that the sin and corruption of this world shall be done away with, and God shall make a new heaven and earth.

The gospel is revolutionary. It completely changes the status of believers’ lives both now and forever, for believers are given the hope of everything for which men dream. It was the revolutionary nature of the gospel that caused some believers in Corinth to begin...

- breaking their social ties.
- changing their professions.
- breaking their religious ties.
- cutting loose from their family and public obligations.

This kind of behavior, of course, disrupted the lives of all who surrounded the Corinthian believers. Some of the Corinthian believers were just breaking loose from everything. For example, some believers reasoned like this: if this world is sinful and corrupt, then a believer must have nothing to do with the world nor with those who live in this world. Therefore, some believers broke their social ties.

Others reasoned this way: if believers are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, then they should separate from their unbelieving spouses. This question is dealt with in the former passage (1 Cor.7:12-16).

Still others thought this: they needed to do away with all the rituals and duties of religion because they were saved by faith and not by a religion.

Believer after believer was questioning his lot in life and becoming dissatisfied, feeling that he had been dealt a terrible hand in life. Therefore, he had to change his life, no matter who it affected or hurt. Some believers were changing their jobs, religion, friends; and some were even breaking up their families in order to change their lot in life.

This passage deals with the believer’s lot in life: his status, condition, circumstances, and relationships throughout society. It is a much needed message.

1. Fact 1: God calls people from all lots in life, from all conditions and levels of society (v.17).
2. Fact 2: religious distinctions do not matter (v.18-19).
3. Fact 3: vocations and social conditions do not matter (v.20-23).
4. Fact 4: be faithful in your lot (v.24).

**1** (7:17) **Life, Lot In—Circumstances—Believers, Life-Walk-Behavior:** first, God calls people from all lots in life, from all conditions and levels of society. Note that both God and Christ are involved in the lot of believers in the world.

- ⇒ God Himself has *distributed* gifts and abilities to every man.
- ⇒ The Lord Jesus Christ has *called* every believer to serve Him and His cause upon earth no matter where he is.

Therefore, let everyone walk where he is using his gifts and abilities for Christ and His cause. Christ calls the person to be a witness for Him right where the person lives and works, unless the person is engaged in some activity that is sinful and illegitimate. A person’s lot in life—his circumstances, position, social standing, employment, marital status—does not

have a bearing on Christ saving him. Therefore, a person's lot in life is not to have a bearing on whether or not he walks in Christ. The believer is to walk in Christ no matter where he is. It is not conditions and circumstances that are to determine the believer's life and walk; on the contrary, the believer is given the power of Christ to walk through circumstances no matter how severe and difficult they may be. This does not mean the believer is not to better himself and his condition in life, nor that the believer is necessarily to stay where he is. It simply means the believer is to serve Christ no matter his lot in life.

**“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:4).**

**“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor.5:7).**

**“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (Eph.5:15).**

**2** (7:18-19) **Religion—Rituals:** second, religious distinctions do not matter. There were both Gentile and Jewish converts in the Corinthian church. As always, some of the Jewish converts wanted to continue practicing some of the ceremonial laws of their former religion. Others felt the form and rituals were useless, and they wanted nothing to do with them. Of course, the Gentile converts certainly did not want anything to do with Judaism, for it was the religion of a despised people, and the gospel made the rituals unnecessary. Apparently the issue had become a serious matter in the church. The answer to the issue is direct and pointed. External rituals and form in religion do not matter. They do not save a person nor do they make a person acceptable or unacceptable to God. What really matters is the heart: the keeping of God's commandments. The believer who pleases God is the believer who loves and trusts the Lord so much that he obeys God. He trusts God to such a degree that he knows that what God says is the very best thing to do. He loves the Lord so much that he longs to please the Lord by doing exactly what the Lord says.

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).**

**“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn.14:21).**

**“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Gal.5:6).**

**“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision” (Ro.2:25).**

**“But he is a Jew [true believer], which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Ro.2:29).**

**“Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing” (Gal.5:2).**

**“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam.15:22).**

**“For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Ps.51:16-17).**

**“For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hos.6:6).**

**3** (7:20-23) **Employment—Employee:** vocations and social conditions do not matter. The importance of this passage is stressed again.

**“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called” (v.20).**

Note: a Christian believer is to know that he can live for Christ *even* in the most horrible of conditions, that of slavery. This matter posed a critical problem in early Christianity, for there were so many converts who were slaves. Their time belonged to their master; therefore, they were often unable to attend services and to serve Christ as much as they wished.

Scripture drives the point home: serve Christ where you are. As a slave, if you can secure your freedom, secure it and then serve Christ to the fullest. But in the meantime, serve Christ where you are. There are two reasons why the slave is enabled to serve where he is.

⇒ He is the Lord's *freeman*.

⇒ The believer who is free and called or saved is the servant of Christ.

Therefore, the slave is equal to all other men in the eyes of the Lord. And he shall receive an equal reward if he is *faithful* where he is as a slave. He may not be free to attend church and participate in religious activities as much as other believers. But if he is faithful to Christ by doing the best job and in being the best witness he can, then he is just as acceptable to God as the most active member of the church. God measures the faithfulness of believers to Christ, not to certain kinds of activities. Wherever the believer is, his lot in life, his vocation and social condition in life do not matter.

Note why. Believers are bought with a price: the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, they are His servants and witnesses all over this world. Wherever believers are, they are bearing testimony and reaching every segment and social level of society. The uttermost part of the earth, no matter how enslaved and impoverished, must be reached and must have its believers who can witness for Christ. This is the only way people all over the world will ever know about the new heavens and earth where believers will be exalted to rule and reign with Jesus Christ. Therefore, he is to live and serve

Christ in all the requirements and duties laid upon him by others while he is a slave on this earth. His day of redemption and exaltation is coming. (See note, *Reward*—1 Cor.3:13-15 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** The point is directed to all professions. If a slave is to serve Christ faithfully where he is, other believers are to serve Christ faithfully, no matter their profession.

**“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph.6:5-7).**

**“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col.3:22-24).**

**4** (7:24) **Faithfulness:** fourth, be faithful in your lot on this earth. This is the third time the exhortation is given in this passage (v.17, 20, 24). It cannot be stressed too much. This does not mean a believer is not to better his lot in life. It means that a believer is to serve Christ faithfully where he is without moaning and grumbling about his lot in life.

Note the emphasis: let the believer “abide with God.” A man is to walk and abide in a consciousness of God all day long every day—no matter where he is or what his circumstances are. He has been saved to fellowship with God and to serve the Lord Jesus Christ as a witness to all other men.

**“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (Jn.15:5).**

**“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Jn.15:7).**

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).**

**“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).**

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).**

**“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).**

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| <p><b>1 This passage is a judgment of Paul's, not a direct commandment of the Lord</b></p> <p><b>2 Concern 1: Consider the "present distress" of the world</b></p> <p>a. Paul's judgment: Stay in your present marital status</p> <p>1) Remain married</p> <p>2) Remain single</p> <p>b. Paul's view: Marriage is normal; it is not sin</p> <p>1) It is affected by world conditions</p> <p>2) It does add responsibility</p> <p><b>3 Concern 2: Know the time is short</b></p> <p>a. Be detached from earthly circumstances</p> <p>b. Do not be engrossed in the world—it passes away</p> <p><b>4 Concern 3: Be without anxiety &amp; distressing care</b></p> <p>a. The unmarried man is more likely to be anxious for the Lord</p> | <p><b>D. The Question Concerning Marriage: Should Christian Virgins &amp; Widows Marry? 7:25-40</b></p> <p>25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.</p> <p>26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.</p> <p>27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.</p> <p>28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.</p> <p>29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;</p> <p>30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;</p> <p>31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.</p> <p>32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:</p> | <p>33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.</p> <p>34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.</p> <p>35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.</p> <p>36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.</p> <p>37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.</p> <p>38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.</p> <p>39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.</p> <p>40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.</p> | <p>b. The married man is more likely to be anxious for his spouse</p> <p>c. The virgin is more likely to be anxious for the Lord</p> <p>d. The wife is more likely to be anxious for her spouse</p> <p><b>5 Concern 4: Attend upon the Lord without distraction</b></p> <p>a. Not intended to restrain liberty</p> <p>b. To show the best thing in the present distress</p> <p><b>6 Conclusion: In light of the present distress several instructions are advisable</b></p> <p>a. The believer should marry—if necessary</p> <p>b. The believer should not marry—if he can control</p> <p>c. The believer should know that not marrying is best</p> <p>d. The contract of marriage is for life</p> <p>e. The Christian widow or widower...</p> <p>1) Is to marry only a Christian</p> <p>2) Is more blessed to remain single</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING MARRIAGE, 7:1-40**

**D. The Question Concerning Marriage: Should Christian Virgins and Widows Marry? 7:25-40**

(7:25-40) **Introduction:** falling in love and growing in love are natural experiences of human life. It is normal for men and women to desire to spend their lives together. However, there are times when a couple should not marry, and there is a better alternative for some persons. This passage discusses the question of Christian singles and widows: should they marry? The Corinthian church had written Paul and asked him about this matter.

1. This passage is a judgment of Paul's, not a direct commandment of the Lord (v.25).
2. Concern 1: consider the "present distress" of the world (v.26-28).
3. Concern 2: know the time is short (v.29-31).
4. Concern 3: be without anxiety and distressing care (v.32-34).
5. Concern 4: attend upon the Lord without distraction (v.35).
6. Conclusion: in light of the present distress several instructions are advisable (v.36-40).

**1** (7:25) **Virgin—Scripture, Inspiration:** this Scripture is a judgment of Paul's, not a commandment of the Lord. This is essential to note, for Paul says clearly that the Lord did not give a direct commandment governing this matter. How

ever he, Paul, would give his judgment...

- because he had obtained the mercy of the Lord. The Lord was with him, and he knew the intimacy and presence of the Lord and of His will.
- because he was called to be faithful to the Lord, and he would be faithful in giving his judgment and instructions.

Note one other fact. The word “virgin” usually refers only to women; however the word is sometimes used to refer to both women and men (cp. Rev.14:4). Paul is apparently using the word to refer to both sexes in this passage.

**2** (7:26-28) **Unmarried, The—Virgins—Marriage:** the first concern is the “present distress” of the world. The Corinthians were facing some terrible and pressuring distress. What was it? We do not know, but it was probably the threat and antagonism of severe persecution from a hostile world. The persecutions were either already existing or else Paul sensed them lying right over the horizon.

Whatever the distress was, it was a heavy strain upon the believers. The word “distress” (anagke) is a strong word referring to calamities. It is the word that is used to describe the woes surrounding the return of the Lord Jesus. It is also the very same word Paul used to describe his own persecutions (1 Th.3:7; 2 Cor.6:4; 12:10). In light of the present distress, Paul says two things.

1. First, his judgment is for believers to stay in their present marital state. If a believer is single, remain single. If a believer is married, of course, be faithful to your marriage bond. Do not flee and desert your family, saving your own life and leaving them to bear the distress alone (v.26-27).

2. Second, marriage is normal; it is not a sin if the couple goes ahead and marries. But note these facts if there is distress in the world.

⇒ The married couple will have more problems and more trouble to face. Marriage adds more responsibility and additional care. It involves another life to consider in making critical decisions, and critical decisions always arise in distressful situations.

**Thought 1.** There have never been many places in this world where professing Christians could worship the Lord Jesus Christ without reactions and threats from a hostile world. Even today practically every place on the earth witnesses the persecution of genuine believers. They are often ridiculed, mocked, cursed, abused, and sometimes threatened with violence and death for their testimony. Few places, if any, are completely free from some form of persecution.

Therefore, if a genuine believer is considering marriage, he or she must consider the loved one’s commitment to Christ. Will the loved one take a stand for Christ and bear witness to a hostile world, a world that wants no restraint upon its behavior, no message that proclaims righteousness and godliness, holiness and purity, honesty and commitment, soberness and morality? The genuine believer should always consider other calamities as well: war, disease, handicaps, economic hardship, and a host of other possible difficulties. The believer must make absolutely sure that he and his spouse desire to suffer together through whatever distress exists or is threatened. They must also make sure they are willing to suffer together *in Christ*, not weakening and deserting either Christ or each other.

**“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen.2:24).**

**“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband” (1 Cor.7:10).**

**“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Eph.5:22).**

**“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pt.3:7).**

**3** (7:29-31) **Time, Short—Marriage:** the second concern is to know that time is short. This is a reference to both the brevity of life and to the return of the Lord. No believer knows when he will be called upon to face the Lord either through death or through the Lord’s return. Any one of us may be taken today by accident or by some unknown disease, and the Lord could certainly choose to return today. Therefore, two attitudes are extremely wise for us to adopt.

1. The attitude of being detached from earthly circumstances.

- ⇒ If we have a spouse, we need to live as though we do not have him or her, for we may not by nightfall.
- ⇒ If we weep, we need to live as though the weeping experience is over, for it may be by nightfall.
- ⇒ If we rejoice, we need to live as though the joyful experience is over, for it may be by nightfall.
- ⇒ If we buy some item today, we need to live as though we do not possess it, for we may not by nightfall.

**“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand” (Ro.13:11-12).**

**“But this I say, brethren, the time is short” (1 Cor.7:29).**

**“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph.5:16).**

**“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Col.4:5).**

**“But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away” (Jas.1:10).**

**“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jas.4:14).**

“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away” (1 Pt.1:24).

“For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding” (1 Chron.29:15).

“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope” (Job 7:6).

“Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity” (Ps.39:5).

“Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish” (Ps.49:12).

“For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again” (Ps.78:39).

“For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more” (Ps.103:14-16).

“I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass” (Is.51:12).

2. The attitude of not overusing the world nor of being engrossed in the world, for it passes away. It can be stated no more clearly or forcefully: the world is passing away. Note the word fashion (shema) is used; it is a word taken from the theater. The world is nothing more than the passing scenes of a film that will soon end. The world is destined to end in its present form or fashion. The present state of things will cease just as the scenes of a film cease. The believer must keep this in mind; he must not live for the passing fashion of this world. He must live for eternity, keeping before his mind that time is short, ever so short.

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal.6:14).

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim.2:3-4).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

**4** (7:32-34) **Anxiety—Marriage:** the third concern is to be without anxiety and distressing care. Remember that Paul is talking to genuine believers, believers who honestly love the Lord and diligently serve Him. Very simply...

- the unmarried Christian is more likely to be anxious for the Lord, how he may please the Lord; whereas the married man is more likely to be anxious for his wife, how he may please her.
- the unmarried woman is more likely to be anxious for the Lord, how she may be holy both in body and spirit; whereas the married woman cares for the things of her husband, how she may please him.

This is a natural and understandable result of marriage that Christian couples must consider when they desire to be married. They are giving up their rights to live single lives, the privilege of only having to care and look after themselves. Once they are married, they are responsible for the care of their spouse. They must think about and actually please the other.

“But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me” (Lk.10:40).

“But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife” (1 Cor.7:33).

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim.5:8).

**5** (7:35) **Mind—Devotion—Marriage:** the fourth concern is to attend upon the Lord without distraction. Note: Paul re-emphasizes that he is speaking for the believers’ “profit,” that is, for their welfare and advantage. He is not trying to cast a snare or undue restraints upon them. He has no reason to restrict their liberty to marry. They could marry if they wished, for he was interested only in telling them what is “comely,” that is, proper and orderly. They need to know what would bring the best order to their lives. The one thing they needed to guard against was walking into marriage unprepared, not knowing and not having given thought to what is involved in marriage.

There is another reason for remaining single, a reason that is most advantageous, a supreme reason that every believer should consider: the single believer can “attend upon the Lord without distraction.” He can devote his life to the Lord without the divided attention that a wife and family necessitates.

“I beseech ye therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to

this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Ph.3:7-8).

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Ph.4:8).

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th.5:23).

**Thought 1.** A believer must keep in mind that celibacy is a gift of God. (See notes—1 Cor.7:1; 7:7.)

**6** (7:36-40) **Marriage, Instructions:** the conclusions concerning the questions about marriage are clearly stated.

1. Christian virgins (both men and women) are free to marry if necessary, that is, if they are not called by God to remain single. Note that in Paul’s day the father was the one who was responsible for the marriage of the child. Therefore, the reference to the “man” in this verse is to the father. He and his wife, the parents of the young person desiring to be married, were vitally involved in the marriage. (What a need today! How fewer divorces would there be if a family carried the matter of dating, engagement, and marriage together before Christ?)

2. The Christian who is called of God and given the discipline to control his passion should remain single, devoting his or her life solely to the Lord.

3. The Christian father who gives his daughter in marriage does well, but the Christian father who encourages his *God-called* virgin daughter (or son) to devote her whole life to the Lord does better.

**Thought 1.** No father should encourage or do this unless he knows beyond question that the child is called of God. He is only encouraging trouble for this child unless the child is truly called of God. For this reason both parent and child must be absolutely sure of God’s call.

4. The contract of marriage is for life. There is to be no exception (cp. Ro.7:1-3).

5. The Christian widower or widow is to consider two things when thinking about marriage.

a. He or she is to marry only a Christian.

b. He or she is more blessed to remain single. He or she will probably be happier remaining single.

| CHAPTER 8  |   |  |  |
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|  | <b>V. THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND PERSONAL RIGHTS, 8:1-11:1</b>  | one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.<br>7 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.<br>8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.<br>9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.<br>10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;<br>11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?<br>12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.<br>13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. | Christ: By whom are all things<br><br>b. Some believers were immature: They had immature knowledge<br><br>c. The fact: Food is immaterial to God; it does not make us spiritual or non-spiritual |
| <b>1 Judge things by love, not by knowledge</b><br>a. Knowledge puffs up; love edifies<br><br>b. Knowledge is partial<br><br>c. Love unites one to God   | <b>A. The Questionable Pleasures &amp; Social Functions, 8:1-13</b><br><br>Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.<br>2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.<br>3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.<br>4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.<br>5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many.)<br>6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and | <b>3 Take heed—do not be a stumbling block</b><br><br>a. By leading any man astray<br><br>b. By destroying the weak  |  |
| <b>2 Know that food does not make a person spiritual</b> (cp. v.8)<br>a. The Corinthian problem: Eating meat offered to idols<br>1) An idol is nothing<br><br>2) There is but one God: Of whom are all things<br>3) There is but one |   | <b>4 Do not wound a brother's conscience: This is sin against Christ</b><br><br><b>5 Claim the great principle: Do nothing that leads a brother astray</b>   |  |

**DIVISION V**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND PERSONAL RIGHTS, 8:1-11:1**

**A. The Questionable Pleasures and Social Functions, 8:1-13**

(8:1-13) **Christian Liberty—License—Social Functions—Pleasures, Questionable:** in the ancient world when a person accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, he faced a critical problem. What was he to do about his circle of friends and their social functions? It was a critical problem for three reasons.

1. Practically every social function served meat that had been offered to idols, and when a significant social function was held, such as a marriage or an important business function, it was sometimes held in the temple. However, no matter where it was held, an offering was always made to the idol god of the family. What was a Christian to do? Could he attend such social functions? If he refused, how would it affect his friends? His job? His business contacts?

2. Practically every family had its own idol god sitting in a significant place in the home. At mealtime the family would offer a small sacrifice to its god in order to assure its blessing. What was a Christian to do about fellowship with his neighbors? Was he to cut off all social contact with them?

3. The market place was usually filled with meat recently offered to idols. Part of the animals used in sacrifice was always given to the priests for their upkeep. The priests usually sold any excess to the local market places, and the markets in turn sold the meat to the public. Some believers felt that it was wrong to purchase meat that had been used in idol worship, and they could seldom tell if the meat was pure or not. This was the reason many Christians throughout the ancient world became vegetarians. Were they right in their conviction? Or, was it all right to go ahead and eat food that had been used in the worship of idols?

The Corinthian believers needed help; they needed the answers to these questions, some guidelines that would help them as they lived in the midst of a sinful and pleasure-mad world. Therefore, they wrote Paul and asked him about meat offered to idols, about the questionable pleasure and social functions of day to day life. Paul deals directly with the Corinthian problem, but he also uses the issue and expands it to include the whole question of Christian liberty and personal rights. For example, can a Christian do his own thing? Is a Christian honestly *set free in Christ*? If so, can the Christian do

what he wants when he wants? If not, what restraints are put upon his liberty or freedom? What is to control his behavior? What is the difference between the Christian's behavior and the world's behavior?

1. Judge things by love, not by knowledge (v.1-3).
2. Know that food does not make a person spiritual (v.4-8).
3. Take heed—do not be a stumbling block (v.9-11).
4. Do not wound a brother's conscience: this is sin against Christ (v.12).
5. Claim the great principle: do nothing that leads a brother astray (v.13).

**1** (8:1-3) **Love—Christian Liberty**: first, judge things by love, not by knowledge. Note that Paul says “we all have knowledge.” He identifies himself with the Corinthian believers. Apparently, some of the believers were stressing the importance of reasoning out social functions. They were stressing the importance of intellect and knowledge in determining right from wrong. They were stressing the fact that...

- an idol is nothing in itself (v.4).
- meat (food) is nothing; it is indifferent in dealing with spiritual matters. It does not make us acceptable or unacceptable to God (v.8).

Note three points.

1. Knowledge puffs up; love edifies. Paul says that he knows that an idol is nothing; neither is food anything. Thinking through the issue clearly shows this. However...

- being able to reason this through and to clearly see the fact is no reason to be puffed up over other believers.
- holding the position of Christian liberty—that a person is free to participate in social functions—is no reason to be puffed up over other believers.

The rule of the Christian is *love*, not knowledge. It is love that edifies and grows people, not knowledge. The Christian believer is not to be stressing his knowledge and superior reasoning because he can see a fact more clearly than other believers. The Christian believer is to love and to control his life by the principle of love.

**Thought 1.** How many look down upon others because others cannot in good conscience take part in certain social functions and social practices? How many feel superior and are puffed up because they feel more free than others to take part in certain functions?

**“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Ro.12:16).**

**“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal.6:3).**

**“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” (Pr.3:7).**

**“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Is.5:21).**

2. Knowledge is only partial. No matter what a person thinks he knows, it is incomplete. Man is totally incapable of knowing anything in its fulness and totality. Those who practice liberty may be wrong. There may be something wrong about their human logic in thinking through the issue of a particular social function or pleasure.

Therefore, to take pride in a rational position is wrong. Rational positions are very weak, especially when compared to positions based upon *love*.

3. Love unites a person to God. If a man loves God, he is known and accepted by God. He is not accepted by God because of knowledge and rational positions. The man is accepted because he loves God and loves people. Therefore, a person who bases his life upon love and not knowledge is the person who is known and accepted by God.

**“But if any man love God, the same is known of him” (1 Cor.8:3).**

**“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal.4:9).**

**“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).**

**“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb.6:10).**

**“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 Jn.4:16).**

**“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 Jn.4:20).**

**“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 21).**

**2** (8:4-8) **Christian Liberty—License**: second, know that food does not make a person spiritual.

1. The Corinthian problem was a critical problem as has already been discussed a (see Introductory note—1 Cor.8:1-13). Paul agreed with those who knew that “an idol is nothing in the world.” Idols are not gods, no matter what their worshippers may think. There is no other God but One. It is true that people call out to gods, but...

- they are gods of their own minds and imaginations, ideas and notions.
- they are gods of wood and stone.
- they are gods and lords of their own creation.

However, in contrast to the gods of men, note the truth.

- a. There is but one God, only One who is the Supreme Majestic Being of the universe.
  - ⇒ He is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and of all believers. (The stress is upon His care for us just as a father cares for his own children.)
  - ⇒ He is the One “of whom are all things.” He is the Source of all creation. (This is in contrast with the unbelievers who have their own gods and allow and say that all gods are equally true.)
  - ⇒ We are in Him. He is our life, the Source of every good and perfect gift (Jas.1:17).
- b. There is but one Lord Jesus Christ, only One Lord and Administrator who stands supreme between God and man.
  - ⇒ By Him are all things. He was the Agent, the Person who created all things for the Father (Jn.1:1-3; Col.1:15-17).
  - ⇒ We are by Him: He saved and redeemed us. He alone is the Savior of the world.

2. The point is this: some of the Corinthian believers were immature; they had immature knowledge and were likely to fall back into sin and defile their consciences (v.7).

They had not grown enough spiritually to break away from the world and its false beliefs. Therefore, if they participated in the questionable pleasures and social functions, they would defile their consciences. They were not spiritually strong enough to control their minds and beliefs—not yet—not totally.

3. The fact is that food is immaterial to God. It does not make us spiritual or unspiritual. The word “meat” means food. Eating or abstaining does not make us acceptable to God, neither one makes us better (to excel, to have an advantage) or worse (to come short or behind).

**“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16).**

**“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake” (Ro.13:5).**

**“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation [behavior] in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (2 Cor.1:12).**

**“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim.1:5).**

**“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1 Tim.1:19).**

**“Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (1 Tim.3:9).**

**“Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly” (Heb.13:18).**

**“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pt.3:16).**

**3** (8:9-11) **Brotherhood—Separation—Stumbling Block—Christian Liberty:** third, take heed—do not be a stumbling block. The word “stumbling block” (proskomma) means a stone, an obstacle, an occasion, an offense—something which causes a person to fall.

A believer’s liberty can cause a weak believer to fall into sin. In the case of the Corinthians, some believers were participating in the social functions where meat had been offered to idols. Some were even attending the functions in the idol’s temple (v.10). Apparently, this was causing some of the weaker believers to do the same. But they were not able to handle the situation.

- ⇒ Some were grievously stricken in conscience, and they felt sinful and unworthy to be the Lord’s. They had a difficult time handling the matter just as any believer does when he knows he has sinned. He has a difficult time accepting the forgiveness of God. He has to struggle even to forgive himself.
- ⇒ Others were running the risk of slipping back into idolatry and perishing. The word perish (apollutai) is strong. It means to destroy, to ruin, to utterly destroy and perish.

The exhortation is strong. Note the words “by *any means*”: “Take heed lest *by any means* this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock.” No believer is to participate in any function that will cause another believer to stumble lest it destroy him. There is one supreme reason: Christ died for him. Christ paid the ultimate price and sacrificed everything to save the brother. How much more should we?

**Thought 1.** Any man, not just the weak brother, may be led astray. The reason is because the mature believer is usually looked upon as “having knowledge,” knowing what is right and wrong. If he is seen doing some questionable thing, others are sometimes influenced or else thrown into a reactionary spirit. Of course, if the mature believer participates in questionable pleasures and social functions, there is always the possibility that he might fall as well.

“And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea” (Mk.9:42).

“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Ro.14:13).

“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Ro.14:21).

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (1 Cor.10:32).

“Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed” (2 Cor.6:3).

“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him” (1 Jn.2:10).

**4** (8:12) **Christian Liberty—Believer, Duty:** fourth, do not wound a brother’s conscience. To wound his conscience is to sin against Christ Himself. This is seen in two points.

1. There is no greater sin than to damage a person’s conscience and spirit. Why? Because a wounded conscience or spirit makes a person feel useless and helpless. It destroys all drive and initiative, will and ambition. A wounded spirit causes a person to give up, lie around, do nothing, and walk about defeated. A conscience or spirit that has been wounded deeply enough will destroy a person. Remember: Christ loves the weak person so much that he died for him. He gave His life for that person. Therefore, anyone who sins against a weak brother by leading him astray sins against Christ.

2. Jesus Christ is identified with believers. He lives within the believer, even the weak believer. Therefore, to harm a believer is to harm Christ.

“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” (Mt.18:6-7).

“Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me” (Mt.25:45).

“And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:4. Note: Saul was persecuting the Lord’s people. To persecute them was to persecute the Lord.)

**5** (8:13) **Christian Liberty:** fifth, claim the great principle—do nothing that leads a brother astray. The word for “meat” means food. Imagine! Paul says that if any food causes his brother to stumble, he will not eat that food. The idea is striking: Paul will do nothing, absolutely nothing, to cause his brother to stumble. No matter how enjoyable, how satisfying, how pleasurable—he will give it all up to keep from destroying those younger and more immature in the faith.

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations” (Ro.14:1).

“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Ro.14:13).

“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Ro.14:21).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Cor.8:13).

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor.9:22).

“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth” (1 Cor.10:24).

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).

| CHAPTER 9  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 The right to be accepted as a minister</b></p> <p>a. He has the call</p> <p>b. He has borne the fruit of the ministry</p><br><p><b>2 The right to be supported</b></p> <p>a. To be fed</p> <p>b. To receive travel support</p><br><p>c. To receive enough income that he can minister full time</p> <p>d. Supportive arguments</p> <p>1) The soldier's right</p> <p>2) The farmer's right</p><br><p>3) The shepherd's right</p><br><p>4) The law says this right belongs to a minister</p> | <p><b>B. The Rights of a Minister, 9:1-15</b></p> <p>Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?</p> <p>2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.</p> <p>3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,</p> <p>4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?</p> <p>5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?</p> <p>6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?</p> <p>7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?</p> <p>8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?</p> <p>9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not</p> | <p>muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.</p> <p>11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?</p> <p>12 If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.</p> <p>13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?</p> <p>14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.</p> <p>15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.</p><br><p>5) The conclusion: These things are said for the sake of God's people &amp; God's minister</p><br><p>e. The central question: Does spiritual labor (the greater) merit material benefits (the lesser)?</p> <p><b>3 The right to be the first person supported by the church</b></p> <p>a. Not to be abused by either the church or the minister</p><br><p>b. The minister is to be a partaker with the altar: Historically practiced</p><br><p>c. The Lord's command: The minister is to live by the gospel</p><br><p><b>4 The right to make the judgment about receiving wages or not</b></p> |

## DIVISION V

### THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND PERSONAL RIGHTS, 8:1-11:1

#### B. The Rights of a Minister, 9:1-15

(9:1-15) **Introduction:** the rights of a minister are often the subject of churches, especially in the area of livelihood and financial support. Too often, churches are guilty of neglecting their ministers and of allowing pastoral support to become a divisive issue. The issue is a subject next to God's heart as this passage and its length clearly indicate. (See outline and notes—Mt. 10:9-10; Lk. 10:7; Ph. 4:10-14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18.)

1. The right to be accepted as a minister (v.1-3).
2. The right to be supported (v.4-11).
3. The right to be the first person supported by the church (v.12-14).
4. The right to make the judgment about receiving wages or not (v.15).

**1** (9:1-3) **Minister, Rights:** the minister has the right to be accepted as a minister. Paul was a true minister of God. In fact, he was an apostle, one of the few who had actually seen the Lord Jesus Christ. However, there were those in the Corinthian church who did not like Paul. They did not like such things as...

- his messages
- his preaching style
- his lifestyle
- his doctrine
- his charisma
- his authoritativeness
- his appearance

Therefore, they set out to get rid of Paul and to destroy his ministry. They attempted to do this by turning the whole Corinthian church against him. (See note, *Paul, Accusations Against*—2 Cor. 1:12-22 for more discussion.)

This is what lies behind the present passage. Paul declares his right to be accepted as a minister, and he expands his declaration to include every minister of the gospel. Every minister has the right to be accepted as a minister.

1. Paul has the call as a minister. His particular call was to be an apostle. Note how his questions would pierce the heart of anyone who knew of him and his ministry.

⇒ *Am I* not an apostle? Are you saying that I am not called of God? That God has not called me to be a servant and a minister for Him? That I am not to preach and bear witness to Christ?

- ⇒ *Am I* not free in Christ? Free to do as He wills, to minister and serve among God's people as the other ministers of God? Am I not free to serve the Lord as He wills?
- ⇒ *Have I* not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Has He not revealed Himself to me and called me? Are you saying I do not know what I am talking about? That I have not seen Christ? That I do not know Christ? That I do not walk in Christ and serve Christ?
- ⇒ The word "not" (*ouchi*) is much more forceful in the last question. Paul is laying stress upon the fact that he had definitely seen the Lord. This was one of the major requirements for the early apostles (Acts 9:17, 27; 18:9-10; 22:14, 17f; 2 Cor.12:1f).
- ⇒ Are you not part of my work in the Lord? Has the Lord not used me in the lives of the believers? In the ministry of the church?

2. Paul had borne fruit as a minister which was evidence of his call. Note the contrast: others may question Paul's call of God, but *surely not the Corinthians*. Many of them had been led to the Lord by Paul. The very fact that some of them were saved under his ministry was proof of his call. Any who wished to examine his call could look at the believers at Corinth. The salvation of some and the growth of others are his answer to those who examine the credentials of his call and ministry.

**Thought 1.** Too often a minister of the gospel suffers rejection and opposition just because someone dislikes something about him. In such cases the minister has two answers:

- 1) The Lord's call and the minister's knowledge of His call.
- 2) The fruit which the minister has borne in the salvation and growth of people.

**"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Ro.14:4).**

**"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Ro.14:13).**

**"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor.4:5).**

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Ph.2:3-4).**

**"There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (Jas.4:12).**

**2** (9:4-11) **Minister, Rights:** the minister has the right to be supported. Paul asserts three rights dealing with the church supporting the minister financially, then he gives five supporting arguments. The word "power" (*exousia*) means authority or right throughout this passage.

1. The right to be fed. The minister and his family have to eat; therefore, it is the church's duty to provide food for their ministers.

2. The right to receive travel support. The ministers of Paul's day were always travelling about ministering among a number of churches. Ministers of every generation have had travel expenses; therefore, it is the responsibility of the churches to provide the travel expenses. Note two things.

- a. The apostles and other ministers took their families with them as they travelled about ministering. This seems to indicate that most of them were married.
- b. The reference to the "brothers of the Lord" is a strong testimony to the deity of Christ. His own half-brothers who had lived with him day by day became followers and ministers after His resurrection (cp. Mt.13:55-56).

3. The right to receive enough income that he can minister full time (v.6). Paul says that he and Barnabas worked and earned their own living while ministering in Corinth. But they had the right to be supported by the church.

4. The supportive arguments. Note how clearly the issue is illustrated and seen in these arguments. The church is unquestionably responsible for the support of its ministers.

- a. The soldier's right: What soldier goes to war at his own expense? The minister is a soldier of Christ. He is leading the people of God in their spiritual warfare. He is, therefore, to be supported by those who engage him to lead the battle.
- b. The farmer's right: What farmer plants his vineyard and does not eat of the fruit? The minister is a farmer who sows the seed of the Word of God. He plants and harvests the fruit for the Lord and for the church. Therefore, the church is to see that he reaps of the harvest and eats of the fruit.
- c. The shepherd's right: What shepherd feeds a flock and does not eat of the milk of the flock? The minister is the shepherd of God's flock and feeds God's flock; therefore, he is to be fed and supported by the flock.
- d. The law or Word of God says this right belongs to a minister. Paul says he does not have to speak as a man using human illustrations to prove his point. The Word of God says the same thing:

**"Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?" (v.9; cp. Dt.25:4).**

Note the question: "Does God take care of oxen?" Yes, he has provided in His Word for oxen. Men are to feed the oxen, for the oxen serve men. If God expects men to take care of the beasts who serve them, how much more does He expect men to take care of the ministers who labor for their spiritual welfare?

e. The conclusion is forceful: these things are written for the sake of God's people. The Greek is emphatic in its stress: these things are said entirely, with all certainty, most assuredly for our sakes. Therefore, the minister or preacher of the gospel should *labor and labor diligently* in hope, for God shall reward his hope. God will see to it that the minister shall partake of his hope. God will see to it that the minister has the necessities of life. (Cp. Mt.6:24-34.)

5. The central question is direct: Does spiritual labor merit material wage? Does ministering the highest qualities of life to people deserve pay? Such qualities as proclaiming and teaching and encouraging...

- salvation & redemption
- life, both abundant & eternal
- love, joy, peace
- longsuffering, gentleness, goodness
- faith, meekness, control

The answer is obvious. There is no question, for there is no greater need than ministering to people in proclaiming and teaching the great qualities for which all men long.

**“Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat” (Mt.10:9-10).**

**“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Cor.9:14).**

**“Let him that is taught in the word communicate [give, share, support] unto him that teacheth in all good things” (Gal.6:6).**

**“Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate [give, share, support] with my affliction” (Ph.4:14).**

**“For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward” (1 Tim.5:18).**

**3** (9:12-14) **Minister, Rights:** the minister has the right to be the first person supported by the church. The question is incriminating: if others have the right to be supported by the church, does not the minister have the first right of support? The Corinthian church had recognized the rights of others to receive support, but they had tragically neglected Paul. Imagine a church neglecting to adequately support Paul! What he has to say is an indictment against the church at Corinth and any other church that fails in this God-given obligation.

1. The support of the minister is not to be abused by either the church or the minister (v.12). Paul did not demand support when he was at Corinth (a three year ministry initially). Note that he says he suffered all things; that is, he suffered hunger and all kinds of deprivations, and the idea is that he suffered them silently. He told no one. Why? Because there were some who opposed his ministry, and they would have charged him with being worldly minded, or being in the ministry only for money, or having wrong motives or a host of other false accusations. Paul just did not want to hamper the gospel in any way whatsoever. However, the church failed Paul and failed him miserably. It did not care for him nor look after him as it should have. Imagine his suffering from lack of food, adequate and proper clothing, and adequate housing!

**“And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Mt.8:20).**

2. The historical practice of supporting ministers is to be closely observed: ministers have always partaken of the altar. Ministers who have ministered holy things to people have always lived of the altar or temple, that is, been supported because he proclaimed God from the altar.

3. The Lord himself has ordained that ministers live of the gospel. This is the supreme authority, the Lord Himself. The Lord demands: if a man preaches the gospel, he is to live of the gospel.

**“Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat” (Mt.10:9-10).**

**“And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you” (Lk.10:7-8).**

**4** (9:15) **Minister, Rights:** the minister has the right to make the judgment about receiving wages or not. Paul made the decision not to receive a wage from the Corinthians. This was simply his strategy with the Corinthians. It enabled him to face his enemies and to refute any charge of preaching for money. He did receive support in other situations (Ph.4:10f). Note two points.

1. Paul clearly says that he has not written to shame the Corinthians into supporting him. His purpose has been to teach them how to treat their ministers.

2. Paul says he does not want the church to begin supporting him, for he is able to glory in his labor for Christ and the church. What he means is that he was able to face his enemies with confidence because he lived a life of self-denial.

**Thought 1.** The law of Christ is that ministers are to be supported by the people of God. However, circumstances sometimes dictate that ministers work at secular jobs, and these circumstances need to be acknowledged when they arise and judged on their own merits as they are carried to the Lord in prayer.

**“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim.5:17).**

**“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation” (Heb.13:7).**

**“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Mt.16:25).**

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1 His compulsion: To preach the gospel</b></p> <p><b>2 His accountability: judgment &amp; woe if he fails to preach</b></p> <p>a. If he preaches willingly, he is rewarded</p> <p>b. If he preaches unwillingly, he is still accountable</p> <p><b>3 His reward: To gain the satisfaction of preaching the gospel freely</b></p> <p><b>4 His method: To become</b></p> | <p><b>C. The Inside Look at a Minister (Part I): A Compulsion to Preach &amp; to Minister, 9:16-23</b></p> <p>16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!</p> <p>17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.</p> <p>18 What is my reward then? Verily, that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.</p> <p>19 For though I be free from</p> | <p>all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.</p> <p>20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;</p> <p>21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.</p> <p>22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.</p> <p>23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.</p> | <p><b>all things to all men</b></p> <p>a. He became as a Jew to the Jews (the legalist)</p> <p>b. He became as a non-religionist to the heathen</p> <p>c. He became as weak to the weak Christian</p> <p>d. His purpose: To save some &amp; to personally share in the gospel</p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND PERSONAL RIGHTS, 8:1-11:1**

**C. The Inside Look at a Minister (Part I): A Compulsion to Preach and to Minister, 9:16-23**

(9:16-23) **Introduction:** this passage is an excellent look at the minister and what it is that compels him to minister.

1. His compulsion: to preach the gospel (v.16).
2. His judgment and woe if he fails to preach (v.16-17).
3. His reward: to gain the satisfaction of preaching the gospel freely (v.18).
4. His method: to become all things to all men (v.19-23).

**1** (9:16) **Preaching—Gospel—Ministers:** the minister's compulsion: he must preach the gospel. Paul did not glory because he was called to be a minister. Being a preacher of the gospel was not a reason for glorying, any more than being a business man or a professional is a reason for glorying. He very clearly says, "though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of."

Necessity was "laid upon" (epikeitai) him. The word means to be pressed, compelled, constrained, required, duty-bound to preach the gospel. God had called Paul to preach the gospel; therefore, it was his charge, his work, his business, his call in life. He could not do otherwise: he was compelled to preach. His preaching was not a matter of choice; he had not chosen to be a preacher. His preaching was a matter of duty. If he did not preach, he would be disobeying God and would miss the very purpose for his life upon earth.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk.16:15).

"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

"But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee" (Acts 26:16).

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor.9:16).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim.4:2).

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Is.6:8).

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence" (Is.62:6).

"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer.20:9; cp. Gen.12:1; Ex.3:10; Judg.6:14; 1 Ki.19:19).

**2** (9:16-17) **Preaching—Minister:** the minister's accountability: he faces judgment and woe if he fails to preach. This explains the necessity and compulsion to preach. One of the major reasons Paul was driven to preach the gospel was

the terrible judgment that he would face if he failed. The word “woe” means that when he stood before God, he would have to face *some terrible*...

- regret
- distress
- disaster
- denunciation
- grief

No person who has ever been called by God is exempt from this coming judgment. This is made clear in what is now said (v.17).

If Paul preached the gospel willingly, he had a reward. But if he preached unwillingly, “a dispensation of the gospel [was still] committed to him.” This simply means he was *still responsible* to preach the gospel even if he did it unwillingly or if he refused to do it. The word “dispensation” (oikonomia) means a stewardship, a trust. The steward was the manager of a large household or estate. The minister of God is the manager of God’s household and estate (church).

Once God had called Paul to preach, the stewardship and trust of preaching was his. Whether he followed through and preached did not matter; he was still responsible for preaching. There was no release from the call and duty. He would stand accountable for preaching the gospel or he would stand accountable for not preaching the gospel.

**Thought 1.** The call to preach the gospel is an awesome responsibility. God places the stewardship of the gospel into the hands of the person He calls. Just think about it: whatever the minister does with the gospel is all that will be done with the gospel—nothing more, nothing less. God has placed His gospel—the stewardship of it—into the hands of the persons He calls. Only what they do with the gospel will be done. What an awesome responsibility!

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God” (Col.1:25).

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (1 Th.2:4).

“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust” (1 Tim.1:11).

“But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:3).

**3** (9:18) **Preaching—Minister:** the minister’s reward is that he gains the satisfaction of preaching the gospel freely. Paul had the power, that is, the *right*, to be paid by the Corinthian church; but he did not receive payment. Why? Because he wanted the reward of preaching the gospel free of charge. What was the reward?

- ⇒ The privilege of seeing people saved free of charge.
- ⇒ The confidence of the people in him, that he was free of greed.
- ⇒ The removal of any charge that he was in the ministry for comfort and money.

**Thought 1.** This does not mean that a minister is to work for nothing, nor that a church is not to pay its minister and pay him well (see outline and notes—1 Cor.9:1-15). It was simply Paul’s strategy to keep those who opposed him so much from being able to charge him with preaching for comfort and money.

The lesson for us is clear: we must preach out of necessity and not for money. We must minister for the purpose of helping people and not to get gain. We must serve people and not use people.

**Thought 2.** Paul did sometimes support himself in the ministry.

“And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers” (Acts 18:3).

“Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me” (Acts 20:34).

“And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him” (Acts 28:30).

“But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void” (1 Cor.9:15).

“For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God” (1 Th.2:9).

“Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you” (2 Th.3:8).

**Thought 3.** The minister of the gospel should constantly search his heart and make sure his heart is pure and cleansed of any wrong motive.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pt.5:2-3).

**4** (9:19-23) **Preaching—Minister:** the minister's method is to become all things to all men. Paul says that he was "free from all men"; that is, he was not obligated to conform to any man's ideas or opinions. He had been set free in Christ and was obligated only to be conformed to Christ. But Paul surrendered himself, actually made himself a servant to all men. Why? So that he might win more men to Christ.

Note: Paul's going along with the opinions and customs of others does not mean he was compromising his convictions nor being two-faced. It means that he was getting next to men, gaining their confidence and trust so they would pay attention to his witness for Christ.

1. Paul became as a Jew to the Jews, that is, to those who were under the law. When Paul was ministering to the Jews, he went along with their customs and laws just as long as nothing violated his walk in Christ. Note that Paul was not under the law.

**"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Ro.10:4).**

Paul's standard was Christ, not the law. But he placed himself under the law when ministering to the Jews in order to get next to them and win their confidence and trust so he could witness to them. Note: Paul compromised with the Jews and all others when a principle was not involved. Acts 21:18-27 is a good example of just how far he would go to gain an entrance for the gospel. However, when a principle was at stake, he would not budge an inch (cp. Gal.2:3-5).

2. Paul became a non-religionist to those who did not observe the law. But note a critical fact: he does not mean he became lawless and immoral. He still obeyed the law of God; that is, he was as always *under the law to Christ*. He still obeyed the will of Christ which actually includes the commandments of God and more. But Paul went along with the customs and lifestyle of the heathen just so they were not a violation of the law of Christ. He lived as a Gentile when among them in order to get next to them and win them to Christ.

3. Paul became weak to the weak Christians. That is, he went along with their petty rules and regulations. He refrained from doing some things that were perfectly legitimate. He conformed to their ideas and opinions just to have an open door to help them grow in Christ. He laid his personal liberty and rights aside in order to reach the new and weak Christians. He would not dare become a stumbling block to them, nor would he cause them to shut him out of their lives by offending them and thereby lose his opportunity to help them. He became as one of them in order to win them.

4. Paul clearly states his purpose for conforming to the customs and opinions of men:

**"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (v.22).**

Paul is declaring that he went to the extreme when necessary in order to reach people for Christ. Note the word "this" (v.23); it is usually translated "all things." Paul declares that he did "all things" for the sake of the gospel. What mattered in life was not him and his rights, but the gospel. The gospel was the *consuming passion* of his life. Why? That he might partake of the gospel with other believers. By being faithful to the gospel he would share in the redemption of the gospel with other believers.

**"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt.4:19).**

**"But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" (Mk.10:43-44).**

**"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Ro.14:21).**

**"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1 Cor.10:24).**

**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal.6:2).**

**"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal.6:10).**

**"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Ph.2:4).**

**"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Pr.11:30).**

**"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan.12:3).**

|   | <b>D. The Inside Look at a Minister (Part II): Great Discipline Required, 9:24-27</b>   |
|---|---|
| 1 He enters the race to run and win                     | 24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.                                    |
| 2 He strenuously disciplines & controls himself         | 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. |
| 3 He runs to obtain an incorruptible crown              | 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:   |
| 4 He runs & fights with certainty & without distraction | 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. |
| 5 He masters his own body                               |   |
| 6 He guards against disqualification                    |   |

## DIVISION V

### THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND PERSONAL RIGHTS, 8:1-11:1

#### D. The Inside Look at a Minister (Part II): Great Discipline Required, 9:24-27

(9:24-27) **Introduction:** this passage is one of the great challenges of Scripture, a challenge that every minister and believer should memorize and keep ever before their minds. Paul is still giving an inside look into his heart and ministry, how he viewed the Christian life and ministry. But this passage is *unique* in its description, for it describes Paul's feelings about the Christian life in terms of athletes, the runner and the boxer. No true minister or Christian believer can approach the Christian life with a flabby attitude. No genuine Christian can indulge the body and its lusts and expect to win the incorruptible crown of the Christian life.

Corinth was known for the Isthmian Games which were second only to the Olympic Games of the Grecian and Roman world. Therefore, everyone in the Corinthian church knew the point Paul was making.

Dramatically, Paul says that the Christian minister and the Christian believer can be compared to athletes. *Shockingly*, he says that a true minister and a true believer of the Lord is to live a life just as disciplined as an olympic athlete. He actually says that we are to keep *our bodies* under control just as much as the athlete. Closely observe his points.

1. He enters the race to run and win (v.24).
2. He strenuously disciplines and controls himself (v.25).
3. He runs to obtain an incorruptible crown (v.25).
4. He runs and fights with certainty and without distraction (v.26).
5. He masters his own body (v.27).
6. He guards against disqualification (v.27).

**1** (9:24) **Christian Race—Minister:** the minister or believer enters the Christian race and he enters to win. In the athletic contest every runner enters the race for one purpose only: to win. However, only one receives the prize; there is only one winner. The believer enters the Christian race for one purpose only: to win. Therefore, he strains in running to obtain the prize. Nothing is acceptable except running and running hard:

- ⇒ Walking fast is unacceptable.
- ⇒ Jogging is unacceptable.
- ⇒ Lagging behind is unacceptable.
- ⇒ Showing little concern for the finish line is unacceptable.

The point is this: the minister and layman alike must run *as diligently* as the runner at the Olympic Games. The believer must put out the *same kind of vigorous effort* in order to reach the finish line. He must be vigorous and diligent; he must persist in the Christian race.

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Cor.9:24).

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Gal.5:7).

“Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain” (Ph.2:16).

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Ph.3:14).

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb.12:1).

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim.4:7-8).

**2** (9:25) **Christian Race—Discipline—Body:** the minister (believer) strenuously disciplines and controls himself. Every runner and boxer is highly disciplined in body, mind, thought, spirit, exercise, workouts, and contests. He is disciplined...

- in body: what he eats and how much he eats.
- in mind and thought: his concentration on the goal and how to best gear his body, spirit, and mind to that end.
- in spirit: in keeping his spirit strong and motivated for the strain necessary to work out day by day and to reach his goal.

The minister or believer is to do no less. He must be just as disciplined as the athlete. The word “striveth” (*agonizomai*) means agony. He disciplines himself to the point of pain. And note: the discipline covers “all things.” It covers his body, mind, and spirit, the place where God’s presence actually dwells. Therefore, he does not allow anything to *touch or enter* his body that is corrupt, impure, polluted, or that will cause a more rapid deterioration of the temple.

1. The minister or believer controls his body. His body is actually the temple of the Holy Spirit.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).

“And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite” (Pr.23:2).

“Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it” (Pr.25:16).

2. The minister or believer controls his mind and thoughts.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Ro.8:5-7).

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:3-5).

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:28).

3. The minister or believer controls his spirit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).

4. The minister or believer works out consistently in ministry and service to others.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).

“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph.6:7).

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb.12:28).

“Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling” (Ps.2:11).

**3** (9:25) **Christian Race—Minister:** the minister or believer runs to obtain an *incorruptible crown*. The runners in an athletic contest run to obtain a passing fame and a corruptible crown or trophy. The athletes in Paul’s day ran for a crown or wreath of olive or pine leaves. Their fame and crown were the same as with our athletes: they both passed ever so quickly. However, the crown and fame of the genuine Christian runner will never pass away. His crown and fame are incorruptible. He shall live and be rewarded with an eternal fame and with the most real and valued crowns imaginable.

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor.9:25).

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim.4:8).

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (Jas.1:12).

“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pt.5:4; cp. 1 Pt.1:3-4).

“Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev.3:11).

“The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne” (Rev.4:10).

**4** (9:26) **Christian Race—Minister:** the minister or believer runs and fights with certainty and without distraction. Effort is necessary, effort that sacrifices and strains to the point of hurting. But note: he is just like the runner. He runs with certainty and without distraction. He knows where the track is; he knows where the lines on the track are, and where the finish line is. He is not uncertain:

- ⇒ sometimes keenly aware of the race, other times not so sure.
- ⇒ sometimes active, other times inactive.
- ⇒ sometimes practicing, other times laying out.
- ⇒ sometimes controlling, other times indulging.
- ⇒ sometimes staying in the lines, other times moving out.
- ⇒ sometimes keeping his eyes on the finish line, other times glancing away.

Note the second example. He is like a boxer. He knows where the ring is, and he knows his opponent. Therefore, he does not beat the air as a boxer who misses his target. He is not just swinging wildly, hoping to hit the mark. He does not walk out of the ring in the middle of the fight; he stays in and fights. He does not glance away; he keeps his eyes on the target. He knows the mark and the target, so his punches are planned, deliberate, controlled, and accurate. The Christian (minister and layman) knows he is in a spiritual warfare; therefore, he is fighting to conquer and to win the incorruptible prize.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds” (2 Cor.10:4).

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph.6:12).

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare” (1 Tim.1:18).

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim.6:12).

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim.2:4).

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions” (Heb.10:31-32).

**5** (9:27) **Christian Race—Minister:** the Christian minister or believer is not to be controlled by his body; he is to control his body. How? By simply not giving in to it—by denying the body whatever it craves. It is tough at first, but a person can do it by simply not giving in even if beads of sweat pop out. A person can do it by refusing to give in, by not doing it no matter the pain—by doing exactly what the disciplined athlete does. And in a few days or weeks the most glorious thing happens: the body is conquered, brought under control. The athletes and consistent exercisers of the world know this. Therefore, no minister or believer will ever be excused for not disciplining his body.

The minister or believer masters his own body. The phrase “keep under” means to bruise, to beat back. Paul says he literally beats back his body and its cravings in order to bring it into subjection. The word subjection (doulagogo) means to enslave, to lead about as a slave.

**Thought 1.** What wonderful discipline—discipline so often sought after! How desperately we need to learn from Paul!

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lk.21:34).

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Ro.6:12).

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Ro.13:14).

“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Cor.6:12).

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor.9:27).

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:24).

“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (Jas.3:2).

**“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pt.1:5-7).**

- 6** (9:27) **Castaway—Christian Race—Minister:** the minister or believer guards against disqualification. Note two facts.  
1. Paul was concerned that his life measure up to his preaching. He feared that he might fail to live what he preached. This is what he means by being disqualified. Note *exactly* what he says:

**“Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”**

Paul knew the *utter necessity* to live what he preached. He knew that the Lord would not tolerate hypocrisy, not in the pulpit, not in the ministry of the gospel, not in the persons whom He had chosen to be the ministers of His people. They were to preach righteousness, and they were to live righteously, live exactly what they preached.

Paul knew that the Lord just would not allow false profession from His ministers, not for long, not without stern chastisement and judgment coming upon the servant who was living a hypocritical life.

**“Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles [unbelievers] through you, as it is written” (Ro.2:21-24).**

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).**

**“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).**

**“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).**

**“And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues” (Ps.78:35-36).**

2. The judgment or chastisement feared by Paul was that of being a castaway. The word “castaway” (*adokimos*) means reprobate, rejected, disqualified, disapproved, unfit, failing to stand the test. What does Paul mean? Most writers think that Paul is referring to salvation, that when he comes to the end of the race, he sees the possibility of being rejected—if he has not *lived* what he has preached to others. The very fact that most writers understand Paul to be dealing with salvation speaks loudly and clearly to all ministers of the gospel: we must heed the Scripture.

**“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).**

Now, what does Paul mean? Five things are sure about Paul’s teaching in Scripture.

*First*, Paul definitely pictured himself in a life-long struggle for salvation. The great Greek scholar A.T. Robertson says that Paul alone uses the Greek word *adokimos* in a moral sense in the New Testament, and Paul definitely says that he subjects his body and keeps it under control lest he be a *castaway*. Look at Paul’s use of the word. It stands as a beneficial warning to us all—to live what we preach, and profess and live it with the utmost diligence and effort (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1931, p.150).

**“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate [adokimos] mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Ro.1:28).**

**“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [adokimos]” (1 Cor.9:27).**

**“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates [adokimos]? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates” (2 Cor.13:5-7).**

**“Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate [adokimos] concerning the faith” (2 Tim.3:8).**

**“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate [adokimos]” (Tit.1:16).**

*Second*, Paul definitely pictured himself as having to struggle against sin throughout life, and he struggled against sin for two reasons:

⇒ to attain to the resurrection of the dead.

**“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ....If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Ph.3:8, 11; cp. v.7-15).**

⇒ to conquer the flesh.

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:16-24).**

*Third*, Paul was perfectly assured of his salvation; he was perfectly assured that he would run the race and run it well. He was persuaded of two things:

⇒ that nothing in heaven or earth, in fact, nothing present and nothing to come, could ever separate him from the love of God.

**“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ro.8:35, 38-39).**

⇒ that the Lord was able to *keep him* until the day of redemption.

**“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim.1:12).**

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).**

**“But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil” (2 Th.3:3; cp. 1 Pt.1:5; Jude 24; Rev.3:10).**

*Fourth*, Paul was convinced that only those who walked in the Spirit and were committed to a deadly struggle against sin were saved and given the absolute assurance of their salvation (see outlines and notes—Ro.8:1-17).

*Fifth*, Paul was not perfect, and he confessed the fact, confessing that he was far from perfect. Therefore, until he was made perfect, he was going to struggle, follow, press, and strive for perfection; that is, to be conformed to the image of Christ.

**“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus [to be conformed to His image, conformed to perfection]” (Ph.3:12-14).**

Now, having studied all this, one thing needs to be observed about what Paul has said.

⇒ Paul was perfectly assured of his salvation and of God’s power to keep him safe until the day of redemption.

⇒ But at the same time Paul was deeply conscious of a deadly struggle against sin.

Pauls’ point is clear and easily seen: it is the minister or lay believer who is carnal, hypocritical, complacent, self-indulgent, fleshly, worldly, and prideful who has doubts and has to suppress and ignore his doubts. The believer who is assured of his salvation is constantly aware that the proof of his salvation is fruit or good works. He knows that if his life is not genuine, then he not only *can be*, but he *will be* disqualified, counted useless, put on the shelf, and cast away. Therefore, he runs and runs the race of the Christian life, and he runs to win. He keeps his body under control. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Jn.5:16 for more discussion.)

**“Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit” (Mt.7:16-17).**

**“But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixty-fold, some thirtyfold” (Mt.13:8).**

**“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (Jn.15:2).**

**“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (Jn.15:5).**

**“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone....But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (Jas.2:17, 20).**

**“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jas.2:24).**

| CHAPTER 10  |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1 The example of Israel: All shared the blessings of God</b></p> <p>a. The blessings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Cloud (guidance)</li> <li>2) Sea (deliverance)</li> <li>3) The baptism into Moses (leadership)</li> <li>4) Food &amp; water (spiritual nourishment)</li> <li>5) The presence of Christ</li> </ol> <p>b. The displeasure of God: Some were overthrown—they missed the crown</p> <p><b>2 The warning</b></p> <p>a. Lust not—as they lusted</p> <p>b. Be not idolaters—as some of them were</p> | <p><b>E. The Warning Example of Israel, 10:1-13</b></p> <p>Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;</p> <p>2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;</p> <p>3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;</p> <p>4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.</p> <p>5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.</p> <p>6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.</p> <p>7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down</p> | <p>to eat and drink, and rose up to play.</p> <p>8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.</p> <p>9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.</p> <p>10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.</p> <p>11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.</p> <p>12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.</p> <p>13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.</p> <p>c. Commit no immorality—as some of them committed</p> <p>d. Try not the Lord's patience—as some of them tried it</p> <p>e. Complain not—as some of them complained</p> <p><b>3 The point: Receive the warning</b></p> <p>a. The climax of the age has come</p> <p>b. Fear, if you think you stand, lest you fall</p> <p>c. Know the way to escape temptation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) No temptation is unique; all tempt. is common to all men</li> <li>2) God limits tempt.</li> <li>3) God provides an escape</li> </ol> |

**DIVISION V**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND PERSONAL RIGHTS, 8:1-11:1**

**E. The Warning Example of Israel, 10:1-13**

(10:1-13) **Introduction:** the security of the believer is one of the great doctrines of the Scripture. Unfortunately, the doctrine has too often been preached and taught with *an inadequate understanding of the doctrine and to the neglect of the warnings of Scripture.*

The result has been tragic, for it has brought multitudes into the church who have not been genuinely converted to Christ, and it has given them a sense of *false security* and *over-confidence*. Multitudes think they are Christians and followers of Christ, but their lives do not match their profession.

Two of the greatest problems facing the church today are those of false security and over-confidence. But Scripture is clear...

- A person may think and say he is saved, but he may be wrong. Saying and thinking do not make a person safe and secure in Christ. Saying and thinking are not the reality or the evidence of salvation.
- A person may be baptized and belong to a church, but baptism and membership in a church do not make a person safe and secure in Christ.
- A person may partake of the Lord's supper or sacrament and think he is thereby safe and secure in Christ, but partaking of the bread and wine do not make a person safe and secure in Christ.
- A person may sense the presence of a *supernatural being*, or be greatly gifted and very active in the church, but it is not these things that make a person safe and secure in Christ.

This was the problem with the Corinthian believers. All of these things were true of them, and they felt safe and secure in Christ. But they were wrong, and they needed to be strongly warned lest they be doomed.

The previous passage had made the point clear. The Christian believer is in a race for the incorruptible crown (1 Cor.9:24-27). The crown of life is not given to a person on a *silver platter*. A person must *run* to win the race: run in discipline, denying himself and straining to control his life for Christ. If he does not so run, he will become a castaway (cp. 1 Cor.9:27).

This passage enforces the point. Paul uses the nation of Israel as a prime example. Israel had been greatly privileged by God—in every way imaginable—and if any people ever felt safe and secure, Israel did. Yet, the people perished in the wilderness outside the promised land (heaven). Believers who feel safe and secure are warned by the example of Israel.

1. The example of Israel: all shared the blessings of God (v.1-5).
2. The warning (v.6-10).
3. The point: receive the warning (v.11-13).

**1** (10:1-5) **Israel—Faithfulness:** the example of Israel. *All Israel* shared in the blessings and privileges of God. The word “all” is emphasized. *All* left Egypt (a type of the world) and began the journey to the promised land (a type of heaven). *All* began to walk through the wilderness of the world with those who truly believed and trusted God; but, as became evident, all were not genuine. They did not truly believe and trust. They felt safe and secure because they were journeying with those who were travelling to the promised land. But they were still in the wilderness, not in the promised land. And the wilderness included all kinds of dangers that had to be confronted and conquered or else they would be destroyed by the wilderness.

Israel had five remarkable blessings and privileges as they journeyed to the promised land. God saw to it that the believers had what was necessary to journey through the wilderness of life.

1. Israel had the cloud of God’s presence. This refers to God’s presence and guidance.

**“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people” (Ex.13:21-22; cp. Ex.14:19; 24:15; 34:5).**

2. Israel passed through the Red Sea. This refers to the great deliverance of God from the bondages and enslavements of Egypt which were a symbol of the world (cp. Ex.14:13-31).

3. Israel was baptized into Moses and his leadership. Moses stood as a type of Christ. God gave Israel the leader it needed to reach the promised land. Therefore, any person who followed Moses through the Red Sea and under the cloud was baptized, immersed, and given over to Moses and his mission. The person was proclaiming that he was a follower of Moses and his mission to reach the promised land.

4. Israel partook of the food and water of God’s provision. The word “spiritual” simply means that the food and water came from God. God provided for their needs; He took care of their day-to-day necessities (Ex.16:4-8, 11-15; Ex.17:6; Num.20:1f).

5. Israel had the presence of Christ. Note how Christ is said to have been present with Israel. The rock that provided water for Israel is said to have been Christ. Jesus Christ was the Source, the energy, the power, the Person who...

- caused the rock to gush forth water.
- caused the Red Sea to roll back.
- caused the cloud to guide Israel and to rain manna or bread.
- gave Moses and the promise of the promised land to the people.

Note how Paul is proclaiming that Jesus Christ is Jehovah of the Old Testament, the One who is called “the Rock” (Dt.32:4; 18:30-31; 2 Sam.22:2; Ps.18:2; 92:15; etc). It was He, our Lord and Savior, who was guiding and providing for Israel through its wilderness journey toward the promised land.

However, what happened to most of the believers of Israel is tragic. There were over six-hundred thousand men alone who broke away from the enslavements of Egypt and began the journey to the promised land. This means that including the women and children there were well over two million who stepped out to follow God to the promised land (cp. Ex.12:37; Num.1:46). But the critical question is this:

⇒ How many remained faithful to God through the wilderness journey? How many actually turned away from the fleshly desires aroused by the delicious foods, drinks, and bodily stimulations of Egypt and the world? How many actually disciplined their bodies, subjected their desires, and kept their eyes and hearts upon the promised land? How many were faithful and steadfast, unmoveable and always abounding in the work of the Lord until they reached the promised land? Remember over two million began the journey: How many entered the promised land? *Only two! Caleb and Joshua.* Caleb and Joshua alone remained faithful to God. Only two did not sin and displease God. Everyone else, over two to three million, perished in the wilderness. They were overthrown (katastronnumi), that is, scattered as corpses all over the wilderness. Why? Because they did not please God.

**“The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zech.1:2-3).**

**“And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease” (Zech.1:15).**

**2** (10:6-10) **Warning:** the warning to the church and to its believers. Scripture says explicitly, what happened to Israel is a warning, an example to us. We face danger, great danger: what happened to the believers of Israel can happen to us. If it does, then the doom that fell upon the believers of Israel will fall upon us. It is critical, therefore, to know what caused the believers of Israel to be destroyed and what kept them from entering the promised land.

1. There was the sin of lust. We must not lust after evil things as they lusted. They lusted and craved for the delicious foods of Egypt (Num.11:4f). As a result of the lust, a plague broke out among the people and killed many of them. In fact, so many died that the place became known as “the grave of greediness or of lust” (Num.11:34).

The lust of those believers is a strong warning to us: we must “not lust after evil things [worldly pleasures]” (v.6).

**“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mk.4:19).**

**“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph.2:3).**

**“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God” (1 Th.4:4-5).**

**“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim.2:22).**

**“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:15).**

**“Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not” (Jas.4:2).**

**“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pt.2:11).**

**“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).**

2. There was the sin of idolatry. When Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the law, the people became restless waiting for the Word of God. Therefore, they decided to go ahead and create their own form of worship (cp. Ex.32:1f). It should be noted that the people were actually dedicating their worship to God Himself.

**“And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD” (Ex.32:5).**

The point to see is this: the image of the golden calf was only to help them picture and imagine God. They felt the need for some image to help them in their worship of Jehovah. Note the reference to eating, drinking, and playing (immoral play). Such behavior often accompanies idolatry, the worship of a self-made god created by a person’s own mind.

This was the danger the Corinthian believers faced. If they participated in the social functions of unbelievers, they might fall into sin. Whether the function was held in the temple or in the homes of the unbelievers, the likelihood was they would slip into the same idolatrous behavior of the unbelievers. (See notes—1 Cor.5:9-10; 6:9 for more discussion.)

**“Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 Jn.5:21).**

**“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them” (Dt.11:16).**

**“I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another” (Is.42:8).**

3. There was the sin of fornication or immorality. This was a gross sin of some of the believers of Israel. Over twenty thousand of them committed immorality with their neighbors and as a result they were judged and condemned to destruction, banned from the promised land (cp. Num.25:1-9). (See notes—1 Cor.5:9-10; 6:9 for discussion.)

**“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet” (Ro.1:27).**

**“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind” (1 Cor.6:9).**

**“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness....they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19, 21).**

**“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:19).**

**“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).**

**“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Th.4:3).**

**“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ....Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 4, 7).**

4. There was the sin of tempting Christ. The word “tempt” (peirazo) means to try the Lord’s patience; to see how far a person can go; to test the patience of Christ. The believers of Israel...

- often felt that God and His leader Moses *demand*ed and *expected too much*.

- often longed for the things of the flesh which they had formerly known in Egypt (the world).

They became discontent with the things God provided, and longed to return to Egypt (the world). Therefore, many of them perished in the wilderness and were not allowed to enter the promised land.

**Thought 1.** Believers often feel that God expects too much, that they are missing out on something in the world. They often feel that God will forgive them...

- even if they do look
- even if they do taste
- even if they do touch
- even if they do slip a little
- even if they do hold back a little

**“Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain” (Jas.4:13).**

**“Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah” (Dt.6:16).**

5. There was the sin of murmuring and complaining and grumbling. Some of the believers in Israel were always complaining and murmuring against God and Moses (cp. Num.14:2, 36; 16:11, 41). The result was judgment and punishment by the destroyer, that is, an angel sent by God to execute judgment. They perished in the wilderness and never saw the promised land. (Cp. Ex.14:11; 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num.11:1; 14:27; 20:3; 21:5.)

**Thought 1.** How many believers grumble and gripe? How many become dissatisfied...

- with the direction God gives through His leaders?
- with the food God gives through His leaders?
- with the way God guides through His leaders?
- with the words God gives to His leaders?

How many voice their complaints to others? The warning is clear to the believers of God’s church.

**“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer” (1 Cor.10:10).**

**“Do all things without murmurings and disputings” (Ph.2:14).**

**“These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage” (Jude 16).**

**“And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?” (Ex.15:24).**

**“I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed” (Ps.77:3).**

**“The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord” (Pr.19:3).**

**“Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?” (Lam.3:39).**

**3** (10:11-13) **Temptation:** the point is unequivocal—receive the warning. The things that happened to the believers of Israel are examples and warnings to us. We must heed them for three reasons.

1. The end or climax of the world (age) has come upon us. Since Christ, believers are living in the last age or period of human history. This simply means that Jesus Christ is the final revelation of God, the only way God will ever deal with men again. Men must now approach God by faith in Christ.

This age is what is known as the age of grace, grace being the way God now deals with men. The age of Christ or of grace is the last age of human history. Therefore, since we are living in the last age, we must heed the warning example of Israel.

2. A person can fall, especially if he *begins to think* that he stands, that is, if he *begins to feel* safe and secure. Note this verse, for it is a straightforward warning that is usually neglected and ignored: “Let him that thinketh he standeth [is safe and secure] take heed lest he fall.”

**“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (Lk.18:9).**

**“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor.8:2).**

**“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor.10:12).**

**“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal.6:3).**

**“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).**

**“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered” (Pr.28:26).**

**“Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me” (Is.47:8-10).**

3. There is a way to escape temptation, but to escape temptation the believer must know three great truths.

a. All temptation is common to man (anthropinos). The word means *a human* temptation that falls to the lot of man. This is an amazing promise. Think about it. No temptation...

- is superhuman
- is unique
- is beyond man’s capacity to handle
- is terrifying in any sense of the word

Every single temptation that attacks the believer is *common to all men*. *All men* face the same temptation. This means a wonderful thing: some men have already overcome it. Yes, many fell, caved in to the temptation; but some demonstrated the will and energy to overcome it.

- b. God is faithful: He limits the temptation. He does not allow a temptation to confront a believer that is...
- |                    |                     |                  |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| • too enticing     | • too appealing     | • too attractive |
| • too forceful     | • too satisfying    | • too fulfilling |
| • too pleasing     | • too self-exalting | • too promising  |
| • too ego-boosting | • too stimulating   | • too arousing   |

God knows *what* we can bear and *how much* we can bear; therefore, He limits every single temptation within our limits to overcome it. God is faithful.

**“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor.1:9).**

**“Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations” (Dt.7:9).**

**“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him” (2 Chron.16:9).**

**“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds” (Ps.36:5).**

**“I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations” (Ps.89:1).**

**“He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler” (Ps.91:4).**

- c. God provides a way to escape. He always makes an escape route, a way out of the temptation. He always gives us the strength and energy to walk through or over the temptation or else to turn and flee from it.

**“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Lk.10:19).**

**“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Ro.16:20).**

**“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).**

**“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb.2:18).**

**“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jas.4:7).**

**“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev.3:21).**

**“The way of the righteous is made plain” (Pr.15:19).**

**“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Is.30:21).**

**“And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them” (Is.42:16).**

**“Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters” (Is.43:16).**

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| <p><b>1 Flee idolatry</b></p> <p><b>2 Judge whether our participation in a function identifies who we worship</b></p> <p>a. Participation in the Lord's Supper identifies us as worshippers of the Lord</p> <p>b. Participation with others identifies us with their function &amp; lifestyle</p> <p>c. Participation of Israel in worship identified them as worshippers of God</p> <p>d. Participation in idolatry is meaningless worship</p> <p>e. Participation in idolatry is fellowshiping with devils</p> <p>f. Participation in idolatry condemns one: keeps one from participating in the Lord's Supper</p> <p>g. Participation in idolatry provokes God</p> <p><b>3 Judge whether lawful acts are always permissible</b></p> <p>a. Test 1: Is it expedient, edifying?</p> <p>b. Test 2: Does it seek the welfare of others?</p> | <p><b>F. The Limits of Christian Believers and Freedom, 10:14-11:1</b></p> <p>14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.</p> <p>15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.</p> <p>16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?</p> <p>17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.</p> <p>18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?</p> <p>19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?</p> <p>20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.</p> <p>21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.</p> <p>22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?</p> <p>23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.</p> <p>24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's</p> | <p>wealth.</p> <p>25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:</p> <p>26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.</p> <p>27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.</p> <p>28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:</p> <p>29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?</p> <p>30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?</p> <p>31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.</p> <p>32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:</p> <p>33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 11</b></p> <p><b>Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.</b></p> | <p>c. Test 3: Does it violate a person's conscience?</p> <p>d. Test 4: Is it courteous &amp; kind?</p> <p>e. Test 5: Does it hurt the conscience of another person?</p> <p><b>4 Judge whether our behavior &amp; freedom should be determined by another person's conscience</b></p> <p>a. Because a person is to do all for God's glory</p> <p>b. Because a person is never to be a stumbling block</p> <p>c. Because a person is to please all men</p> <p>1) Paul's commitment</p> <p>2) Paul's example</p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND PERSONAL RIGHTS, 8:1-11:1**

**F. The Limits of Christian Believers and Freedom, 10:14-11:1**

(10:14-11:1) **Introduction:** how far can a Christian go in participating in the activities of the world, especially in social functions? This question is a constant problem that nags both believers and nonbelievers. Christian liberty vs. license—what a believer is free to do and what he is not free to do—is the subject of this important passage.

1. Flee idolatry (v.14).
2. Judge whether our participation in a function identifies who we worship (v.15-22).
3. Judge whether lawful acts are always permissible (v.23-28).
4. Judge whether our behavior and freedom should be determined by another person's conscience (v.29-11:1).

**1** (10:14) **Idolatry:** flee idolatry (see note—1 Cor.8:1-13 as background for this passage). The charge is given for a very real reason: most people are worshipping some god other than the Lord God Himself. The word idolatry (eidololatrias) means both the worship of false gods and the failure to have a right relationship with God. Any person who does not worship God is worshipping some idol, and almost everything upon earth can become an idol and consume the heart and passion of man:

- self
- family
- possessions
- business
- sports
- religion
- sex
- knowledge
- power

In practical terms, an idol is anything that consumes a person's mind, heart, soul, and body. An idol is that to which a person gives himself.

- ⇒ Some people give themselves and are consumed by some purpose or possession on earth.
- ⇒ Other people give themselves and pray to their own idea of god; that is, to the *god* which they imagine in their own mind. (This is actually the worship of most people in industrialized societies.) They have a concept of god and worship that concept. They choose their own concept of god instead of the living and true God who revealed Himself in Christ and the Holy Scripture.
- ⇒ Still other people give themselves and pray to some idol, picture, or image which they have made or purchased. (The idol may either represent some god or be considered the god himself.)

From this, it is readily seen that most men are idolaters, for most men are consumed by something other than God Himself. They reject the only living and true God, Jehovah, who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures.

The Corinthian church was confronted with the problem of idolatry in its very midst. Some of its members were actually attending social functions held in the banquet halls of idolatrous temples and in the homes where images of idols were prominently placed to oversee the family. Such functions included marriages, business affairs, and even day-to-day fellowship and meals in the homes of neighbors.

Were the church members right in attending these functions, or were they being loose with their Christian liberty? What was to be the attitude and position of the church? Paul had already dealt with the issue at length; however, it was of such importance that it needed to be reinforced so that the issue was unmistakably answered (see note, *Christian Liberty*—1 Cor. 8:13 for more discussion and background).

The charge is forceful: flee idolatry. Turn away and run from it. Do not leisurely turn and do not just walk away, but be quick to turn and quick to run away from it.

**Thought 1.** Think for a moment. If we are to run from idols, to whom do we run? To God, of course. This fact stresses a crucial point. The only way to escape idolatry is to stay near God. Our hearts are either consumed by God or by someone or something else. Someone or something has our attention and loyalty: either God or some other person or thing.

The exhortation is to flee idolatry. Be as wise men; judge the force of the following argument (v.15).

**2** (10:15-22) **Idolatry:** first, does our participation in social functions identify who we worship? Note six points.

1. Participation in the Lord's Supper identifies us as a worshipper of the Lord (v.16). When we partake of the cup and the bread, we declare that we worship the Lord...
  - that we are in communion and fellowship with Him.
  - that we are bound together with Christ by His body and blood.
  - that we have given our lives to Him.
  - that we are committed to His death and purpose.
2. Participation with other people identifies us with their function or activity (v.17). Believers who come together to partake of the Lord's Supper are identified as worshippers of the Lord. Their very purpose for coming together is to partake of the bread as a fellowship of believers. Therefore, they are naturally looked upon and identified as worshippers of the Lord. The point is this: believers who come together with unbelievers in their functions are identified with the unbelievers' function.
3. The participation of Israel identified them as worshippers of God (v.18). When an animal was offered as a sacrifice to God, only a portion of the animal was actually consumed upon the altar. The rest of the meat was always kept and eaten by both the offerer and the priest. The very fact that the Jewish worshipper partook of the same meat offered in sacrifice identified him as a worshipper of God. The God to whom he sacrificed identified him in communion and fellowship with God; it identified him as a worshipper of God.
4. Participation in idolatry is meaningless worship (v.19). The idol, whatever it is, is nothing. It has no existence, no soul, no spirit, no power, no objective being. An idol is nothing more than the imagination and idea within a man's mind. It is nothing more than a figment of man's imagination.
5. Participation in idolatry is fellowshiping with devils (v.20). The devil and his angels or demons are behind all idolatry, whether the idolatry of a heathen society or of an educated society. Scripture definitely declares:

**“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph.6:12).**

**“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor.11:14-15).**

Satan is out to cut the heart of God and to destroy God's purpose in saving man. Satan does this by turning men away from the Lord Jesus Christ, by enticing men to give their lives to the things and gods of this world. When a person becomes consumed with anything upon this earth, then he has fulfilled the will of Satan: he has turned to something other than God. The man prefers something else over God.

Note what Scripture says: when people make sacrifices (whether animals or self) to something other than God, they are sacrificing to devils. One thing is certain: the offering of their allegiance and commitment is not to God. And it is not to some man-made thing or idol, for idols and things are nothing. They are meaningless as objects of worship. To whom then does a person offer his allegiance? Scripture says to devils. Note the clear statement: “Ye shall have [no] fellowship with devils.” In other words, “Flee idolatry.”

6. Participation in idolatry condemns a person (v.21). It is utterly impossible to participate in the true worship of God and in the worship of devils.

“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table and of the table of devils” (v.21).

7. A person cannot be a guest of the Lord at His table and a guest at the table of idolatrous devils. God will not allow it. Such hypocrisy provokes the Lord. And we are not stronger than He. We cannot escape His judgment if we practice idolatry.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools....who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever” (Ro.1:21-22, 25).

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 Jn.5:21).

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” (Ex.20:4; cp. Lev.26:1).

“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them” (Dt.11:16).

“Neither shalt thou set thee up any image [thing or person]; which the LORD thy God hateth” (Dt.16:22).

“There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god” (Ps.81:9).

“I am the LORD: that is my name: my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Is.42:8).

**3** (10:23-28) **Christian Liberty—Stumbling Block:** second, are lawful acts always permissible? Remember the subject of this passage: the limits of Christian freedom. The particular problem of the Corinthian church concerned social and fellowship functions with their neighbors and fellow employees (see notes—1 Cor.8:1-13; 10:14-15 for discussion). The point has just been made that when a person participates in a function he becomes identified with that function. In light of this, does this mean that a believer must never attend a social or fellowship held by an unbeliever? And how about the more specific question: What can a believer buy and eat and drink (v.31; cp. 1 Cor.8:8; Ro.14:21)? Scripture gives five tests in these verses.

1. Test 1: Is the thing or act expedient and edifying (v.23)? It may be lawful, legitimate, and allowed...
  - but is it expedient: beneficial, helpful, useful?
  - but is it edifying: building up, constructing, maturing?

2. Test 2: Does the thing or act seek the welfare of others (v.24)? We are not to act for self, but for others.

3. Test 3: Does the thing or act violate our conscience (v.25-26)? The verse deals specifically with the Corinthian problem. It was a common practice for the temple priests to take the meat from animal sacrifices and sell it to the markets for retail sale. Some believers were bothered by the fact that they might be purchasing meat which had been offered to idols. Very simply, Paul says to buy the meat and ask no questions about its source, for the earth with all its creatures and provisions is the Lord’s. The animal was created by God for food; therefore, if there is a wrong, it was committed by the idol worshippers, not by the believer who uses the animal as God purposed. The point is this: the believer is not to do anything that violates his conscience. He should not be asking questions and making a fuss over small and minute matters (scruples). Personal opinions, scruples, rules, and regulations that disturb conscience are *not to be pressed and made an issue*.

4. Test 4: Is it courteous and kind (v.27)? If an unbeliever invites us to a social function and we are inclined to go, then we should go out of courtesy and kindness. However, after arriving, we are not to ask questions that would disturb our conscience. A clear conscience before God is much more important than a social function. (Note: this applies to the specific activities at socials as well. No believer should participate in an activity...

- that would violate his conscience (v.25, 27, 28).
- that would identify him as a worldly person (v.16-18).

5. Test 5: Does it hurt the conscience of another person? The point of the verse is clear: if partaking of any meat or drink or if participating in any function or activity offends a brother, then we are not to partake or participate. His conscience and life are far more important than any food or drink or any social event or activity. This is the test that controls all the others. Even if our own conscience is not bothered, we are to act for the sake of others. We are not to do things if they offend others—no matter how lawful and legitimate and acceptable they are.

“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Ro.14:13).

“But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:15-17).

“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Ro.14:21).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak” (1 Cor.8:9).

**“But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Cor.8:12-13).**

**“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor.9:22).**

**4** (10:29-11:1) **Christian Liberty:** third, should our behavior and freedom be determined by another person’s conscience? Paul asks two clear-cut questions that are relevant for every generation of believers.

⇒ Why is my liberty to be judged (controlled) by the conscience of others?

⇒ If I can do something by the grace of God and give thanks for it, why would I let myself be criticized for it? The idea is that it would not be worth it. Bearing the criticism would not be worth the activity, especially since our purpose is to live for Christ and His glory. There are three reasons why the believer is to control his behavior by the conscience of others.

**“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:17).**

1. The believer is to do all for the glory of God. His concern is not his own rights, but the glory of God. Whatever will glorify God the most is to be what the believer does. Eating, drinking, and socializing—all are to be done for the glory of God.

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).**

**“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (Jn.15:8).**

**“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.15:6).**

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).**

2. The believer is never to be a stumbling block...

- to the Jews.
- to unbelievers (Gentiles).
- to the believers of the church of God.

The believer is to do absolutely nothing that would offend another person or cause him to stumble. He is to love and live out of concern for all.

**“And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea” (Mk.9:42).**

**“Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones” (Lk.17:1-2).**

**“Give none offence” (1 Cor.10:32).**

**“Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed” (2 Cor.6:3).**

**“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him” (1 Jn.2:10).**

3. The believer is to please all men *in all things*. He is not to seek his own profit, that is, his own will, advantage, and benefit. The believer is to seek the advantage and benefit of others. Why? The reason is powerful, and note: it is the very reason God acted in our behalf; therefore, it is the reason we are to act in behalf of men: *that they might be saved*.

Note: there have been two men who lived upon earth this way. Paul says so. Who were they? Paul and Christ: “Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ” (1 Cor.11:1).

**“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mt.16:24).**

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).**

**“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Ro.14:21).**

**“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth” (1 Cor.10:24).**

**“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor.9:8).**

**“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:24).**

**“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:4).**

**“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Ph.3:8).**

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| <p><b>1</b> The church remembered the instructions on church order given by Paul</p> <p><b>2</b> Principle 1: There is a partnership &amp; order in the universe</p> <p><b>3</b> Principle 2: Do not embarrass or dishonor anyone</p> <p>a. A man can dishonor God</p> <p>b. A woman can dishonor her husband</p> <p><b>4</b> Principle 3: Do not violate the order of creation</p> | <p><b>VI. THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING PUBLIC WORSHIP, 11:2-34</b></p> <p><b>A. The Customs of the Christian &amp; Church Worship, 11:2-16</b></p> <p>2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.</p> <p>3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.</p> <p>4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.</p> <p>5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.</p> <p>6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.</p> <p>7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, foras-</p> | <p>much as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.</p> <p>8 But the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.</p> <p>9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.</p> <p>10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.</p> <p>11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.</p> <p>12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.</p> <p>13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?</p> <p>14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?</p> <p>15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.</p> <p>16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.</p> | <p>a. Man is the image of God</p> <p>b. Woman is the glory of man</p> <p>1) Created from the rib of man</p> <p>2) Created as a companion to man</p> <p>c. Woman is to honor man's authority</p> <p><b>5 Principle 4: Recognize the essential partnership</b></p> <p>a. Neither is independent</p> <p>b. Each is from the other</p> <p>c. All things are from God</p> <p><b>6 Principle 5: Use good common sense</b></p> <p>a. Think of the relationship</p> <p>b. Think of the nature of people, the way people are made</p> <p><b>7 Principle 6: Do not contend &amp; argue over customs</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING PUBLIC WORSHIP, 11:2-34**

**A. The Customs of the Christian and Church Worship, 11:2-16**

(11:2-34) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Worship, Public:** remember, the leadership of the Corinthian church had written Paul a letter asking for instructions to certain problems which had arisen in the church (see note—1 Cor 7:1-40). The present chapter deals with two problems concerning public worship. The first problem deals with the customs of believers and of church worship, in particular with the partnership and order existing between men and women in the church and society at large (1 Cor. 11:2-16). The second problem deals with the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34).

(11:2-16) **Introduction:** custom and tradition are often controversial issues in both society and the church. Some maintain that custom and tradition help to maintain values and order; others maintain that they prevent change, change that is essential to progress. The present passage deals strikingly with the issues.

1. The church remembered the instructions on church order given by Paul (v.2).
2. Principle 1: there is a partnership and order in the universe (v.3).
3. Principle 2: do not embarrass or dishonor anyone (v.4-6).
4. Principle 3: do not violate the order of creation (v.7-10).
5. Principle 4: recognize the essential partnership (v.11-12).
6. Principle 5: use good common sense (v.13-15).
7. Principle 6: do not contend and argue over customs (v.16).

**1** (11:2) **Church—Organization:** the church remembered the instructions on *church order and worship* which Paul had taught when he was with them. But some were slipping into some practices and customs that were questionable, and the church leadership needed clear instruction to guide these customs.

Note: Paul commends the church for remembering his instructions, that is, for seeking to obey God's will even in the customs of behavior and of church order and worship. The word "ordinances" (paradoseis) means traditions or instructions that are passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. This is important to see, for this passage is dealing...

- with traditions
- with unwritten laws of behavior

- with customs
- with local practice
- with preferences of a particular people or body
- with long-established patterns of a people or group

What is being said in this passage is dealing with the particular situation in Corinth. It deals with the worship and customs of the Corinthian church and the society of its day. It is not the law of God for believers in every society and situation. However, the *principles* laid down for Corinth are applicable to life itself. For this reason, the passage is outlined in principle form instead of points stating the problem in Corinth. The problem in Corinth is easily seen in the stated principles, for the principles speak to the behavior and customs of believers in every generation.

**2** (11:3) **Customs—Women, Subject to Men:** the first principle is basic. There is a *partnership and order* in the universe. Note the emphasis on knowing this principle: “I would have you know.” Believers must grasp and understand this principle.

1. The head of every man is Christ. The word “head” in Scripture refers to authority. Christ has authority over man...

- by nature: Christ is stronger than man.
- by position: God has ordained that Christ be the head and that man be subordinate to Him.

2. The head of the woman is man. This is a sensitive subject in modern society; but it is a subject that must be dealt with in love, humility, and honesty. Before proceeding any further, close observation will help a person understand God’s position on the relationship between men and women. This passage clearly states this.

a. Neither man nor woman is superior to the other in being. Man and woman are equal in God’s eyes. In God’s eyes there is an essential partnership between man and woman. Neither is independent of the other. Both are from the other, and the relationship that exists between them has come from God.

**“Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God” (1 Cor.11:11-12).**

b. There is neither male nor female in God’s eyes. He sees both man and woman as one, each as significant as the other.

**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28).**

When God talks about man being the head of the woman, He is not talking about ability or worth, competence or value, brilliance or advantage. God is talking about *function and order* within an organization. Every organization has to have a head for it to be operated in an efficient and orderly manner. There are no greater organizations than God’s universe, His church, and His Christian family. Within God’s order of things there is a partnership, but every partnership must have a head, and God has ordained that man is the head of the partnership.

3. The head of Christ is God. This simply means that when Christ came to earth, He subjected Himself to God the Father. God the Father was the head under whom Christ worked and functioned.

**“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Ph.2:6-7).**

**3** (11:4-6) **Dress—Customs:** the second principle is important, very important. We must not embarrass or dishonor anyone. This verse actually begins to zero in on the specific problem confronting the Corinthian church. It involved dress. The way some of the men were dressing was bringing dishonor to God, and the way some of the women were dressing was bringing dishonor to both God and their husbands.

1. A man can dishonor God by the way he dresses. Some men in the Corinth church were worshipping with their heads covered. The custom of a man worshipping with his head uncovered was important to the early church. The Jews worshipped with covered heads, copying Moses who covered his head after being in the presence of God (2 Cor.3:13-18). The church wished to show that man had *regained the image of God*. Man could now have face to face contact with God through Christ, his Mediator. The uncovered head was the symbol of this face to face communion with God. The uncovered head was the distinguishing mark of a follower of Christ. It must be remembered that these customs were extremely important to the early church, just as important as our customs are today.

The men were covering their heads in a spirit of rebellion and non-conformity. Such a spirit is, of course, sin. A spirit of rebellion and non-conformity disturbs both the spirit of the person in rebellion and those against whom he is rebelling. Fellowship with God and true worship with other believers are impossible in an atmosphere of rebellion and non-conformity.

**Thought 1.** A true believer should never allow a spirit of rebellion or non-conformity to take a foothold in his life. God has not saved the believer to change customs; God has saved him to spread the message of love and care, ministry and salvation among men.

2. A woman can dishonor both God and her husband by the way she dresses. It was a strict custom in the East for women to wear a veil in the days of the early church. Even today, the custom still exists in some countries of the East. William Ramsey gives an excellent description on the significance of the veil to women.

*“In Oriental lands the veil is the power and honour and dignity of the woman. With the veil on her head she can go anywhere in security and profound respect. She is not seen; it is a mark of thoroughly bad manners to observe a veiled woman in the street. She is alone. The rest of the people around are non-existent to her, as she is to them. She is supreme in the crowd...But without the veil the woman is a thing of nought, whom anyone may insult...A woman’s authority and dignity vanish along with the all-covering veil that she discards.”* (Quoted by William Barclay. *The Letters to the Corinthians*, p. 109.)

Remember, the veil left the forehead and eyes exposed and reached all the way down from the head to the ankles. The woman, of course, had some clothing underneath the veil; but in the eyes of society, an unveiled woman was the sign of a woman with loose morals. She was exposing too much of her body, set on attracting attention. The immodest and indecent dress, of course, brought dishonor to her husband, God, the church, and fellow believers. Note Paul says that she may as well be stripped of all covering (shaven head) as to be unveiled or exposed enough to attract attention and cause thoughts of loose morals.

**Thought 1.** Christian women must not follow the customs of the world in dress. They must not dress in an immodest way...

- to attract attention.
- to expose the body.
- to seek popularity.
- to seek acceptance.
- to be in style.

**“Neither yield ye your members [bodily parts] as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Ro.6:13).**

**“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works” (1 Tim.2:9-10).**

**“Whose [wives] adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pt.3:3-5).**

**4** (11:7-10) **Customs—Relationship, Man and Woman:** the third principle is pointed and straightforward. We must not violate the order of creation. These verses are still dealing with dress as the basic issue. The points can be briefly and clearly seen.

1. Man was created in the image of God (Gen.1:26-27); therefore, if he disturbs the spirit of believers through rebellion and non-conformity, he dishonors God (v.7). When God created man, God gave him authority over the earth. Therefore, man should always behave in a manner that demonstrates his authority and does not bring dishonor to God.

2. Woman is the glory of man. She has a place of her own in God’s creation, but her place is not the man’s. Her place is by the side of man, highly exalted as his queen. She reigns in majesty by the side of man as his glory. In God’s order and organization of things, man is the ruler and woman is the ruling queen by his side. God demonstrated the fact by doing two things when He created man and woman.

⇒ God created woman from the rib of man (Gen.2:21f).

⇒ God created woman as a companion to man (Gen.2:18).

3. Woman is, therefore, to honor man’s authority. She is not to rebel against his authority nor bring embarrassment and dishonor to her husband. In Corinth she was to cover her head by wearing the veil that symbolized man’s authority. She was to do it because angels were present. She should respect their presence as well as the authority of her husband.

The application is this: Christian women should dress modestly, not to attract attention. A Christian woman is not to dress exposing her body, which suggests loose morals. She is to dress to honor her husband. She is to respect and acknowledge his authority and right within the order of creation. She is not to cause hurt and pain to him by the way she dresses or does anything else. (Keep in mind that the man is to love, honor, and respect his wife as well.)

**Thought 1.** How many homes are in utter chaos because there is no recognition and no willingness to accept authority? How many men and women have dishonored God and each other because they dressed in either rebellion or to attract attention? How many have fallen into sin and immorality because of dress and exposure?

The only answer is love and God’s order of authority in creation. Without love and authority chaos is the inevitable result.

**“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph.5:25).**

**“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [behavior] of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation [behavior] coupled with fear” (1 Pt.3:1-2).**

- 5** (11:11-12) **Relationship, Man and Woman—Family:** the fourth principle is to recognize the essential partnership between man and woman. This point is simply and clearly stated:
- ⇒ Neither the man nor woman is independent of the other. They are mutually dependent upon each other. The Lord has ordained it.
  - ⇒ The woman is from the man, created from his rib; and the man is from the woman, born of her.
  - ⇒ All things are of God: both man and woman.

The point is this: it does not matter who is of whom, whether man is of woman or woman of man. Both are of God, and both have their place and function, calling and purpose in the universe. Therefore, both owe their allegiance to God. Both must be faithful to God in their place and responsibility.

**“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph.5:22-25).**

**“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Eph.5:33).**

- 6** (11:13-15) **Custom—Wisdom:** the fifth principle is to use good common sense. A person can usually look at a situation and tell what to do—if he will *think and be honest*. But both *thinking and honesty* are necessary. The great tragedy is that not too many persons *think* through the issues of life and even *fewer* are honest when they do think. Paul appeals to the Corinthians to judge the situation themselves, to think and be honest about the matter.
1. A woman should think about the relationship between her, her husband, and God. She should not be praying in church when she is improperly dressed, exposing herself. She should be veiled, properly dressed both in worship and out in society.
  2. A man should think about nature and creation. God created him to hold authority and to bring the world and nature with its catastrophic disasters under control (cp. Gen.1:28). Therefore, he is not to be in rebellion nor a non-conformist in customs, not even over a simple matter as the length of hair. He is not to be consumed with such trivial matters. His time and energy are to be given to the authority and work God has given him to do.

**“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it [gain control over all creation]” (Gen.1:28).**

- 7** (11:16) **Customs:** the sixth principle is direct and demanding. We must not contend and argue over customs. Believers should conform to the *expected* customs of Christian behavior and church order and not argue and rebel against them. The implication is this: we are not on earth to argue and fight over trivial matters, but to carry on the ministry of God’s church. There are too many desperate people in the world who are dying from hunger, thirst, poverty, disease, and sin—too many who need our help—for us to become involved in arguing over personal rights and customs.

**“For though I be free from all man, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor.9:19-22).**

**“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth” (1 Cor.10:24).**

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| <p><b>1 Paul rebuked the way the Corinthians were celebrating the Lord's Supper</b></p>  | <p><b>B. The Lord's Supper, 11:17-34</b></p> <p>17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.</p>   | <p>25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.</p>  | <p>b. The meaning of the cup</p>   |
| <p><b>2 The corruption of the Lord's Supper</b></p> <p>a. Divisions &amp; cliques, factions &amp; parties corrupt</p> <p>b. Self-deception corrupts</p> <p>c. Selfishness &amp; indulgence &amp; neglect of the poor corrupt</p> <p>d. Abusing the sanctity of the church &amp; shaming the poor corrupt</p> | <p>18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.</p> <p>19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.</p> <p>20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.</p> <p>21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.</p> <p>22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.</p> | <p>26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.</p> <p>27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.</p> <p>28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.</p> <p>29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.</p> <p>30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.</p> | <p>c. The reason for observing the Lord's Supper</p> <p><b>4 The severe consequences of partaking unworthily of the Lord's Supper</b></p> <p>a. A person becomes guilty of (profanes) the Lord's death</p> <p>b. A person condemns himself if he does not examine his heart for unconfessed sin</p> <p>c. A person is disciplined, chastened by the Lord</p> |
| <p><b>3 The real meaning of the Lord's Supper</b></p> <p>a. The meaning of the bread</p>   | <p>23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:</p> <p>24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.</p>   | <p>31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.</p> <p>32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.</p> <p>33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.</p> <p>34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.</p>  | <p><b>5 The right approach to the Lord's Supper</b></p> <p>a. Judge—examine self</p> <p>b. Accept the chastening of the Lord</p> <p>c. Serve one another</p> <p>d. Do not bring condemnation upon yourselves</p>   |

**DIVISION VI**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING PUBLIC WORSHIP, 11:2-34**

**B. The Lord's Supper, 11:17-34**

(11:17-34) **Introduction:** the Lord's Supper is one of the ordinances of the church. It is crucial for believers to understand how it is and is not to be observed. This passage is a thorough study on the subject.

1. Paul rebuked the way the Corinthians were celebrating the Lord's Supper (17).
2. The corruption of the Lord's Supper (v.18-22).
3. The real meaning of the Lord's Supper (v.23-26).
4. The severe consequences of partaking unworthily of the Lord's Supper (v.27-30).
5. The right approach to the Lord's Supper (v.31-34).

**1** (11:17) **Lord's Supper:** Paul rebuked the way the Corinthians were celebrating the Lord's Supper. He had praised them for their diligence in keeping the traditions or customs of the church (v.2). But in dealing with the Lord's Supper, he declared in no uncertain terms: "I praise you not." The word "declare" (parangello) means command. Note how forceful Paul is: "Now in this [the Lord's Supper] I *command* you, I praise you not." His forcefulness stresses the awesome importance of the Lord's Supper and the absolute necessity to celebrate it as it should be celebrated.

Paul abruptly states: "You come together to celebrate the Lord's Supper not for the better, not to edify yourselves by remembering the Lord's death; but you come together for the worse, to tear yourselves down."

**2** (11:18-22) **Lord's Supper:** the corruption of the Lord's Supper. The Corinthians were tragically abusing the Lord's Supper. The abuses may seem strange to some churches today because they simply partake of a bread crumb and a

## 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34

small glass of wine or grape juice to celebrate the Lord's Supper. However, as stated in the introductory note, the Corinthians observed the Lord's Supper with a full-fledged meal or *Love Feast*. There were *four abuses*, some of which are very applicable and speak very directly to the churches of every generation.

1. There were divisions and cliques within the church which corrupted the Lord's Supper (v.18-19). When divisions, cliques, factions, and parties exist, the spirit of a church is in disorder. Minds and hearts are not upon the Lord nor at peace with the Lord or with the Lord's people. Disturbance, pain, anger, rumor, gossip, pride, selfishness, misunderstanding, and misrepresentation always prevail when there are divisions and cliques within a church.

Note: Paul said he only believed part of what he had heard. He knew full well how matters begin to grow and become surrounded with rumors, innuendos, and exaggeration. However there was truth to what he had heard, and he knew it, and the church must correct it.

Note another matter that is of crucial importance for genuine believers within the church. Divisions and cliques within the church do not catch God off guard nor by surprise. On the contrary, God allows the divisions and cliques for a very special reason: the division causes the genuine believer to stand out ever so much more. People who are divisive and cliquish cause the love and truth of genuine believers to shine ever so brightly. In the words of Scripture:

**“There must be heresies [factions] among you, that they which are approved [the tested, the genuine] may be made manifest [revealed, shown, demonstrated] among you” (v.19).**

**Thought 1.** This point is a great encouragement to the minister of God and to genuine believers as they face division, cliques, and opposition from the carnal and unsaved in the church.

Note the warning in this point as well. Any person who finds himself in a group that is divisive or cliquish stands in terrible danger. Divisiveness and cliquishness are proofs that a person is not genuine. He must repent and commit his life to the love and mission of the Lord (cp. 1 Cor.15:33).

**“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor.1:10).**

**“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor.3:3).**

**“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:3).**

**“Only let your conversation [behavior] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

**“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Pt.3:8).**

2. There was self-deception which corrupted the Lord's Supper (v.20). Very simply, the Corinthians were only deceiving themselves in coming together and partaking of the cup and the bread. They may have thought they were celebrating the Lord's Supper, but they were not; they were utterly deceived. What they were doing was *not remembering and honoring* the Lord. It was utterly impossible to have a divisive and cliquish spirit and honor the Lord. Their meeting together was utterly meaningless and useless to the Lord.

**“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal.6:3).**

**“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal.6:7).**

**“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jas.1:22).**

**“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain” (Jas.1:26).**

**“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous” (1 Jn.3:7).**

**“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev.3:16-17).**

**“For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful” (Ps.36:2).**

3. There was selfishness and neglect of others which corrupted the Lord's Supper (v.21). When the early church came together for the *Love Feast*, everyone brought all the food they could. This provided plenty for everyone, including the poor and the slaves who would not be able to bring much. The whole idea was to have a common meal where everyone shared:

- the rich and poor
- the Jew and Gentile
- the upper and lower class
- the adult and child
- the free and enslaved
- the educated and uneducated
- the male and female

However, the Corinthian church had begun to abuse the Supper. Instead of sharing, everyone sat off in their own little group of friends and shared their food only among themselves. The result was tragic:

- ⇒ Some were neglected, having little if anything to eat. This would be true in particular with the slaves.
- ⇒ Some were indulging, acting as gluttons.
- ⇒ Some were treating the affair as a social gathering, drinking off to the side and becoming drunk.

There was no real Christian fellowship or love whatsoever being experienced. And although the church was partaking of the bread and the cup, it was not celebrating the Lord's Supper. What they were doing was totally meaningless and useless. What they were celebrating was a feast to the evil spirit of selfishness and indulgence, not to the Lord.

4. There was the abuse of the sanctity of the church and the shaming of the poor which corrupted the Lord's Supper. Note that this verse is a series of questions that answer themselves and should stir conviction within the heart of the guilty.

- ⇒ Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? The church is not the place where we are to eat and drink. It is the place of worship.
- ⇒ Are you not abusing the church and shaming the poor through your division, cliques, selfishness, indulgence, and hoarding? Of course you are!
- ⇒ "What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not!"

**3** (11:23-26) **Lord's Supper:** the real meaning of the Lord's Supper. Paul clearly said that Christ discussed the Lord's Supper with him in a special revelation. What he received from the Lord is what he now shares. (Cp. Acts 18:9; 22:18; 23:11; 27:23-25; Gal.1:12; 2:2; 2 Cor.12:7 for references to the special revelations Paul received of the Lord.) Note that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on the very night that He was betrayed.

1. The meaning of the bread: note the exact words of Christ.

- a. "Take, eat: this is my body." There are, of course, various interpretations of this statement. Some say that the bread actually becomes the substance of the Lord's body when a person eats the bread and drinks the cup. Others hold beliefs ranging from the elements being the actual substance to being merely a remembrance of the Lord. But note the word "is." The word has the meaning of representing or identifying as well as of substance. For example...
  - "He is [represents] the image and glory of God" (1 Cor.11:7).
  - "That rock was [represents] Christ" (1 Cor.10:4). (Other references would be Jn.8:12; 10:9.)

Note another point. When Jesus instructed the disciples to "take, eat," He was standing there. He even partook of the bread Himself. Certainly in that instance the bread was only representing or symbolizing His body.

Note another point as well. In passing the cup, Jesus did not say, "This is my blood." He said, "This cup is the new testament [covenant] in my blood." Of course, the cup was not literally the new covenant; it was only a symbol of the new covenant. Neither was it literally the blood of Christ; it was only representing the blood of Christ.

- b. Note the words, "which is broken for you." This refers to the death, the bruising, and the suffering of Christ. Note the words "for you." The word "for" (huper) points to the substitutionary nature of Jesus' death. He died for us, as our substitute.

**"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal.3:13).**

**"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb.2:9).**

**"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb.9:28).**

**"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pt.2:24).**

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pt.3:18).**

- c. "This do in remembrance of me." This means much more than just recalling the death of Christ. It means to actively stir up one's mind and to meditate upon the person of Jesus Christ. Christ says to remember me, not just one aspect of His Person and work. The believer is to *actively meditate* upon Christ.

2. The meaning of the cup: again, note the exact words of the Lord.

- a. "This cup is the new testament [diatheke, covenant] in my blood." The idea is that the old covenant of the Old Testament is being set aside and God is establishing a new covenant with His people. The *basis* of the new covenant is *the blood of Jesus Christ*, not the blood of bulls and goats.

**"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? and for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death...they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb.9:13-15).**

- b. "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it." Christ, very simply, told His followers, to do as He was doing in celebrating His supper: set a time aside, take the cup, bless it, and drink of it.
- c. "In remembrance of me." This is repeated to stress the point that the Lord's Supper has one purpose and only one purpose: to focus attention upon the Lord. The Lord's people are to center their minds upon Him and Him alone. The celebration of the Lord's Supper is not to be a time for fellowshiping and feasting.

3. The reason for observing the Lord's Supper: note the word "show" (katangelo). It means to proclaim, preach, declare, announce. The Lord's Supper is both a picture and sermon which proclaims...

- the Lord's death
- the Lord's return

The point is this: Christ died for us that we might live eternally with Him. Therefore, His death pictures both what He has done for us as well as what He is going to do for us when He returns. His death is a picture of both our past and present redemption as well as our future redemption when we shall be conformed to His image of perfection.

**“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:9).**

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation [behavior] received by tradition from your fathers” (1 Pt.1:18).**

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).**

**“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev.1:5).**

**“For our conversation [behavior] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).**

**“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Th.4:16-18).**

**“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:13).**

**4** (11:27-30) **Judgment—Lord’s Supper:** the severe consequences or chastisement for partaking of the Lord’s Supper unworthily. What does it mean to partake of the supper unworthily? Paul is speaking directly to the Corinthians; so whatever their sins were is bound to be what Paul means by unworthily. The Corinthians were guilty of partaking of the Lord’s Supper with...

- a spirit of division (v.18).
- a spirit of heresy (factions, parties, cliques, v.19).
- a spirit of self-deception (v.20).
- a spirit of selfishness and indulgence (v.21).
- a spirit of drunkenness (v.21).
- a spirit of neglecting the poor (v.21).
- a spirit of irreverence and carelessness in protecting the sanctity of the church (v.22).
- a spirit of unthoughtfulness and carelessness in approaching the Lord’s Supper.

Very frankly, the above list seems to indicate that having sin within one’s heart and life is what is meant by partaking unworthily. Certainly, if we eat the bread and drink the cup with *unconfessed sin* in our hearts and lives, how can we be counted worthy? Our only worthiness is Jesus Christ, and the only time we are counted worthy by Him is when we are walking...

- in constant confession.
- in constant repentance to Him.
- in constant praise of His mercy, grace, Person, and work.

We have no righteousness of our own, so the only conceivable time we could be counted worthy would be when we are walking in constant fellowship with Him. And constant fellowship means actively thinking upon and talking with Him through confession, repentance, praise, and request.

There are three consequences for partaking of the Lord’s Supper unworthily, that is, with unconfessed sin in one’s heart and life.

1. A person becomes guilty of the Lord’s death (v.27). The idea is that the person shall be held accountable, for he is guilty of sin against the Lord Himself. He...

- insults Christ
- offends Christ
- tramples Christ underfoot
- counts the death of Christ as meaningless
- does despite to Christ

**“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace” (Heb.10:29).**

2. A person condemns himself if he does not examine his heart for unconfessed sin (v.28-29). The severity of the consequence is so serious that a person must examine himself before partaking of the Lord’s Supper. He needs to make sure he has a clean heart by confessing and repenting of any known sin (v.28).

The word “damnation” (krima) means to judge, to condemn. It does not mean to damn or to doom to eternal hell and punishment. The person is assumed to be a real believer who is guilty of sin, not an unbeliever who is to be damned to hell. The actual judgment upon the believer who lives in sin is covered in the next point.

The word “discern” (diakrino) means to discriminate, to distinguish. The person who eats the bread and drinks the cup unworthily just fails to think about what he is doing. He fails to discriminate and discern the seriousness of his act. If he thought about the matter, he would not partake of the Lord’s Supper with unconfessed sin in his life, for such irreverence of the body and blood of the Lord stirs the judgment of God.

**“Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD” (Lam.3:40).**

**“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor.13:5).**

**“But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another” (Gal.6:4).**

3. A person is disciplined and chastened by the Lord (v.30). The Corinthians were so rank in their abuse of the Lord’s Supper that God had to act in severe discipline. His discipline included both sickness and death. This fact is stated so simply and straightforwardly that it has to be taken for what it says unless the Scripture is to be twisted. There is nothing in the context that even suggests that weak and sickly death are symbolic. When dealing with God’s discipline or chastisement of His people, three things need to be kept in mind.

- ⇒ God does discipline His child. He disciplines His child because He loves him (Heb.12:5-13).
- ⇒ God disciplines His child to prevent the child from destroying himself and hurting and damaging others through serious sin (v.29, 31).
- ⇒ God knows exactly what kind of discipline will most likely awaken his child to repentance and confession.
- ⇒ God knows when a believer should be taken on home to heaven. God alone knows when a *sinning believer has gone so far in sin* that he is never going to repent. At that point, the believer’s task upon earth is done; he will never again have a testimony for Christ upon earth, nor be of any real value to anyone else. As stated, only God knows when a believer who is living in sin reaches such a point. When he does, he is ready to be taken home. His damage to Christ and to loved ones and to the world have gone far enough.

Apparently, some of the Corinthian believers had reached the point of no return, so God took them on home to be with Him. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Judgment*—1 Jn.5:16. Also see notes—1 Cor.3:13-15; 3:17; 5:3-5.)

**“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (Jn.15:2).**

**“But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (1 Cor.11:32).**

**“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Heb.12:5-8).**

**“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev.3:19).**

**“Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee” (Dt.8:5).**

**“He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain” (Job 33:19).**

**“Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law” (Ps.94:12).**

**“My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction” (Pr.3:11).**

**“O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing” (Jer.10:24).**

**5** (11:31-34) **Lord’s Supper:** the right approach to the Lord’s Supper. Note four points.

1. Approach the Lord’s Supper by judging yourself, that is, by examining yourself. We are to examine and make sure we are not living in sin or carrying some known and unconfessed sin in our hearts. We are certainly not to partake of the Lord’s Supper if we are living in known sin.

2. Accept the chastening of the Lord. Confess and repent, turn from your life of sin, knowing that God is chastening you out of love. He is chastening you to keep you from being condemned with the world. This apparently refers to the final judgment. The person who continuously lives in known sin is apparently running the risk of being judged with the unbelievers of the world.

3. Serve one another. Stop acting selfishly and stop indulging yourselves. Share and demonstrate love by putting others first.

4. Do not bring condemnation upon yourself. Straighten your life out; sin no more. Change what you have been doing. Eat at home, and come together for the Lord’s Supper. Do everything decently and in order.

**“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:17).**

**“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb.12:11).**

**“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty” (Job 5:17).**

**“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).**

**“Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more” (Job 34:31).**

**“Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word” (Ps.119:67).**

**“And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice” (Jonah 2:2).**

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|   | <p>CHAPTER 12</p> <p><b>VII. THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, 12:1-14:40</b></p> <p><b>A. The Potential Dangers Surrounding Spiritual Gifts, 12:1-3</b></p>   |
| <p><b>1 There is the danger of being ignorant about the gifts</b></p> <p><b>2 There is the danger of being carried away to false worship</b></p> <p><b>3 There is the danger of speaking false messages</b></p> <p><b>4 There is the danger of speaking the truth apart from the Spirit</b></p> | <p>Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.</p> <p>2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.</p> <p>3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaketh by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.</p> |

## DIVISION VII

### THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, 12:1-14:40

#### A. The Potential Dangers Surrounding Spiritual Gifts, 12:1-3

(12:1-14:40) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Gifts, Spiritual:** the Corinthian church was facing several problems that were about to rip the church apart. One of the most serious problems was the issue of spiritual gifts. No gift, no ability, no endowment from God should ever be abused or cause a controversy. But the gifts of God's Spirit were being so abused by the Corinthian believers that the church was about to be torn apart. Note how critical the issue was: Paul devotes three whole chapters to the question of spiritual gifts.

A quick look at the history of spiritual gifts will help in understanding this passage.

1. The Old Testament had foretold that God would send His Spirit to earth and gift His people in a special way.

**“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:28-29; cp. Acts 2:17-18).**

2. Jesus Christ had promised and discussed the Holy Spirit with His followers in great detail:
- ⇒ the Person of the Holy Spirit or who the Holy Spirit is (see outline and notes—Jn. 14:15-26).
  - ⇒ the work of the Holy Spirit (see outline and notes—Jn. 16:7-15).
  - ⇒ the very special signs and protection that the Holy Spirit would provide for them.

**“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mk. 16:17-18).**

⇒ the promise of the Spirit's *permanent baptism* and enduement of power.

**“For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence....But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:5, 8).**

3. The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was such a phenomenal experience that it actually launched the greatest movement the world has ever known—Christianity itself. All the promises made by God in the Old Testament and by Jesus Christ concerning the Holy Spirit and His special gifts of ministry were witnessed for the very first time on the day of Pentecost.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-3

4. Before Christ, when God called a person for a particular work, God always provided the gifts and abilities needed to do the work. God has always equipped His people to do the work of the ministry. However, since Christ and the day of Pentecost, there is one great and remarkable difference: *every believer is called and gifted by God to minister*. That is what Pentecost was all about. God expects every believer to be a witness to the salvation of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. To be a witness is one of the primary reasons God gives the Holy Spirit to every believer, and it is certainly the reason He provides spiritual gifts. The gifts and abilities are given to be used—used in sharing Christ and in ministering to the desperate needs of the poor and suffering masses of this lost and dying world.

5. Paul discusses the Holy Spirit and His special gifts for ministry in great detail:

- ⇒ the power and work of the Holy Spirit (see outline and notes—Ro.8:1-17).
- ⇒ the struggle of the Holy Spirit against the flesh (see outline and notes—Gal.5:16-21).
- ⇒ the fruit of the Holy Spirit (see outline and notes—Gal.5:22-26).
- ⇒ the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit (see outline and notes—Ro.12:6-8; 1 Cor.12:1-11; Eph.4:7-16).
- ⇒ the questions or problems surrounding spiritual gifts (see outlines and notes—1 Cor.12:1-14:40).

In conclusion Scripture says unmistakably that there are spiritual gifts—special gifts and abilities given by the Holy Spirit to be used in the church and in the ministry to reach the world for Christ. However, as in the secular world, when a man receives a gift, he does not always use his gift wisely nor in the way it should be used; so it is in the church. Christian believers do not always use their spiritual gifts wisely nor as God wants them used. This happened to the believers in the Corinthian church, and unfortunately, it happens to multitudes of believers and churches around the world in every generation. The misuse and abuse of God's gifts are the very reasons the world has never been reached for Jesus Christ. This fact alone stresses the desperate need for a study of these chapters.

(12:1-3) **Introduction—Gifts, Spiritual:** the Corinthian church was about to be torn apart because of the controversy over spiritual gifts, and unfortunately, churches down through the centuries have allowed themselves to become embroiled in the same controversy. It is unfortunate because God's power or special endowment and gifts must rest upon believers if they are going to reach the suffering masses of the world for Christ. There are four dangers surrounding spiritual gifts or the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

1. There is the danger of being ignorant about the gifts (v.1).
2. There is the danger of being carried away to false worship (v.2).
3. There is the danger of speaking false messages (v.3).
4. There is the danger of speaking the truth apart from the Spirit (v.3).

**1** (12:1) **Gifts, Spiritual:** there is the danger of being ignorant about spiritual gifts. Note two significant points.

1. Note the words "spiritual gifts." There are most definitely spiritual gifts, very special gifts and abilities from God that are given to a person when he first becomes a follower of Jesus Christ. Note they are *spiritual gifts*, not the natural abilities a person has developed from birth. They are special gifts given by the Holy Spirit that enable the believer to serve Jesus Christ in the church and in the world—spiritual gifts that enable the believer to help in ministering to people and in leading them to Christ.

**"And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey" (Mt.25:15).**

**"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Ro.12:6-8).**

**"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor.12:4-10).**

**"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ....And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph.4:7, 11).**

2. Note the exact words of Paul: "Concerning spiritual gifts...I would not have you ignorant." There are three ways that a person can be ignorant about spiritual gifts.

- a. A person can be ignorant that there is such a thing as spiritual gifts. He can fail to know that God endows the genuine believer with very special gifts that empower and enable him to serve and live for Christ.
- b. A person may know that God gifts His people, but he may not know what special gifts God has given him. The believer may not know what it is God wants him to do for Christ and the church.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-3

- c. A person may know what his gifts are, but he may not know how to properly use them. It was at this point that the Corinthian church was having so much trouble. Many of the believers knew their spiritual gifts, but they were misusing them, failing to use them as God willed them to be used.

**Thought 1.** There is only one solution to ignorance: study. Believers must study the Word of God and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit...

- to learn about spiritual gifts.
- to learn what their particular calling and gifts are.

**“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).**

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).**

**“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).**

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).**

**“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col.3:16).**

**“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pt.2:2).**

**2** (12:2) **Gifts, Spiritual:** there is the danger of being carried away to false worship. Many of the believers in Corinth had been saved out of the heathen religions of that day. Note the emphasis of Paul:

- ⇒ They had been “Gentiles”; now they were Christians, followers of Christ, the Messiah Himself.
- ⇒ They had been worshippers of idols who were dumb or voiceless, unable to communicate and relate. But now they were worshippers of the only true and living God who could communicate and share with them.
- ⇒ They had been “carried away” and “led” by some force, energy, or spiritual power to serve the dumb idols. But now they were under the power of God’s Spirit; therefore, they were to be led by Him.

The point is this. The religions of that day widely practiced special gifts that seemed to come from spiritual forces, gifts such as trances, tongues, ecstatic utterances, and prophecies of the future. Such gifts were actually running rampant. Many of the believers in Corinth were converts from paganism; therefore, they would have been familiar with the counterfeit gifts. Some of them would have practiced these gifts in their former religion before their conversion. Apparently some of them...

- had used a counterfeit gift to imitate the real gift.
- had misused the gift and ended up not really worshipping God, but worshipping in a meaningless way.
- had begun to feel and act super-spiritual, worshipping the gift and self rather than focusing attention upon God.

**Thought 1.** Think how often we see spiritual gifts counterfeited and misused, for example the gift of prophecy. How often do we see a person preaching or prophesying and it is clearly evident that he is only counterfeiting the gift and has not really been called by God? And the gift of tongues and miracles: how often do we see believers counterfeiting or using the ecstatic and miraculous gifts in a manner that does not lead to a true worship of God?

**“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (Jn.4:24).**

**“Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev.14:7).**

**“O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth” (Ps.96:9).**

**“Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy” (Ps.99:5).**

**3** (12:3) **Gifts, Spiritual:** there is the danger of speaking false messages (v.3). Some person in the Corinth church apparently spoke in tongues and distorted the great truth that “Jesus is Lord.” From all indications, the person took the truth that Paul had preached, that Christ was “made a curse for us” (Gal.3:13), and he said something to the effect that “Jesus is accursed.” Paul proclaims the truth in no uncertain terms: this is not the Spirit of God.

The point is forceful: every believer must be careful not to speak or proclaim a false message. What the believer proclaims must be of God; it must be the truth of God. The world has enough false messages. It does not need any more misrepresentation and counterfeit messages, messages that leave men hopeless beyond the grave. The world needs the truth of God, the message of the glorious gospel: that He has sent His Son into the world to eternally save all men everywhere. It is time for false messages and untruths to cease flowing from lips of people who are counterfeiting the gifts of God's Spirit.

**Thought 1.** The believer must guard against two deceptions when dealing with spiritual gifts and truth.

1) Making a statement or proclaiming a message that is not the truth of God and His Word.

**“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn.8:32).**

**“For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me” (2 Cor.12:6).**

**“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Eph.4:25).**

**“The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment” (Pr.12:19).**

**“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” (Zech.8:16).**

**“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Mal.2:6).**

2) Either becoming or sitting under a person who counterfeits the gifts of God's Spirit, whether he be a self-proclaimed minister or lay leader in the church.

**“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” (1 Jn.4:1-3).**

**“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God” (2 Cor.4:13-15).**

**“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim.4:1-2).**

**“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves....having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim.3:1-2, 5).**

**“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 Jn.1:7).**

**“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily [quietly, secretly] shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).**

**4** (12:3) **Gifts, Spiritual—False Profession:** there is the danger of speaking the truth apart from the Holy Spirit (v.3). Note the word “Lord” (kurios). It refers to God Himself, that is, the Jehovah who is proclaimed throughout Scripture to be the Sovereign Lord of the Universe. To call Jesus “Lord” is to acknowledge His deity, that He is God Himself. The point is this: no man can please God by calling Jesus Lord apart from the Holy Spirit. Any person can speak the words that “Jesus is Lord,” but for a person to please God, he must *acknowledge* within his heart and life that Jesus is Lord. The word *acknowledge* is the key: it means to surrender one's heart to Jesus *as the Lord of one's life*. And no person is going to do this, not really, unless he is moved upon by the Spirit of God. However, when a person is moved upon by the Spirit to say that Jesus is Lord, the person does surrender all he is and has to serve Jesus. To summarize very simply, saying that Jesus is Lord does not mean to merely mouth the words; it means to be stirred within the heart by the Spirit of God to *confess* that one's life belongs to Jesus *as Lord*. It means to give everything that a person is and has to Christ, acknowledging Him to be the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, the very Son of God Himself.

Apparently some in the Corinthian church were saying that Jesus is Lord, but were not truly converted. They were professing truth, but had not really committed their lives to the truth. Tragically, from the earliest days of church history churches have overflowed with counterfeit and hypocritical professions.

**Thought 1.** How many counterfeit the gifts of God's Spirit and profess to know and proclaim the truth, yet they are not really led by the Spirit of God? How many preach, teach, and speak in tongues; yet they are only mouthing truth, not proclaiming truth through the Spirit of God? No spiritual truth can ever be used effectively by God apart from the leadership of His Spirit.

**"But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jn.14:26).**

**"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (Jn.16:13).**

**"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor.2:12-13).**

**"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (1 Jn.2:27).**

**Thought 2.** Too often envy and jealousy over the gifts of others causes a person...

- to counterfeit a gift.
- to proclaim a truth in the flesh that is not led by the Spirit.

**Thought 3.** Tragically, from the earliest times of church history churches have overflowed with counterfeit and hypocritical professions.

**"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mt.7:21).**

**"Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Mt.23:28).**

**"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mk.7:6).**

**"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Tit.1:16).**

**"And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues" (Ps.78:35-36).**

**"And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not" (Ezk.33:31-32).**

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| <p><b>1 The unity of the gifts</b><br/> a. There are different gifts, but the same spirit<br/> b. There are different ministries, but the same Lord<br/> c. There are different operations, but the same God</p> <p><b>2 The purpose of spiritual gifts</b></p> <p><b>3 The list of the different gifts</b></p> | <p><b>B. The Spiritual Gifts, 12:4-11</b></p> <p>4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.<br/> 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.<br/> 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.<br/> 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.<br/> 8 For to one is given by the</p> | <p>Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;<br/> 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;<br/> 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:<br/> 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.</p> | <p>a. Wisdom<br/> b. Knowledge<br/> c. Faith<br/> d. Gifts of healing<br/> e. Working of miracles<br/> f. Prophecy, see 14:3<br/> g. Discerning of spirits<br/> h. Tongues<br/> i. Interpretation of tongues</p> <p><b>4 The unity of the gifts restressed</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, 12:1-14:40**

**B. The Spiritual Gifts, 12:4-11**

(12:4-11) **Introduction—Gifts, Spiritual:** a terrible controversy was raging in the Corinthian church over spiritual gifts. All kinds of questions were being bantered about:

- ⇒ Which gifts were essential?
- ⇒ Which gifts were the most valid and true?
- ⇒ Which gifts were the most important?
- ⇒ Which gifts were the most useful and needful?
- ⇒ Which gifts were to have precedence?
- ⇒ Which gifts were to be desired and coveted?
- ⇒ Which gifts were the most honorable?
- ⇒ Which gifts were more acceptable?

God had blessed the Corinthian believers with an abundance of spiritual gifts so they could effectively minister to the citizens of pagan Corinth. However, the believers never came close to launching the ministry God had intended for the church. Why? Because many of the believers had misunderstood and were misusing and abusing the spiritual gifts which God had given them.

- ⇒ Some began to feel their gifts were more important than the gifts of others, that they were more blessed than other believers. Therefore, all kinds of sins began to swell up in the hearts of these people: a sense of pride, arrogance, super-spirituality, and of self-importance.
- ⇒ Others began to feel they had to have the same gifts as others, so they became envious, and began to seek their gifts. The result was a terrible abuse of the gifts. Some persons began to counterfeit some of the gifts, and their abuse brought disorder and disruption to the church.

There was argument and debate, strife and division over the spiritual gifts of God. God had given spiritual gifts to equip His people for ministry; but instead of using the gifts for ministry, they were arguing over what gifts were essential, valid, important, needful, honorable, and desirable.

The present passage deals with these problems, and to the open and honest heart it answers many of the questions about spiritual gifts.

1. The unity of the gifts (v.4-6).
2. The purpose of spiritual gifts (v.7).
3. The list of the different gifts (v.8-10).
4. The unity of the gifts restressed (v.11).

**1** (12:4-6) **Gifts, Spiritual:** the unity of the spiritual gifts. Pointedly, Paul says there should be absolutely no pride, controversy, or division over spiritual gifts. Three simple, yet profound reasons show why.

1. There are different gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit. The Spirit determines what gift to give to a believer. The choice is entirely the Holy Spirit's; it is not the believer's choice. No man earns, merits, or deserves a spiritual gift. The gift is given freely by the Spirit as He wills. He and He alone is the Source of the gift. Therefore, there is nothing about a gift for a man to feel prideful and important about. He did not earn it, and he certainly does not deserve it.

Note another fact as well, a matter that always needs to be remembered by genuine believers: there is nothing controversial about spiritual gifts. *They are all*—every one of them—gifts of the Spirit. He can give whatever spiritual gift and grace He wills to whomever He wills. Even if He needed and willed to give a new grace or gift to a person for meeting a

special need in the church or in the world, what could anyone say against it? If He willed it, He could do it. He is the Spirit of God. What is there to argue about?

**Thought 1.** Believers need to do as Paul is soon to say, love—for love is the the greatest gift—and get on about the task of reaching our desperate world for Christ.

2. There are different ministries or ways of serving (administrations), but they are all done by the authority of the same Lord. It is the Lord Jesus who gives the believer the right and authority to minister *in His name*. No believer earns, merits, or deserves the right to be looked upon by the Lord, much less represent the Lord. Therefore, when the Lord gives the believer the right to minister in His name, it is an occasion for humble brokenness and thankful service, not for self-importance, super-spirituality, and arrogant service.

3. There are different activities and operations in carrying out the various ministries, but it is the same God who works and gives the power to do it all. No man has a greater God or a greater claim to God than anyone else. It is the very same God who equips and empowers every believer to do the daily activities of his ministry.

No man, therefore, has a greater claim to boast or to feel super-spiritual over other believers. And there is nothing controversial about the matter. God can do whatever He wills, just as He pleases, for it is *God who works all things in all believers*. Therefore, believers need to humbly thank God for His presence and power and be faithful to the daily activities demanded by their ministry. They certainly have no reason for feeling superior and self-important; neither do they have the right to stand against other believers because God is *working different things in them*.

**Thought 1.** Both the church and believers must always remember *there are differences* among believers. And it is God who has made the differences. Look at what Scripture has just said: there are...

- *Different gifts* ...given by the same Spirit (v.4)
- *Different ministries* ...given by the same Lord (v.5)
- *Different activities* ...given by the same God (v.6)

The point to see is forceful: no matter the gifts, ministries, and activities, they are all *given*—given by the Spirit, the Lord, and God. The gifts are not and could not be worked up by believers, not genuine gifts. Neither are they earned, merited, or deserved. Therefore, all feelings of self-importance and all controversy needs to be stopped, and the face of God needs to be sought in repentance. For God is the One who has given and distributed as He willed. He alone knows best how to reach the people of this desperate and dying world. Therefore, He alone knows what gifts and graces are needed...

- in the generations and times
- by the races and countries of the world
- for the minds and emotions of all people
- for the conversion and growth of all people

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us” (Ro.12:6).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor.4:7).**

**2** (12:7) **Gifts, Spiritual:** the purpose of spiritual gifts is to *enable* believers to do the ministry, the work to which God has called them. The word “profit” (sumpheron) means edification, advantage, benefit. Believers are equipped with spiritual gifts primarily for the *benefit and edification of others*, not for themselves. The gifts are not given to believers for their own gratification or for them to revel in a sense of self-importance and super-spirituality. The believer does, of course, profit and benefit from the gift given him, but he is gifted primarily to edify and help others. This is seen in the word “manifestation.” It means to be openly and publicly seen. The gifts of the Spirit are to be openly and publicly used; they are...

- to be manifested to the church, that is, used to edify the church.
- to be manifested to the world, that is, used to benefit the world (reaching the lost).

Note a crucial fact that is not always understood. The gifts of the Spirit are “given to every man.” They are not given only to the educated and outstanding. Every single believer is given some spiritual gift by the Spirit of God, and it is given because it is needed within the church and the world, needed to help in ministering to people and in reaching the lost for Christ.

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“And he gave some [gifts]...for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:11-12).**

**3** (12:8-10) **Gifts, Spiritual:** the list of the different gifts is given to show just how diverse the gifts of the Spirit really are. He can gift a person as He wills, and His gifts are many and varied. This list is only partial; other gifts are mentioned in other passages (see outlines and notes—Ro.12:6-8; Eph.4:11).

1. There is the gift of the *word of wisdom* (sophia). Wisdom means the wisdom of God; this is made clear by 1 Cor.2:7. The wisdom of God is the truth which God has now revealed to man; it is the whole system of truth revealed by God—the truth about God and man and the world. Therefore, the word of wisdom is the gift to share the wisdom and truth of God with men—to share the truth in simple and understandable language.

**“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Ro.11:33).**

**“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (Jas.3:17).**

**“Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his” (Dan.2:20).**

2. There is the gift of the *word of knowledge* (gnosis). This is practical knowledge. It is knowing what to do in the day-to-day situations that arise. It is knowing how to apply the wisdom that one has to daily living. It is being able to make practical application of truth to life. It does no good to know truth unless a person knows how to use the truth.

The *word of knowledge* is the gift to share with others how they should live; the ability to apply truth to their lives in day-to-day living; the ability to make practical application of truth to life.

**“Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn.7:16-17).**

**“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn.8:31-32).**

**“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God” (Pr.2:3-5).**

**“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding” (Pr.3:13).**

3. There is the *gift of faith*. This is not the usual faith that we mean when we speak about saving faith. It is a very special gift of faith: a mustard seed faith, a strong faith, a powerful faith, a wonder-working faith, a special gift of faith that enables a believer to do great things for God and His people.

**“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Mt.17:20).**

**“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mk.9:23).**

**“And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith” (Lk.17:5).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (Jn.14:12).**

4. There is the *gift of healing*. This is a gift that has been minimized and de-emphasized for generations because of the charlatans and the abuses that too often surrounded it. All kinds of theories and doctrinal positions were held saying that the gift was only for the early church. However, as William Barclay so openly points out, it is a gift that is being re-discovered by the church. It is a gift that is definitely experienced and demonstrated in the lives of multitudes all over the world today (*The Letters to the Corinthians*, p.122f).

**“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease” (Mt.10:1).**

**“And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils” (Mk.3:14-15).**

**“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mk.16:17-18).**

**“To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit” (1 Cor.12:9).**

5. There is the gift of the *working of miracles*. This would refer to miracles other than that of healing which has just been discussed. There are times when circumstances and situations arise, and believers need a miraculous deliverance of some sort. Apparently, this is what the gift is. When it is in God’s will for a storm to cease—for an enemy to be temporarily blinded, for a fire to be turned or put out, or for an innumerable number of threats against believers to be altered—God raises up some believer and gifts him to work the needed miracle. Examples of this gift would be Christ stilling the storm; Paul smiting Elymas with blindness (Acts 13:11); and Paul being delivered from a poisonous snake bite (Acts 28:5).

6. There is the *gift of prophecy*. This is the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God’s Spirit. It includes both prediction and proclamation, and neither one should be minimized despite the abuse of the gift.

There is no question, the gift to predict events has been abused to the point of the ridiculous. However, the abuse of a gift does not eliminate the fact that the Spirit of God sometimes gives believers a glimpse into coming events in order to prepare and strengthen them to face the events.

However, the major function of prophecy is clearly stated by Scripture, and the fact should be learned by all believers:

**“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort”**  
(1 Cor.14:3).

7. There is the gift of *discerning of spirits*. This is a gift that is desperately needed by believers in every generation, for there are always false prophets and teachers in their midst. In reality, some measure of the gift is needed by every believer in order to keep from being led astray.

**“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”** (1 Jn.4:1).

**“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works”** (2 Cor.11:13-15).

**“Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”** (1 Th.5:20-21).

**“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron”** (1 Tim.4:1-2).

**“[Men] having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away”**  
(2 Tim.3:5).

8. There is the *gift of tongues*. This is the gift of an ecstatic or deeply emotional speech. It has always been greatly coveted by people familiar with the gift because it brings a person into a deep sense of God’s presence. What is the language spoken?

⇒ Some say it is in no known language.

⇒ Others say it is in some foreign language unknown to the speaker.

⇒ Still others say it is a heavenly language.

This is an illustration of how the Holy Spirit gifts people differently in order to meet the needs of the person and local situation.

Again, this is a gift that has been abused so drastically and tragically that much of Christendom has shied away from the gift. However, the gift is dramatically sweeping the world just as the gift of healing is. It should be noted that it is the gift that was being so abused and causing so much havoc in the Corinthian church. (The gift of tongues is covered in detail in Chapter 14. See outline and notes—1 Cor. 14:1-40 for more discussion.)

9. There is the gift of the *interpretation of tongues*. This is simply what it says: the Spirit of God gifts some believers to interpret the tongue.

**4** (12:11) **Gifts, Spiritual:** the unity of the gifts is restressed. The point is critical for the church to learn and practice; therefore, it is repeated.

1. All the gifts just covered are given by one and the same Spirit. God’s gifts do not come from any other source. True spiritual gifts cannot be earned, merited, or worked up by men. No man deserves the gift of the grace of God. Therefore, there is no room for self-importance and super-spirituality, nor for controversy. One believer has one gift and another believer has another gift, but both have come from the Spirit of God.

2. The Spirit of God endows the gifts to every man exactly as He wills. He knows what gifts are needed and where they are needed all over the world. He knows what gifts will edify the church most and what gifts can be most effective to reach the world and to minister to the desperate needs of all mankind. Therefore, he meets the needs of all believers in their respective calls and localities.

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| <p><b>1 The human body is a picture of Christ &amp; of His church</b></p> <p>a. The Spirit baptizes us into one body, Christ Himself</p> <p>b. The Spirit causes us to drink of Himself</p> <p><b>2 Point 1: Some less gifted feel they are unimportant to the body</b></p> <p>a. Each member is necessary</p> <p>b. Each member has an essential function</p> <p>c. Each member is set in the body as God wills</p> <p>d. Each member is distinct, but together there is only one body</p> <p><b>3 Point 2: Some more gifted feel they are more important to the body</b></p> | <p><b>C. The Church—the Body of Christ and the Gifts, 12:12-31</b></p> <p>12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.</p> <p>13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.</p> <p>14 For the body is not one member, but many.</p> <p>15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?</p> <p>16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?</p> <p>17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?</p> <p>18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.</p> <p>19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?</p> <p>20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.</p> <p>21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.</p> | <p>22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:</p> <p>23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.</p> <p>24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:</p> <p>25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.</p> <p>26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.</p> <p>27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.</p> <p>28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.</p> <p>29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?</p> <p>30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?</p> <p>31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.</p> | <p>a. The weaker members (less gifted) are actually more necessary</p> <p>b. The unpresentable parts are treated with greater honor</p> <p><b>4 Point 3: God has put both the presentable &amp; unpresentable into one body</b></p> <p>a. To keep the members from clashing</p> <p>b. To create a natural care for one another</p> <p><b>5 Point 4: Each is a member of the body of Christ &amp; has his own place in it</b></p> <p>a. God sets &amp; gifts each member in the church<sup>ps1</sup></p> <p>b. All do not have the same gift</p> <p><b>6 Point 5: Each is to covet the very best gifts</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, 12:1-14:40**

**C. The Church—the Body of Christ and the Gifts, 12:12-31**

(12:12-31) **Introduction:** this passage gives us one of the most meaningful descriptions of the church in all of Scripture. It is also one of the most meaningful messages on the church that can be preached. The purpose of the passage is to stress *the unity of the church*. The church is said to be a body, a body of many parts or members. It is compared to the human body throughout the whole passage.

1. The human body is a picture of Christ and of His church (v.12-13).
2. Point 1: some less gifted feel they are unimportant to the body (v.14-20).
3. Point 2: some more gifted feel they are more important to the body (v.21-23).
4. Point 3: God has put both the presentable and unpresentable into one body (v.24-26).
5. Point 4: each is a member of the body of Christ and has his own place in it (v.27-30).
6. Point 5: each is to covet the very best gifts (v.31).

**1** (12:12-13) **Church—Body, The:** the human body is a picture of Christ and of His church. The picture is practical and descriptive: the human body is one organism, one person, one being, one life; yet it has many members or parts to it. However, despite its many parts, the body is still one organic whole. All the parts of the body are still *in the body* and actually form the body, enabling it to function.

“So also is Christ.” Christ is One Organism, One Person, One Being, One Life; yet He too has many members or parts to His body. However, despite the many parts to His body, His body is still one organic whole. All the parts of His body actually give Him form and enable Him to function. The point is that the human body and the body of Christ picture what the Holy Spirit does.

1. The Holy Spirit baptizes believers into one body, that is, into Christ Himself. When we really believe *in Christ* (note the significant phrase “in Christ” which is so often found in Scripture. See note, *Believer, Position in Christ—Ro.6:3-5; DEEPER STUDY # 1—8:1*)...

- the Holy Spirit immerses us into the death of Jesus Christ. God actually counts us as “*in Christ*,” as “in the body of Christ.” God sees us as having already died *in the body of Christ*. Therefore, having died *in Christ*, we never have to die (see *DEEPER STUDY # 1, Justification—Ro.4:22; note—5:1*).
- the Holy Spirit immerses us into the resurrection of Christ. God counts and sees us as having already been raised from the dead *in the body of Christ*. Therefore, we already have the new life of Christ, both abundant and eternal life.
- the Holy Spirit immerses us into the purpose of Jesus Christ. God counts and sees us *in the body of Christ* working and carrying out the very same purpose as His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The point is powerful: we—all genuine believers—owe our very existence to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. All that we have received of God is due to one thing and to one thing only: the baptism of the Holy Spirit into the very body of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. God recognizes and acknowledges us...

- only if we have “*believed in*” the Lord Jesus Christ.
- only if we have been “*baptized into*” the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has to see us “*in Christ*,” “*in the body of Christ*” in order to accept and approve us. Picture the scene: there is the body of Christ—*out there*. When God looks at the body of Christ, He sees us *in Christ*; then God accepts and approves us—no matter who we are. We may be Jew or Gentile, a slave or a free man—it does not matter. If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit takes us and baptizes us into the body of Christ. God sees and accepts, counts and credits us as *in Christ*, as *in the body of Christ*.

**Thought 1.** Note a significant fact. Paul has not mentioned the church. In fact, he does not mention the church until verse 28 when he begins to mention the spiritual gifts. Why? He does not say, but his thrust is the universal body of Christ: every individual believer around the world, no matter who or where he is, is a member of the body of Christ. And the individual believer is critical to the health of the whole body. The individual believer is desperately needed to make the body of Christ healthy.

“And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness [acceptance]” (Gen.15:6).

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified [counted acceptable] by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace [acceptance] with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).

2. There is another significant fact in this verse as well. We “have all been made to drink into one Spirit”; that is, the Spirit has entered our bodies. He dwells within the hearts and lives of all believers.

- ⇒ Believers are not only immersed “*into the body of Christ*” by the Holy Spirit...
- ⇒ but the Holy Spirit is immersed or placed into the lives and bodies of believers.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor.3:16).

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor.6:19).

**2** (12:14-20) **Church:** some who are *less gifted* feel they are unimportant to the body of Christ. Some members in the Corinthian church were experiencing what so many believers experience, a sense of being...

- less gifted
- less able
- less capable
- less worthy
- insignificant
- unimportant
- inadequate
- ungifted

However, such feelings and thoughts are false, totally untrue. “The body is not one [significant] member, but many [members].” Every person who truly belongs to the body of Christ (the church) is significant and important to God and has a gift and function in the body. Note four significant facts about the church, the body of Christ.

1. Each member is necessary. The foot may not be as gifted as the hand in handling things, but the foot is still part of the body. The ear may not be able to envision things like the eye can, but the ear is still part of the body.
2. Each member has an essential function. The eye, the ear, and the nose—they all have their function.

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- ⇒ None can do the function of the other. Each member has its function, and no other member can do the function of the other member.
- ⇒ If the whole body were only an eye, it would be a freak: inoperative, unfunctional, and useless. It would be an atrocity.

**Thought 1.** Note three significant applications.

- 1) The body of Christ, the church, can operate only if enough members function as they are gifted to do.
- 2) The body, the church, becomes handicapped if some members do not function and do the work they are gifted to do.
- 3) The ability of the body to operate is determined by the number and efficiency of its members. The more the members of the body (church) function and function efficiently, the more the body (church) can do.

3. Each member is set “in the body” as God wills. The eye sees because God gave it the ability to see. The ear hears because God gave it the ability to hear. The same is true in the church. Note the words “every one of them”—every member has been set in the church by God and gifted by God. God has not just set the more prominent members in the church. God has set “every one” of us in the church, and He has gifted us for an essential function. And note: what we are called and gifted to do is *God’s will*. We are who we are and have the gifts we have because God willed us to be as we are.

**Thought 1.** The implications of this point are forceful. Every believer...

- needs to thank God for who he is and for his gift.
- needs to use his gifts with all diligence and fervency.

4. Each member is distinct, but *together* there is only one body. If only one member existed, where would the body be? Of course, there would be no body. So it is with the church. If there is only one member in the church, he would be significant, the most important person around. But where would the church be? The point is clear: the church is not one significant and important person. The church is many members—all significant and important. But note: despite the diversity, the church is still one body.

**“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Ro.12:6-8).**

**“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Cor.12:4-7).**

**3** (12:21-23) **Church:** some who are *more gifted* feel they are more important to the body. This point is a sharp rebuke to those who try to dominate or impose their will upon a church. A person’s own will and desires are never to be pushed forward and forced upon the church. Every member is important and significant and must be considered. Too often, there are some who feel they are more important than others in the church. They feel their gifts and contributions are more significant than that of others. The thrust of this point is that such feelings and thoughts are inaccurate, totally inaccurate. Even the lowest and least gifted member (who is using his gift) is as important to the function of the church as the minister or the most gifted person. “The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you.” “The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you.” All are important to God. In fact, note what Scripture says; the two points are real eye-openers, a shock to what most people think:

1. The weaker members (less gifted) are actually more necessary. The word “feeble” (asthenes) means sick, sickly. It shows that in appearance the lesser members may seem unimportant, but they are not; they are essential. In fact, they are actually more necessary. The average layman who serves as a personal worker, although he is never seen by the crowds, is much more essential to decisions for Christ than the evangelist who is in the center of the scene. The dear saint who has become a *prayer warrior* is much more essential to the strength of the church than the most eloquent preacher who ever fills the pulpit.

2. The unrepresentable parts of the body are treated with greater honor. The reference is to clothing. We take more pains to dress the unrepresentable parts of our body, giving them a special nobility.

So it should be in the church. The less gifted should be recognized and treated with a very special nobility, for they are actually more necessary.

**Thought 1.** The point is well made: no believer or group of believers are to look down upon, snub, or bypass the less gifted in the church. All are important; in fact, the less gifted who are using their gifts for Christ are actually more necessary. They are “where the rubber hits the road”; therefore, they should be treated with greater honor.

**“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Lk.22:26).**

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and**

base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor.1:27-29).

"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor.4:7).

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pt.5:5).

**4** (12:24-26) **Church:** God has put both the presentable and unpresentable into one body. The presentable parts of our body have no need for clothing; therefore, we do not clothe them (for example, the face and the hands). God has done the same thing in the church. God has tempered the body together. The word "tempered" (sunekerasen) means to mix, combine, and blend together. God has arranged the church as it is: the gifted and less gifted mixed, combined, and blended together. And He has done it in such a manner that more honor really belongs to those who are not as gifted. The prayer warrior is much more essential than the soloist who is out before the people. The lay witness for Christ is more necessary than the preacher who stands in the pulpit. The person who ministers to the sick or elderly is more honorable than the committee chairman who leads the whole congregation in administrative matters.

All are important, but the more honorable are not necessarily those who stand before the church. Sometimes the more honorable are those who are never seen, those who go about their ministry for the Lord, using their gifts and functioning within the church as He has ordained.

1. God has tempered or blended the members together to keep them from clashing. There should be no jealousy, pride, or divisiveness within the church; for God has gifted every believer to complement the others. God has gifted all to function together in harmony.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor.1:10).

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor.13:11).

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph.4:3).

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Ph.1:27).

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Pt.3:8).

2. God has tempered or blended the members together to create a natural care for one another. Note the words "same care." The very same care should be shown to one member as is shown to another member.

One member of the church is not more important than another member—not to God, and it should not be to us. There should be no favoritism or partiality shown to anyone. When a member of the human body suffers, the whole body suffers. When one member (for example, the feet in a race) is honored, the whole body rejoices with the feet. So it is to be in the church. The church is one body; therefore, it is to suffer and rejoice together. The body is to walk through the experience of life together—suffering and rejoicing with every member, looking after and caring for every member.

"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Mt.25:35-36).

"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Ro.15:1).

"To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor.9:22).

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1 Th.5:14).

**5** (12:27-30) **Church:** each believer is a member of the body of Christ and has his own place in it. This point is forceful and emphatic.

⇒ "Ye are the body of Christ": collectively, we have the supreme privilege. We are the members of Christ, of His body, of the body of God's Son Himself.

⇒ "Members in particular": individually, each one of us is a member of Christ's body. Not a single believer is excluded, and no person is more a member than any other believer.

Paul illustrates the point by listing some of the gifts. He says two significant things.

1. God has set and gifted each member in the church. For example, consider these eight gifts.

a. First, God has set apostles in the church (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Apostle*—1 Cor.12:28 for discussion).

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- b. Second, God has set prophets in the church (see note, *Gifts*—1 Cor.12:8-10 for discussion).
  - c. Third, God has set teachers in the church. The gift of teaching is the gift to instruct believers in the truth of God and His Word. It is the gift to root and ground people in doctrine, reproof, correction, and righteousness.
  - d. There was also the gift of miracles (see note—1 Cor.12:8-10 for discussion).
  - e. There was the gift of healing (see note—1 Cor.12:8-10 for discussion).
  - f. There was the gift of helps. This is the gift that does just what it says: helps people. We all know some persons who are always ready to jump to help people—always available and ready to offer a helping hand. These are particularly directed to help the needy, for example, the widows or widowers, orphans, disabled, shut-ins, and poor.
  - g. There was the gift of governments or administration. The Greek word is descriptive (*kuberneseis*). It refers to the pilot of a ship, the person who steers the ship through the dangerous channels of the oceans. The church, of course, needs such persons who can give it direction as it moves along on its journey to reach the destination God has appointed for it.
  - h. There was the gift of different tongues (see note—1 Cor.12:8-10 for discussion).
2. The point to note is that all members do not have the same gift.
- ⇒ Are all apostles?
  - ⇒ Are all prophets?
  - ⇒ Are all teachers?
  - ⇒ Are all workers of miracles?
  - ⇒ Do all have the gifts of healing?
  - ⇒ Do all speak with tongues?
  - ⇒ Do all interpret tongues?

The answer is obvious. No! God has not gifted all believers with the same gift.

**“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey” (Mt.25:15).**

**“But all these [gifts] worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (1 Cor.12:11).**

**“[Gifts are given] for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:12).**

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(12:28) **Apostle:** to send out. An apostle is a representative, an ambassador, a person who is sent out into one country to represent another country. Three things are true of the apostle.

- ⇒ He belongs to the One who has sent him out.
- ⇒ He is commissioned to be sent out.
- ⇒ He possesses all the authority and power of the One who sends him out.

The word “apostle” has both a narrow and a broad usage in the New Testament.

1. The narrow sense. It refers to the twelve apostles and to Paul as an apostle (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor.9:1). In this narrow sense there were at least two basic qualifications.

a. The apostle was a man chosen directly by the Lord Himself or by the Holy Spirit (cp. Mt.10:1-2; Mk.3:13-14; Lk.6:13; Acts 9:6, 15; 13:2; 22:10, 14-15; Ro.1:1). He was a man who had either seen or been a companion of the Lord Jesus.

b. The apostle was a man who had been an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor.9:1).

2. The broad sense. The word “apostle” refers to other men who preached the gospel. It is used of two missionaries, Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14, 17) and Silas (1 Th.2:6); and two messengers, Titus (2 Cor.8:23) and Epaphroditus (Phil.2:25). There is also a possibility that James, the Lord’s brother (Gal.1:19) and Andronicus and Junia (Ro.16:7) are referred to as apostles.

In the narrow sense, the gift of an apostle was bound to die out because of the unique qualifications to receive the gift. But historically, in the broad sense, there is perhaps a sense in which the qualifications and gift itself are still given and used by the Lord. The Lord’s servant of any generation must *see* the Lord and know Him intimately. Similarly the servant must personally *see and experience* the power of the resurrection. Certainly there are some in every generation who have *seen* the Lord Jesus and who *know and experience* the power of the Lord’s resurrection. Perhaps the Lord Jesus endues them with the very special gift of an apostle to be used throughout His most precious domain—the church.

**6** (12:31) **Gifts:** each believer is to covet the best gifts. Note there is a legitimate covetousness. The believer is to covet the “best gifts” so he can more effectively serve his Lord. However, there is a more excellent way than gifts, something much higher, a quality that surpasses all the gifts combined. And it can be possessed by every believer, no matter who he is. What is the quality? What is it that is far greater and far more supreme than the greatest combination of gifts? That is the subject of the next outline.

# 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13

| CHAPTER 13  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | <b>D. The Most Excellent Quality of Life: Love, Not Gifts,<sup>DS1</sup> 13:1-13</b>  |  |
| <b>1 The great importance of love</b><br>a. Verdict 1: Tongues without love are meaningless<br>b. Verdict 2: Gifts without love are nothing<br>1) Prophecy is nothing<br>2) Understanding all mysteries & knowledge are nothing<br>3) Faith is nothing<br>c. Verdict 3: Giving without love profits nothing<br>1) Giving one's goods<br>2) Giving one's life—martyrdom<br><br><b>2 The great acts of love</b> | Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.<br>2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.<br>3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.<br>4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,<br>5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;<br><br>6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;<br>7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.<br>8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.<br>9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.<br>10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.<br>11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.<br>12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.<br>13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. | <b>3 The great permanence of love</b><br>a. It never fails, never ceases, never vanishes<br><br>b. It is perfect & complete<br><br>c. It is maturity—mature behavior<br><br>d. It is being face to face with God—perfect consciousness & knowledge<br><br><b>4 The great supremacy of love</b> |

## DIVISION VII

### THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, 12:1-14:40

#### D. The Most Excellent Quality of Life: Love, Not Gifts, 13:1-13

(13:1-13) **Introduction:** there is no question, what the world needs more than anything else is love. If people loved each other, really loved each other, there would be no more war, crime, abuse, injustice, poverty, hunger, starvation, homelessness, deprivation, or immorality. Love is the one ingredient that could revolutionize society. Love is the greatest quality of human life. Love is the supreme quality, the most excellent way for a man to live.

1. The great importance of love (v.1-3).
2. The great acts of love (v.4-7).
3. The great permanence of love (v.8-12).
4. The great supremacy of love (v.13).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(13:1-13) **Love:** throughout this passage, the word used for love or charity is the great word *agape*. (See DEEPER STUDY # 4, *Love*—Jn.21:15-17 for more discussion.) The meaning of *agape love* is more clearly seen by contrasting it with the various kinds of love. There are essentially four kinds of love. Whereas the English language has only the word *love* to describe all the affectionate experiences of men, the Greek language had a different word to describe each kind of love.

1. There is *passionate love* or *eros love*. This is the physical love between sexes; the patriotic love of a person for his nation; the ambition of a person for power, wealth, or fame. Briefly stated, *eros love* is the base love of a man that arises from his own inner passion. Sometimes *eros love* is focused upon good and other times it is focused upon bad. It should be noted that *eros love* is never used in the New Testament.

2. There is *affectionate love* or *storge love*. This is the kind of love that exists between parent and child and between loyal citizens and a trustworthy ruler. *Storge love* is also not used in the New Testament.

3. There is an *endearing love*, the love that cherishes. This is *phileo love*, the love of a husband and wife for each other, of a brother for a brother, of a friend for the dearest of friends. It is the love that cherishes, that holds someone or something ever so dear to one's heart.

4. There is *selfless and sacrificial love* or *agape love*. *Agape love* is the love of the mind, of the reason, of the will. It is the love that goes so far...

- that it loves a person even if he does not deserve to be loved.
- that it actually loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.

Note four significant points about agape love.

- a. Selfless or agape love is the love of God, the very love possessed by God Himself. It is the love demonstrated in the cross of Christ.

⇒ It is the love of God for the *ungodly*.

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

⇒ It is the love of God for *unworthy sinners*.

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

⇒ It is the love of God for *undeserving enemies*.

**“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:10).**

- b. Selfless or agape love is a gift of God. It can be experienced only if a person knows God *personally*—only if a person has received the love of God into his heart and life. Agape love has to be shed abroad (poured out, flooded, spread about) by the Spirit of God within the heart of a person.

**“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Ro.5:5).**

- c. Selfless or agape love is the greatest thing in all of life according to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mk.12:29-31).**

- d. Selfless or agape love is the greatest possession and gift in human life according to the Scripture (1 Cor.13:1-13).

**“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Cor.13:13).**

**1** (13:1-3) **Love:** the great importance of love. Unequivocally, the decree is pronounced; the judgment is given; the verdict is declared:

⇒ the superior quality of life is love; it is not gifts.

⇒ the most excellent way to live and serve is to possess and share love; it is not gifts.

The contrast between love and gifts is vivid. Three *verdicts* are declared and the verdicts stress with resounding force the great superiority of love.

1. Verdict one: tongues without love are meaningless.

⇒ The “tongues of men” probably means all the languages of men (cp. Acts 2:4-13).

⇒ The “tongues of men” probably means the heavenly language or the spiritual gift of an ecstatic utterance given by the Holy Spirit of God.

⇒ “Sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal” do not mean the sound of musical instruments but the tinkling together of either small cymbals or the clashing and banging together of large cymbals by untrained persons.

A person can possess the gift and ability to speak and share Christ in all the languages of the world, but if he does not have love, *he becomes* only a clanging and tinkling noise. His speech is meaningless.

A person can possess the spiritual gift of tongues, that is, speak in the heavenly languages of angels; but if he does not have love, *he becomes* only a clanging and tinkling noise. His heavenly, angelic language is meaningless.

Note the phrase “*he becomes*.” This is a crucial point: the gifted person’s speech is not only meaningless, the person himself *becomes meaningless*. He becomes useless in his life and ministry for Christ. Love is far more superior than the gift of tongues.

2. Verdict two: gifts without love are nothing. Three particular gifts are contrasted with love.

- a. There is the gift of prophecy (see note, *Prophecy*—1 Cor.12:8-10). A person may have the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God’s Spirit, both predicting the future and proclaiming the truth of God’s Word. He may possess all the charisma, stature, eloquence, and descriptive language in the world; but if he does not have love, he is nothing. Not only is his gift of prophecy nothing, but he is nothing.

**Thought 1.** There is always the danger of feeling and acting superior because of one’s prophetic gifts and eloquence. It is possible to long for souls and to preach the glories of heaven and the tragedy of hell with an attitude and a tone that one is better than others.

- b. There is the gift of understanding “all mysteries and all knowledge”—the sum total of all that God has ever revealed and of all that man has ever learned, discovered, and developed. Just imagine! A person possessing

all the knowledge in the world! Yet if he does not have love, he would be nothing! Not only would his understanding and knowledge be nothing, he would be nothing.

**Thought 1.** The danger is looking down upon others, of feeling that one is more knowledgeable or better equipped than others. A coolness or detachment or aloofness often characterizes such a person.

- c. There is the gift of faith, that is, the very special gift of faith that is given by the Holy Spirit to remove mountains and to do great and miraculous things for God (see note, *Faith*—1 Cor.12:8-10). Note the word “*all*”. Imagine a person possessing “all faith”; yet, if he did not possess love, he *would be nothing*.

**Thought 1.** The danger is spiritual superiority, an overblown sense of importance. A person with the gift of faith can easily hurt others by speaking openly of their *great faith*. They can easily make others feel inferior and of less importance to God.

3. Verdict three: giving without love profits nothing. Two phenomenal illustrations are given.  
a. There is the illustration of selling and giving everything that a person has. Imagine giving everything—“bestowing *all* my goods to feed the poor”—yet, if I have not love, it profits me nothing.

**Thought 1.** There are several dangers in giving. There are the dangers of:

- ⇒ giving out of duty.
- ⇒ giving with contempt because one is forced to give.
- ⇒ giving with an air of superiority because one has and the needy do not have.
- ⇒ giving with a rebuke because one feels the needy are just irresponsible and ought to make their own way in life.
- ⇒ giving unsacrificially.

- b. There is the illustration of martyrdom, the most terrible martyrdom of all—of being burned alive at the stake. Yet, if a person does not have love, his martyrdom profits him nothing. He dies in vain.

**Thought 1.** There is always the danger of counting martyrdom as a thing of glory and of pride, as something to show one’s commitment to a cause. If a believer is ever called upon to die as a martyr, he is to die only out of love for Christ and for his fellow man.

**2** (13:4-7) **Love:** the great acts of love. What is given in these four verses is not a long, dry, methodical definition of love. On the contrary, the very acts of love are given—the very behavior of a person, the very way a person is to live among and with others. In living and moving among others in the world, a person is to love, and this is what loving others means.

1. Love “suffers long” (makrothumei): is patient with people. The word always refers to being patient with people, not with circumstances (William Barclay. *The Letters to the Corinthians*, p.133).

Love suffers a long, long time..

- no matter the evil and injury done by a person.
- no matter the neglect or ignoring by a loved one.

Love suffers a long, long time without resentment, anger, or seeking revenge. Love controls itself in order to win the person and to help him to live, work, and serve as he should.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith” (Gal.5:22).**

**“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col.1:11).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

2. Love is kind (chresteuetai): courteous, good, helpful, useful, giving, showing and showering favors. Love does not resent evil; it does not revel in the hurt and neglect. Love reaches out in kindness: in helpfulness, in giving, and in showering favors upon the person who neglects or hurts oneself.

**“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Ro.12:10).**

**“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).**

3. Love does not envy (zeloi): is not jealous; does not have feelings against others because of what they have, such as gifts, position, friends, recognition, possessions, popularity, abilities. Love does not begrudge or attack or downplay the abilities and success of others. Love shares and joys and rejoices in the experience and good of others.

**“Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another” (Gal.5:26).**

**“Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity” (Ps.37:1).**

**“Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways” (Pr.3:31).**

**“A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones” (Pr.14:30).**

**“Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long” (Pr.23:17).**

## 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13

4. Love does not vaunt itself (peopereuetai): is not boastful; does not brag nor seek recognition, honor, or applause from others. On the contrary, love seeks to give: to recognize, to honor, to applaud the other person.

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Ro.12:10).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Ph.2:3).**

5. Love is not puffed up (phusioutai): prideful, arrogant, conceited; does not think nor act as though oneself is better or above others. Love is modest and humble and recognizes and honors others.

**“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:4).**

**“But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee” (Lk.14:10).**

**“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Lk.22:26).**

**“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pt.5:5).**

6. Love does not behave itself unseemly (aschemonei): unbecomingly, rudely, indecently, unmannerly, disgracefully. Love does nothing to shame oneself. Love is orderly and controlled; and it behaves and treats all persons with respect, honoring and respecting who they are.

**“That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Ph.1:10).**

**“For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you” (2 Th.3:7).**

7. Love seeks not her own: is not selfish; does not insist upon its own rights (Williams). Love is not focused upon who one is nor upon what one has done. Love seeks to serve, not have others serving oneself. Love is acknowledging others, not insisting that others acknowledge oneself; it is giving to others, not insisting that others give to oneself.

**“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth [welfare]” (1 Cor.10:24).**

**“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:4).**

8. Love is not easily provoked (paroxunetai): not easily angered; not ready to take offence; not quick tempered; not “touchy” (Phillips, as quoted by Leon Morris). It is not easily aroused to anger; does not become “exasperated” (Barclay). Love controls the emotions, and never becomes angry without a cause (Ro.12:18).

**“But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth” (Col.3:8).**

**“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jas.1:19).**

**“Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil” (Ps.37:8).**

**“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Pr.16:32).**

**“The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression” (Pr.19:11).**

**“Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools” (Eccl.7:9).**

9. Love does not think evil (logizetai kakon): does not consider the wrong suffered; is not resentful; does not hold the evil done to oneself. Love suffers the evil done to it and forgets it.

**“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Mt.5:39).**

**“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Ro.12:17).**

**“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men” (1 Th.5:15).**

**“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Pt.3:9).**

10. Love does not rejoice in iniquity (adikia): unrighteousness, evil, wrong-doing. Love does not take pleasure in the unrighteousness and sin of others; it does not feed upon sin and wrong, nor does it pass along the stories of sin and wrong. Man’s nature is too often fed the tragedy of evil, whether personal sin or natural disaster (cp. the daily news reports and most subjects of conversation between so many people).

**“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Mt.7:3).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal.6:1).**

**“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Pt.4:8)**

11. Love rejoices in the truth: rejoices when the truth is known and when it prevails; rejoices when others are recognized and promoted for whom they are and for what they have contributed. Love rejoices when the truth is rooted and grounded in a person and among the people of the world. Note that love never covers nor hides the truth; love is courageous in that it faces the truth.

**“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Eph.4:25).**

**“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph.6:14).**

**“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” (Zech.8:16).**

**“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Mal.2:6).**

12. Love bears all things: the word bears (stegei) means both to cover all things and to bear up under all things. Love does both: it stands up under the weight and onslaught of all things and it covers up the faults of others. It has no pleasure in exposing the wrong and weaknesses of others. Love bears up under any neglect, abuse, ridicule—anything that is thrown against it.

**“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:2-3).**

**“And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph.6:9).**

**“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col.3:13).**

13. Love believes all things: is “completely trusting” (Barclay); “always eager to believe the best” (Moffatt, as quoted by Leon Morris); is “ever ready to believe the best” (Amplified New Testament). Love sees and understands the circumstances and accepts and forgives and believes the very best about a person.

**“And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Lk.17:4).**

**“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).**

**“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col.3:13).**

14. Love hopes all things: it “never ceases to hope” (Barclay); it expects the good to eventually triumph and to gain the victory; it refuses to accept failure; it always hopes for the best and for the ultimate triumph of the good—no matter how fallen or how tragic the fall or how difficult gaining the victory may seem.

**“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Ro.8:24).**

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).**

**“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work” (2 Th.2:16-17).**

**“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 Jn.3:3).**

15. Love endureth all things: the word endures (huopmenei) is a military word meaning to stand against the attack of an enemy. Love actively fights and endures all attacks. Love is strong, full of fortitude and fight, and it struggles against any and every assault to buckle in to being unloving. Love conquers and triumphs—always—because it endures all things. No matter what attacks love, named or unnamed, it endures the attack and continues to love.

**“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal.6:9).**

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [trial]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (Jas.1:12).

“Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (Jas.5:11).

“Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev.3:11).

**3** (13:8-12) **Love:** the great permanence of love. Love is far superior to the spiritual gifts. The great permanence of love clearly shows its superiority.

1. Love never fails, never ceases, and never vanishes. Love endures and lasts forever. But not so with spiritual gifts: the spiritual gifts shall cease to be and shall vanish. When? When we stand in eternity before God. Spiritual gifts are only temporary; they are not permanent; therefore, they are far inferior to love. Spiritual gifts are only temporary tools for us to use in reaching and ministering to a lost and needy world.

**Thought 1.** Note how believers become guilty of the very things they accuse the world of doing: focusing upon the temporary instead of the eternal. Too many believers glory in their earthly gifts and abilities instead of serving and ministering in love.

2. Love is perfect and complete. We know nothing perfectly, and we can proclaim and predict the truth only with partial certainty. No person knows all the truth. However, a day of perfection is coming, and when it comes, only that which is perfect will stand and endure.

The point is this: love is perfect; therefore, love shall endure and be the primary trait between believers in eternity. Therefore, love is far superior to the gifts.

3. Love is mature—maturity of behavior. While on earth, all that man is and possesses—his abilities, knowledge, and being—all are as a child. Man is just immature and imperfect, no matter what area of his life is being considered. However, the day of maturity is coming, the day when he shall set aside all the childhood understanding and thoughts and become a mature man, a perfected man. When will that day come? It will come when love is perfected between God and man and between man and man. Love is the great gift and quality existing upon earth today that shall endure throughout eternity; therefore, love is far superior to the gifts and abilities of men.

4. Love is being face to face with God—a perfect consciousness and knowledge of God. Our present relationship with the Lord is comparable to the reflection we see through a dark mirror. We can faintly see the figure, but it is not fully distinct nor clear. Therefore, we only see God and the truth in part and we only know God and the truth in part. However, the day is coming when we shall know God even as He knows us—perfectly.

⇒ When is that day coming? The day love is perfected between God and man.

⇒ What will bring the day about? Love—God’s perfect love for man.

It is love that will be perfected and that will bring the day of perfection to reality for man. It is love that will bring us into a face to face relationship with God and into a perfect knowledge of truth. Therefore, love is far superior to the spiritual gifts.

**4** (13:13) **Love:** the great supremacy of love. Both faith and hope are great qualities and gifts, but love is far superior. How? Remember that Paul is contrasting love with the spiritual gifts and dealing with the tendency of people to center attention upon their gifts and accomplishments. Love is far superior to faith and hope for at least six reasons.

1. Faith focuses upon the revelation of God, whereas love focuses upon *God Himself*. We know about God only by the revelation of God through Jesus Christ, the Word, nature, and the inner witness of thoughts and conscience (cp. Ro.1:18-20; 2:14-15). A man believes in God by focusing upon one or more of the revelations about God. But love is different, entirely different. Love focuses and centers upon God Himself and stirs a relationship of adoration and worship. Faith, of course, can stir the same adoration and worship; but faith can also exist without adoration and worship. A person can believe in someone and not love him.

2. Hope focuses upon being eternally with God in a perfect world, but again, love is superior because it focuses upon God Himself. A person can have hope in someone without loving him, but a person who loves someone always hopes in him.

3. Love—true love (agape love)—does not originate in the nature of man, but in the nature of God. God is love; love is the basic trait of His nature. The very existence of man is due to the fact that God is love, not to the fact that God believed or held hope for man. Therefore love, which is the basic trait of God’s nature, is far superior to faith and hope.

4. True love is a gift of God. A man can know true love only as he comes to know the love of God. Faith arises from the heart of man, but love is deposited or given to man by God. It is shed abroad in the heart by God. Apart from God, man loves only those who love him; he either opposes or withdraws from those who hate him. A man can only love (agape love) his enemies through the love of God. Therefore love, being the very special gift of God, is far superior to faith and hope.

5. Experience and nature itself prove that faith and hope reach and grow people, but love reaches and grows people far more than any other gift or quality.

6. A person can believe in God, yet feel he is above others. He can act prideful, arrogant, and superspiritual. He may hope for an eternity to be with God and with other believers, yet he can be cold and distant. But love—true love—has no weaknesses or dangers. Love never fails, never comes short. But remember: love is not indulgence and license. Love involves control and discipline as well as care and giving, selflessness and sacrifice.

CHAPTER 14

**E. The Gift of Tongues  
Contrasted with Prophecy, 14:1-25**

Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

13 Wherefore let him that

speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

communicate even in prayer—apart from some other gift (interpretation)

- 1) Must be interpreted
- 2) Or else unfruitful

**4 The gift of tongues and Paul's personal worship**

a. Paul prays & sings both with the Spirit & with the understanding

- 1) So that others may understand & confirm what is prayed & sung

- 2) So that others may be edified

b. Paul speaks in tongues often; but in church he always uses another gift

c. Paul urges one thing: Understanding, edification

**5 The purpose of tongues & prophecy**

a. Tongues are a sign to warn unbelievers; prophecy is a gift to edify believers

b. Tongues within the church confuse & harden unbelievers

c. Prophecy within the church convicts unbelievers

- 1) It convicts him of sin
- 2) It calls him to judgment
- 3) It reveals the secrets of his heart
- 4) It drives him to his knees

1 Gifts are to be coveted—especially prophecy

2 The difference between tongues & prophecy

a. Tongues are addressed to God; prophecy is addressed to men<sup>DS1</sup>

b. Tongues edify self; prophecy edifies the church

c. Tongues are commendable; but prophecy is more commendable

3 The problem with tongues

a. Tongues do not communicate in the church—apart from some other gift

1) Paul, if he were to visit the church, would not speak with tongues

2) Musical instruments: Communicate or else the music is unknown

3) A military trumpet: Communicates or else an army is unprepared

4) Your own speech: Communicates or else it is meaningless

5) Different foreign tongues: Communicate or else the speakers are like foreigners to one another

6) The point: Seek gifts that communicate, that edify the church

b. Tongues do not com-

## DIVISION VII

## THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, 12:1-14:40

## E. The Gift of Tongues Contrasted with Prophecy, 14:1-25

(14:1-25) **Introduction:** remember that chapters twelve through fourteen are dealing with the spiritual gifts which God gives to His followers for the work of the ministry. Believers are gifted to minister and to help people in their desperate need for life, both life abundant and life eternal. However, when men focus upon their gifts and abilities, the problems of pride, arrogance, superiority, and super-spirituality always arise. There are always some people who feel that their gifts and abilities make them better and more favored and privileged than others. This is exactly what happened to the Corinthian church, and it is what has happened to multitudes of believers since that day. The gift of tongues is especially subject to pride and super-spirituality because it involves a static and heavenly utterance as opposed to ordinary human language.

The point is this: the gift of tongues (and all other gifts) is just one of many gifts. Each gift has its place in fulfilling the mission of the Lord and each must be used effectively in reaching the world for Christ and in ministering to the needs of people. The present passage is a contrast of the gift of tongues with prophecy.

1. Gifts are to be coveted—especially prophecy (v.1).
2. The difference between tongues and prophecy (v.2-5).
3. The problem with tongues (v.6-14).
4. The gift of tongues and Paul's personal worship (v.15-20).
5. The purpose of tongues and prophecy (v.21-25).

**1** (14:1) **Gifts, Spiritual—Prophecy:** gifts are to be coveted, especially prophecy. Note two points.

1. Love is to be pursued above all else in life. Gifts, abilities, and service are important; but they pale into insignificance in comparison with love. Love is the greatest need and the supreme answer to all the needs of men. It is when we love a person that we meet the needs of a person. In fact, if we truly love a person, then we will do all we can to meet all the needs of that person.

⇒ The word "follow" (diokete) means to pursue, to persist, to continue on and on, never giving up until love is possessed.

2. Spiritual gifts are to be desired. We are to pursue love first, but this does not mean we are not to seek the spiritual gifts of God. On the contrary, the more we love God and men, the more we covet the gifts of God so that we can minister and help the world of men more effectively.

⇒ The word "desire" (zeloute) means to covet earnestly; to be zealous and ambitious for.

**2** (14:2-5) **Tongues, Gift of—Prophecy:** the difference between tongues and prophecy. Remember that the gift of tongues is the gift that is so subject to pride and super-spirituality because of its unearthly or heavenly nature. However, its true importance is shown by contrasting it with the gift of prophecy. The differences between tongues and prophecy are immediately said to be threefold.

1. Tongues are addressed to God, whereas prophecy is addressed to men (v.2-3). Very simply stated, Scripture declares that tongues do not edify or benefit men as much as prophecy. There are reasons for this.

- a. Tongues are directed toward God; they are for God, for communion with Him, for sharing the mysteries (secret things) of God with God.
- b. Tongues are not understood by men. Scripture is clear: "no man understands," that is, hears, gets the sense, grasps the meaning of what is being said.
- c. The believer who prophesies edifies, exhorts, and comforts men (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Prophecy*—1 Cor.14:3).

**Thought 1.** Note the importance being laid upon proclaiming the message of the gospel in understandable terms. Men can be reached and helped only as they can understand the message of believers. The point is clear: the primary message upon our lips must be the gospel, and it must be understandable to all men.

2. Tongues edify self, whereas prophecy edifies the church (v.4). The point is clear: tongues are useful; they edify self. But prophecy is of much more benefit. The believer who prophesies edifies the *whole* church; he builds up far more people. Note something else as well: the gift of tongues is focused upon self-edification, but the gift of prophecy is focused upon the ministry, upon the edification of others. Self-edification is, of course, important; but the ministry of edifying others is far more important.

3. Tongues are commendable, but prophecy is more commendable. This is a verse that needs to be given close attention both by those who emphasize and by those who minimize and deny tongues.

⇒ Paul would like for all to speak with tongues.

⇒ But it is far more important for all to prophesy and proclaim the gospel.

⇒ The prophet is far more important than the man who speaks in tongues unless the tongues are interpreted.

Again, note that the stress is edification. The purpose for the believer speaking in worship must be to edify the church. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Prophecy*—1 Cor.14:3 for verses on edification.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(14:3) **Prophecy**: this is the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God's Spirit. In the Bible it includes both *prediction and proclamation*, and neither one should be minimized despite the abuse of the gift. There is no question...

- the gift to predict events has been abused to the point of the ridiculous. However, the abuse of the gift does not eliminate the fact that the Spirit of God does sometimes give believers a glimpse into coming events in order to prepare and strengthen them to face the events.
- the gift to proclaim the gospel has been abused to the point that most people's understanding of the gospel is tragically warped. However, the abuse of the gospel by both the false and immature prophets (ministers) does not eliminate the fact that God does call some men to proclaim His Word.

The New Testament clearly states the purpose of prophecy in this verse: "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor.14:3).

1. *Edification* (oikodomen) means to build up. It is a construction word referring to constructing some building. The first purpose of prophecy is to build up people.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Ro.14:19).

"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Ro.15:2).

"...knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1 Cor.8:1).

"...let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor.14:26).

"Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying" (2 Cor.12:19).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph.4:11-12).

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph.4:29).

2. *Exhortation* (parakiesin) means to strengthen, to encourage, to call to the side of. The second purpose of prophecy is to strengthen and encourage people by calling them to the side of God.

"And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people" (Lk.3:18).

"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40).

"Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23).

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

"And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them" (Acts 15:32).

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1 Th.5:14).

"Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Th.3:12).

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Tim.2:1).

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim.4:13).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim.4:2).

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Tit.1:9).

"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" (Tit.2:15).

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb.3:13).

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb.10:25).

"And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words" (Heb.13:22).

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (1 Pt.5:1).

3. *Comfort* (paramuthian) means to give strength and hope to, to ease the grief or trouble of someone. It has the idea of comforting through the most severe experiences of life, for example, through death (cp. Jn.11:19, 31). The third purpose of prophecy is to comfort people as they walk through life.

**“So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” (2 Cor.2:7).**

**“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do” (1 Th.5:11).**

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).**

**“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God” (Is.40:1).**

**3** (14:6-14) **Tongues, Gift of:** the problem with tongues. There are two specific problems with tongues that are discussed in these nine verses.

1. The first problem: tongues do not communicate in the church, not apart from some other gift (interpretation, v.13). Paul illustrated the fact with several illustrations.

a. Paul himself, if he were to visit the church, would not speak with tongues. Why? Because his speaking in a tongue would not profit us. We would not be able to understand what he was saying. His visit and proclamation would do us no good. The only way his visit and words would help us would be if he shared...

- some revelation
- some knowledge
- some prophesying
- some teaching

b. Musical instruments also illustrate the fact. Pipes (Greek, aulos, wind instruments) and harps (Greek, kithara, string instruments) must have a distinctive sound or else their sound is meaningless, confused, and nonsense—just not understood. Musical instruments must communicate or else the music is unknown and fails to inspire the listeners.

c. A military trumpet illustrates the point. When the soldier blows the trumpet, he must communicate or else the army is unprepared for the battle.

d. A person’s own speech is a fourth illustration. A person must speak words that are understood or else the listeners do not know what he is saying. He is doing nothing more than speaking into the air.

e. Different foreign languages are a fifth illustration. Very simply, there are many different voices (languages) in the world, and each language has its own distinct speech. If a foreigner speaks to me and I do not understand what he is saying...

- I am as a barbarian, that is, as a dumb and senseless man to him.
- he is as a barbarian, that is, as a dumb and senseless man to me.

He is of no use to me, not in sharing and communicating the gospel. What he has to say is meaningless, unintelligible, unprofitable, and of no value. It does not reach or edify, strengthen or comfort me.

f. The point is striking: the believer who is zealous of spiritual gifts is to seek for the gifts that edify the church. Note: a believer’s zeal is not to be dampened even if he has been misinformed and emphasizes the wrong gift. He is to straighten out his emphasis, keep his zeal, and direct his energy to edifying the church. The important gifts are those that build up people for Christ.

**“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Cor.9:24).**

**“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way” (1 Cor.12:31).**

**“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy” (1 Cor.14:1).**

**“Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” (1 Cor.14:12).**

**“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Ph.3:13-14).**

**“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Tim.1:6).**

**“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev.3:19).**

2. The second problem: tongues do not communicate even in prayer, not apart from some other gift (interpretation). Paul definitely says one can pray in a tongue. The idea seems to be a tongue of “ecstasy” (v.2, Williams) or of some “strange language” (v.2, Beck).

The speaking in tongues in Acts seems to be the speaking of foreign languages. But the speaking in tongues in 1 Cor.14 is an ecstatic utterance. An objective and thorough study of 1 Cor.12-14 shows this. Some of the passages have to be really strained to make them apply to foreign languages (or to a learned and conditioned reflex as claimed by some interpreters). Several examples are as follows.

“Tongues speaketh not unto men, but unto God...in the spirit he speaketh mysteries” (1 Cor.14:2).

“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself” (1 Cor.14:4).

“If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth....” (1 Cor.14:14).

Paul says, “I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding” (1 Cor.14:18-19).

The point is an eye-opener: even if a believer prays in an unknown tongue, it is unfruitful unless he has the gift of interpretation. He has no idea what he is praying unless there is the gift of interpretation. His prayer is unfruitful and meaningless.

**4** (14:15-20) **Tongues, Gift of—Paul:** Paul’s own personal worship and use of tongues is covered in these six verses. He says three distinct things.

1. Paul worships by praying and singing both with the spirit and with the understanding (v.15-17). Note a crucial point throughout this passage: Paul is not denying or forbidding the exercise of the gift of tongues. He is *insisting* on the proper use of the gifts. He says that he himself will do it “with the understanding also.”

The stress is that he does not pray or sing without understanding what he is praying and singing. He gives two reasons for this.

a. He wishes others to understand and to confirm what he prays and sings (v.16). The illustration is pointed. If you bless God with the spirit (that is, with a tongue), how shall the unlearned (those who do not understand tongues) say “Amen,” that is, confirm what you say? Agreeing and sharing in your prayer and praise is impossible, for no one understands what you are saying.

b. He wishes others to be edified (v.17). The giving of thanks and prayer are not wrong; in fact, they are good. But if they are done in a tongue, others are not edified.

2. Paul speaks in tongues often, but in the church he always uses another gift (v.18-19). Nothing could be any clearer about Paul’s practice of tongues than this verse:

⇒ Paul had the gift of tongues and used the gift more than “ye all.”

⇒ However, in church, he would rather speak five clearly understood words than ten thousand words in a tongue. To the honest and open reader, Paul’s point is clear: in the church, he used other gifts to worship and proclaim the gospel. He used his gift of tongues in private worship.

3. Paul urges one thing: understanding and edification. This is a strong imperative, a forceful statement: “Be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.” It seems as though “tongues” had so divided the Corinthian church that bitterness and malice had become quite a problem between some. Some of the believers just did not understand the gifts, their importance and purpose. Therefore, they were acting like children, stricken with the different, emotional, and spectacular experience. They desperately needed to understand the gifts and their proper place in the believer’s life. One thing was certain: there was to be no place for divisiveness over the gifts. There was to be only love and mature understanding. Believers are to be as mature men and women, not as children.

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (1 Cor.3:1-2).

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (1 Cor.13:11).

“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men” (1 Cor.14:20).

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:13-14).

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat...But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb.5:12, 14).

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pt.2:2).

“I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one” (1 Jn.2:14).

**5** (14:21-25) **Tongues, Gift of—Prophecy:** the purpose of tongues and prophecy. Three points are discussed.

1. Tongues are a sign to warn unbelievers; prophecy is a gift to edify believers. The Old Testament passage quoted is Is.28:11-12. The meaning seems to be a promise that God will bear witness to unbelieving Israel through many tongues (languages), yet they will still not hear Him.

Paul seems to be saying several things here.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-25

- a. Tongues are foreign languages, although they are often experienced in an ecstatic moment and may not be understood by the speaker himself.
- b. Tongues are a sign to warn unbelievers. How can this verse be reconciled with the fact that tongues are said to be primarily for personal edification (v.2, 4, 17) and prophecy is said to be primarily for public edification and witness (v.24-25)? The answer is probably twofold.
  - ⇒ Unbelievers clearly see the hand of God when a foreign believer is suddenly and miraculously given the ability to witness to them in their own native language. Such was definitely the case at Pentecost (cp. Acts 2:6-13).
  - ⇒ The believer who speaks in tongues has an exciting and exhilarating experience while in his prayer closet. This exciting experience enables him to become the kind of witness he ought to be for the Lord Jesus Christ. His gift of tongues edifies him personally, and he is quickened with a new fervor to warn the unbeliever of pending judgment. Verses 21, 23, and the whole context point toward this meaning. One thing is certain: God knows what every child of His needs to make that child the witness he ought to be. He knows what experience and what gifts are needed—and He always provides these experiences and gifts.

Prophecy is primarily for believers, for their edification, strengthening, and comfort (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Prophecy*—1 Cor.14:3 for more discussion).

2. Tongues within the church confuse and harden unbelievers. The point is clearly seen: tongues without interpretation cause a person to appear insane. The tongue speaker seems to be babbling just like an insane person does. Tongues (the ecstatic gift) are not to be used to reach people within the church.

3. Prophecy within the church convicts unbelievers. This is a great passage on the effect of preaching upon unbelievers. Note that although prophecy is primarily for believers and their edification, it is used by God to reach the lost as well. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Prophecy*—1 Cor.14:3 for discussion.)

**“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).**

**“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25).**

**“For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Is.66:2).**

**“For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known” (Lk.12:2).**

**“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl.12:14).**

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| <p><b>1 Rule 1: The guiding principle—gifts are to be used in church only to edify people</b><br/> a. Confusion prevailed in the Corinthian church<br/> b. The guiding principle: All things must edify</p> <p><b>2 Rule 2: Tongues are to be limited &amp; interpreted</b></p> <p><b>3 Rule 3: Prophecy is to be limited &amp; discerned</b></p> | <p><b>F. The Place of Tongues and Prophecy in the Church, 14:26-40</b></p> <p>26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.</p> <p>27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.</p> <p>28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.</p> <p>29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.</p> <p>30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.</p> <p>31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.</p> <p>32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the</p> | <p>prophets.</p> <p>33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.</p> <p>34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.</p> <p>35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.</p> <p>36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?</p> <p>37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.</p> <p>38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.</p> <p>39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.</p> <p>40 Let all things be done decently and in order.</p> | <p><b>4 Rule 4: Women are to keep silent in the church—not to exercise the gift of tongues in the church</b></p> <p><b>5 Rule 5: Guard against the potential abuses of the gifts</b><br/> a. Thinking you are the only teacher<br/> b. Thinking that God speaks only to you<br/> c. Thinking that you are more spiritual than others</p> <p><b>6 Conclusion: The final rule &amp; charge</b><br/> a. Covet the best gifts<br/> b. Forbid not tongues<br/> c. Do all things orderly—in worship</p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, 12:1-14:40**

**F. The Place of Tongues and Prophecy in the Church, 14:26-40**

(14:26-40) **Introduction:** this passage throws a great deal of light upon the worship services of the early church. Note two things in particular. First, Paul is stressing flexibility, but with order and dignity. Second, the primary purpose for worship is edification. The subject is the place of tongues and prophecy in the church. Five rules are given to control the worship services.

1. Rule 1: the guiding principle—gifts are to be used in church only to edify people (v.26).
2. Rule 2: tongues are to be limited and interpreted (v.27-28).
3. Rule 3: prophecy is to be limited and discerned (v.29-33).
4. Rule 4: women are to keep silent in the church—not to exercise the gift of tongues in the church (v.34-35).
5. Rule 5: guard against the potential abuses of the gifts (v.36-38).
6. Conclusion: the final rule and charge (v.39-40).

**I** (14:26) **Church—Worship:** rule one is the guiding principle—gifts are to be used in church to edify people. The worship services in the Corinthian church had become very disorderly—confusion prevailed. Many were speaking in tongues, talking, praying, and singing their own personal songs—all at the same time. Each person was struggling for the right to share his latest inspiration and spiritual insight. Note exactly what is said and the disorder is clearly seen: “How is it then, brethren? when ye come, together, every one of you...

- hath a psalm [song, Greek],
- hath a doctrine [some teaching],
- hath a tongue,
- hath a revelation [some spiritual insight],
- hath an interpretation.”

The worship services had degenerated into utter disorder and mass confusion. To the visitor, the services were hardly more than an *uproar* of mumbo jumbo and gibberish. Everyone was talking and doing his own thing—all simultaneously. Pride, puffiness, self-centeredness, super-spirituality, and division prevailed instead of love, respect, humility, unity, and edification. Decency and orderliness were totally lacking.

**“If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?” (1 Cor.14:23).**

The situation had to be straightened out or else the church would never be effective in its witness for the Lord. The primary answer to straightening out the disorderliness lay in the believers learning the purpose for their gifts: to edify and build up the church. Note how often this chapter stresses the point of edification:

**“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor.14:3).**

**“...he that prophesieth edifieth the church” (1 Cor.14:4).**

**“...that the church may receive edifying” (1 Cor.14:5).**

**“...that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” (1 Cor.14:12).**

**“For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified” (1 Cor.14:17).**

**“Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (1 Cor.14:19).**

**2** (14:27-28) **Tongues—Church—Worship:** rule two is that tongues are to be limited and interpreted in church. Note several points.

1. Only two persons, at most three, were allowed to speak in tongues during one service.
2. “By course” means either in turn or else an equal share of time. There was to be only one person at a time speaking in tongues. There was to be no disorderliness or confusion.
3. There was always to be an interpreter. If there was no interpreter present, then the tongue speaker was to keep silent and speak only to himself and to God.
4. The person who speaks in tongues has control over his gift. The gift is not what it is commonly thought to be: a spiritual impulse from the Holy Spirit that the person cannot resist. He not only *can* control his tongue speaking, he *is* to control it.
5. There may be some merit to the idea that the best course was for tongues not to be used publicly, but Paul just could not run the risk of stopping the Corinthians from using the gift of tongues in worship. It was too embedded and too violent an issue. To have insisted on its public demise would have immediately alienated too many from his influence, and perhaps even have caused the church to reject his ministry entirely. Just think of Paul in a distant city. Remember how the church was attacking him and his ministry—laying charge after charge against him (see note—2 Cor.1:12). Would it even be possible to correct the abuse? Could he possibly correct it without alienating many fine, but ill-advised believers? If so, how was he to do it? What approach was he to use? Was he to suggest they cut off the practice entirely in public worship, or was he to allow its exercise in *moderation*?

The whole tone of the passage seems to point to the latter idea.

- ⇒ Tongues are said to edify self while prophecy edifies the church (cp. vs. 1-25).
- ⇒ Tongues are said to be an extremely sensitive gift with the potential of causing severe problems (1 Cor.12:1-3; 14:6-14, 36-40).
- ⇒ Paul’s own practice of tongues was only in private (1 Cor.14:15-20).
- ⇒ Paul’s statement is undeniably clear: he would rather speak five words that can be understood than to speak ten thousand in a tongue (1 Cor.14:19).

Throughout this passage one point is undeniably seen: the heaviest weight rests with the idea that tongues are best used for private and not for public use. However, if a church or a people absolutely insist on the use of tongues in church services, only two, and at most three persons are to exercise their gifts. And even they are to keep silent unless a known interpreter is present.

**3** (14:29-33) **Prophecy—Church—Worship:** rule three is that prophecy is to be limited and discerned. Note several points.

1. Only two or three prophets are to speak in a single service.
2. The word “other” is plural in the Greek. The others are probably the same persons who were mentioned earlier, those who are mature enough and gifted with the ability to discern what is being proclaimed.
3. If another person who is listening receives some special insight into what is being proclaimed by a speaker, the speaker is to allow the person to share his insight.
4. All prophets in a church were to be allowed to speak. However, they were not all to speak in the same service. The rule that only two or three could speak in a single service had already been laid down.
5. Every true prophet has a significant message and contribution to make to the church. This is seen in the words “one by one.” All the prophets were needed “that all may learn, and all may be comforted” (v.31).
6. The spirits of the speakers are to be controlled by the speakers. Again, gifted believers, no matter the gift, are not overcome by an irresistible surge of the Spirit—not to the point that they cannot control themselves. No two speakers are to try to speak at the same time. The simplest of reasons is given: “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.”
7. The statement is strong: “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” (v.33). All churches which allow confusion and disorderliness are strongly rebuked by the statement. Their disorderly services are of self, not of God.

**4** (14:34-35) **Women—Church—Worship:** rule four is that women are to keep silent in the church—they are not to exercise the gift of tongues in the church. Note two points.

1. An interpretation of these verses must keep in mind the context of chapter 14. To lift these verses out of context does violence to Scripture and to the high esteem with which Christ and the New Testament hold women. Paul mentions this matter because women were probably the ones most abusing the gift of tongues and the predictive element of proph-

ecy. Paul's charge is for the women to calm down and keep quiet, to bring things into order. The passage is directed both to the local problem of the Corinthians and to any other church where women are abusing the gifts of tongues and the predictive element of prophecy.

2. Most commentators interpret this passage by saying that it must be understood in the context of its day. Barclay's comment on these verses is an example: "In all likelihood what was uppermost in his mind was the lax moral state of Corinth and the feeling that nothing, absolutely nothing, must be done which would bring upon the infant Church the faintest suspicion of immodesty. It would certainly be very wrong to take these words of Paul out of the context for which they were written and make them a universal rule for the Church."

3. Whatever this passage is saying, it is not disallowing women from participating and sharing their *gifts* in the church. Other Scriptures are clear about this:

**"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17).**

**"And the same man [Philip the evangelist] had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts 21:9).**

Paul clearly recognized the fact: "But every *woman* that prayeth or prophesieth" (1 Cor.11:5).

**5** (14:36-38) **Gifts, Spiritual:** rule five is to guard against three potential abuses of the gifts.

1. Abuse 1: thinking that you are the only teacher; that is, that you have something that no one else has:
  - ⇒ some truth
  - ⇒ some insight
  - ⇒ some revelation
  - ⇒ some understanding

Such an attitude is not only full of pride and puffiness, it is a claim to be the originator and source of truth, to be like God Himself.

**Thought 1.** Too many persons and churches act as though they are the creators and originators of God's Words.

2. Abuse 2: thinking that God speaks only to you. Too many believers and churches think they are special to God, and that God gives them truth and insight that no one else receives. The result is conceit, arrogance, criticism, judging, censoring, and divisiveness.

3. Abuse 3: thinking that you are more spiritual than others. The rules laid down by Paul were commandments from the Lord. Every prophet and every spiritual person must acknowledge the fact and obey the rules. However, there were some in Corinth who had rejected Paul and the rules God had given him. They thought their gifts of prophecy and spirituality placed them above the rules and gave them the right to exercise their gifts as they felt led.

Paul says no! "Let all acknowledge that the things I write are the commandments of the Lord." If anyone refuses to accept and follow the rules, then let him remain in his ignorance. Note: there is a suggestion of judgment in this statement. God will eventually take care of him who rebels and continues to selfishly act in ignorance.

**6** (14:39-40) **Gifts, Spiritual—Church—Worship:** the conclusion is a final rule and charge.

1. Covet the best gift, which is to prophesy (cp. 1 Cor.14:1-5).
2. Do no forbid speaking with tongues. Remember, however, an interpreter must always be present.
3. Do all things decently and orderly in worship. However, note a crucial fact: this does not mean that a service is to be so formal that it is stiff and cold. The picture painted by Paul throughout the present passage is orderliness with congregational participation, and the participation was not limited to singing and the giving of offerings. Individuals within the congregation were allowed to share spiritual insights given them by God—even during the main prophetic proclamation (sermon). The services were not staid and restrictive. They were orderly, but they were also flexible enough to allow two or three of the laity to participate, even on the spur of the moment.

**"But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches" (1 Cor.7:17).**

**"If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?...Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor.14:23, 40).**

**"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Tit.1:5).**

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|  | <p><b>CHAPTER 15</b></p> <p><b>VIII. THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, 15:1-58</b></p> <p><b>A. Argument One: The Primary Facts of the Gospel,<sup>DS1</sup> 15:1-11</b></p>  | <p>5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:<br/>6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.<br/>7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.<br/>8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.<br/>9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.<br/>10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.<br/>11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.</p> | <p><b>Fact 3: There were eye-witnesses</b><br/>a. Peter saw Him<br/>b. The twelve saw Him<br/>c. Five hundred saw Him<br/><br/>d. James saw Him<br/>e. The apostles saw Him again</p> <p><b>5 Fact 4: There was one strong eyewitness, Paul himself</b><br/>a. He saw Christ after His ascension<br/>b. He was radically changed against all odds<br/>c. He was desperately driven to labor for Christ</p> <p><b>6 Fact 5: There is only one gospel that is preached &amp; has to be believed</b></p> |
| <p><b>1 The importance of the gospel</b><br/><br/>a. You have received it<br/>b. You stand in it<br/>c. You are saved by it<br/>    1) If you hold it fast<br/>    2) If your belief is not in vain</p> <p><b>2 Fact 1: Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture<sup>DS2</sup></b></p> <p><b>3 Fact 2: Christ was buried &amp; arose according to the Scripture</b></p> | <p>Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;<br/>2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.<br/>3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;<br/>4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:</p> |   |   |

**DIVISION VIII**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, 15:1-58**

**A. Argument One: The Primary Facts of the Gospel, 15:1-11**

(15:1-58) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Resurrection, The:** the Corinthian church was confused about the resurrection of the believer. Therefore, in the letter which the church had written to Paul, one of the questions had to do with the resurrection of the believer's body (see note—1 Cor.7:1-40). Some in the church were flatly denying the resurrection (v.12). Some were apparently following the false teaching of others:

- ⇒ spiritualizing the resurrection, saying it was already past or else took place at death (cp. 2 Tim.2:17-18).
- ⇒ rebelling against such an idea, claiming that it was scientifically impossible for maimed, scattered, decomposed bodies to be raised in an act of recreation.

The answer of Paul is simply argued: the resurrection of Jesus Christ proves the resurrection of the human body. In fact, Jesus Christ arose so that all men in their full and complete persons—bodies as well as spirits—could live forever. The resurrection of Jesus Christ makes the resurrection of men absolutely certain.

After establishing this fact, Paul deals with some very common objections to the glorious truth.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(15:1-11) **Gospel:** means "Good News." There is only one gospel, but it is described in different ways. It is called the "Gospel of the Kingdom of God" (Mt.4:23; Mk.1:14); the "Gospel of the Grace of God" (Acts 20:24); the "Gospel of God" (Ro.1:1); the "Gospel of Christ" (Mk.1:1; Ro.1:16; 2 Cor.4:4; 10:14); the "glorious Gospel" (2 Cor.4:4; 1 Tim.1:11); and the "Everlasting Gospel" (Rev.14:6).

(15:1-11) **Introduction:** the first argument for the resurrection of the human body is the gospel itself. The primary facts of the gospel prove that God can bodily raise a person from the dead. He raised up the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, perfecting the very same body He had possessed while on earth. This is the point of the whole chapter: the dead shall be raised in their same bodies, their bodies no longer being physical and imperfect, but spiritual and perfected. Nevertheless, despite the change of nature and composition, their bodies are the very same bodies. The facts of the gospel which prove the resurrection of the believer are fivefold.

1. The importance of the gospel (v.1-2).
2. Fact 1: Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture (v.3).
3. Fact 2: Christ was buried and arose according to the Scripture (v.4).
4. Fact 3: there were eyewitnesses (v.5-7).
5. Fact 4: there was one strong eyewitness, Paul himself (v.8-10).
6. Fact 5: there is only one gospel that is preached and has to be believed (v.11).

**1** (15:1-2) **Gospel:** the importance of the gospel. Paul says that he declares the gospel to the Corinthian church, the *very same gospel* which he had *already preached* to them. This is significant. In fact, the word “declare” (gnorizo) means to *make known*. Paul is not reminding the Corinthians of the gospel, he is again...

- declaring it as though they had never heard it.
- proclaiming it as though they had never sat before it.
- making it known as though they had never known it.

Some in the church were in danger of not continuing in the faith; they were denying the very hope of *personally* living in the presence of God (v.12). They desperately needed the importance of the gospel proclaimed again. Note what Paul says about the believers in the church.

1. They had received the gospel, that is, actually embraced it as true believers.
2. They stood in the gospel. The idea is that they firmly adhered to it, professing and standing for the truths of the gospel. This indicates that some were still faithful to the truth of the resurrection despite the error being taught by others (v.12).
3. They were saved by the gospel. The word “saved” is present or continuous action, “you are being saved.” Scripture teaches three tenses or stages to salvation: the past, present, and future (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Salvation*—1 Cor.1:18 for discussion). In this verse Scripture is referring to the present or progressive stage of salvation. Salvation is a *continuous experience* that is here said to be conditional.
  - ⇒ They must keep the gospel in “memory.” The Greek words (ei katechete) mean *if you hold fast*. In order to be saved, of course, a person must hold fast to the gospel. No man could ever deny the gospel and expect to be saved.
  - ⇒ They must not believe in vain. The idea is that some might believe, but believe in the wrong thing—believe in something that is vain, empty, worthless, useless.

**Thought 1.** A person must hold fast, continue to believe to be saved.

“...he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)” (Heb.10:23).

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (Jas.1:12).

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jas.1:21).

“Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (Jas.5:11).

**2** (15:3) **Jesus Christ, Death:** the first fact of the gospel is that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Note four points.

1. The words “first of all” mean that the very first thing Paul ever preached to the Corinthians was the death of Jesus Christ. The death of Christ is so important that it must be the first thing preached. It is the very foundation of a person’s salvation. Apart from the death of Jesus Christ there is no salvation; therefore, the fact of Christ’s death must be the first subject proclaimed.
2. The first fact Paul himself received was the death of Christ. As Leon Morris says, Paul is *not interrupting* the message he had received; he is giving us the *exact message* he had received (*The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. “Tyndale Bible Commentaries,” p.205). This is a crucial fact, for Paul had been convicted by a direct appearance from Christ Himself. This means that the first words Christ spoke to Paul dealt with the Lord’s death. This fact alone stresses the great importance of the Lord’s death (Gal.1:11-12; cp. 1 Cor.11:23).
3. “Christ died *for our sins*.” The word “for” (huper) means for our benefit, for our sake, in our behalf, in our stead, as our substitute. (See DEEPER STUDY # 4—Mk.10:45.) This means at least three things.
  - a. Christ died as our sacrifice.

“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor.5:7).

“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:15).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself” (Heb.7:26-27).

“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb.9:13-14).

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“Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb.9:25-26).

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb.10:10).

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God....For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb.10:12, 14).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).

b. Christ died as our ransom (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Ro.3:24; note—Gal.3:13).

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col.1:14).

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb.9:12).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev.5:9).

c. Christ died as our propitiation (see note—Ro.3:25. Cp. 1 Jn.2:1-2.)

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Ro.3:25).

“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:2).

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn.4:10).

4. “Christ died...according to the Scriptures” (see DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Jesus Christ, Death*—1 Cor.15:3 for discussion).

## DEEPER STUDY # 2

(15:3) **Jesus Christ, Death:** the Old Testament Scriptures bore strong predictions concerning the death of God’s Messiah.

- ⇒ Christ rebuked his disciples for not believing all the prophets had spoken about His death (Lk.24:25-26).
- ⇒ Paul’s very method of preaching was to convince people that Jesus Christ was the Messiah who had been predicted in Scripture (the Old Testament).

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (Acts 17:2-3).

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22-23).

- ⇒ Paul clearly said that he was determined to preach nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and that the gospel had been promised before by the prophets in Holy Scripture.

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2).

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)” (Ro.1:1-2).

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Ro.3:21-22).

⇒ Much of the book of Hebrews is an exposition on how the death of Christ fulfills the Old Testament.

Some of the major Old Testament prophecies are given with the references to their New Testament fulfillment. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Scripture Fulfilled*—Jn.1:45 for many of the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus Christ and their fulfillment.)

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen.3:15; cp. Heb.2:14).

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?” (Ps.22:1; cp. Mt.27:46).

“They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion....For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet....They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture” (Ps.22:13, 16, 18; cp. Lk.23:34; Jn.19:23-24).

“He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken” (Ps.34:20; cp. Jn.19:36).

“They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (Ps.69:21; cp. Mt.27:34; Mk.15:23; Jn.19:28-30).

“For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded” (Ps.69:26; cp. Mt.27:34; Mk.15:23; Jn.19:29).

“I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads” (Ps.109:25; cp. Mt.27:39).

“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Is.50:6).

“As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men” (Is.52:14).

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Is.53:3-12).

“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself” (Dan.9:26).

“As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water” (Zech.9:11).

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born” (Zech.12:10).

“And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones” (Zech.13:6-7).

**3** (15:4) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** the second fact of the gospel is that Jesus Christ was buried and arose from the dead according to the Scriptures. (See note, *Jesus Christ, Resurrection*—Mt.17:23 for New Testament verses.) Note three points.

1. The burial of Jesus Christ is important, for it proves two significant things.

⇒ It proves that Jesus Christ died. No man is buried unless he is dead.

⇒ It proves the resurrection. The empty tomb is evidence that Christ arose from the dead.

2. Jesus Christ arose from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus Christ assures the believer that he too shall be raised from the dead.

a. The resurrection of Christ proves that *God is*: that He does exist and care for the earth. There is no power on earth that can raise a man from the dead. Only a Supreme, eternal power and Person can do that. Only God can give life to dead matter and to the dust of the earth. The very fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead proves that God exists and cares for this earth.

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- b. The resurrection of Christ proves that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, the Son of God Himself. It proves that Jesus Christ was sent to earth to secure the Ideal righteousness for man and to die and to arise from the dead for man. (See note, *Justification*—Ro.5:1 for more discussion.)

**“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).**

**“Which [God’s mighty power] he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:20).**

- c. The resurrection of Christ proves that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. It proves that Christ is the very One whom God sent to earth to save men from death and to give them life. (See note, pt.2—Ro.6:3-5 for discussion.)

**“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:25).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Ro.10:9).**

**“By which [the gospel] also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:2-4).**

- d. The resurrection of Christ proves that He is “the Spirit of life.” It proves that Christ is the very energy and force of life, the very power and Being of life, and that He can give the same “Spirit of life” to men. He can raise men from the dead, even as He arose from the dead. (See note—Ro.8:2-4 for more discussion. Also see outline and notes—1 Cor.15:12-19; 15:20-23.)

**“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11).**

**“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” (1 Th.4:14).**

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

3. Jesus Christ “rose again...according to the Scripture.”  
⇒ Jesus Christ said that Jonah was a type of His resurrection.

**“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Mt.12:40).**

- ⇒ The Gospel of John says that the resurrection was predicted in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ rebuked the disciples for not believing the predictions of His death and return to glory (resurrection).

**“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Lk.24:25-27).**

**“For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead” (Jn.20:9).**

- ⇒ Paul proclaimed the Old Testament predictions concerning the resurrection of Christ.

**“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22-23).**

- ⇒ Peter proclaimed the Old Testament prophecies predicting the Lord’s resurrection.

**“Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers and saw corruption: but he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption” (Acts 13:35-37).**

⇒ Psalm 16:10 is a clear prediction of the Lord's resurrection.

**“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Ps.16:10).**

⇒ All the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah's eternal reign are prophecies of His resurrection. This is clear, for He could reign eternally only if He was raised from the dead. (See note, *Jesus Christ, Davidic Heir*—Lk.3:24-31 for verses and their fulfillment.)

**Thought 1.** Note the implication of this fact for all believers. No man can live forever unless he is raised from the dead, for all men are doomed to die. Therefore, all the prophecies concerning believers living forever can be fulfilled only if we are raised from the dead.

**4** (15:5-7) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** the third fact of the gospel is that there were eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It should be noted that Paul does not give all the resurrection appearances of Christ; he lists what he feels is more than enough to give conclusive evidence. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Jesus Christ, Resurrection*—Mk.16:1-13 for complete list.)

1. There was the resurrection appearance to Cephas or Peter. Peter had failed the Lord miserably, having denied Him three times. Peter's miserable failure and denials came in the Lord's most critical hour—the hour when the Lord needed Peter's loyalty more than ever. Because he had failed the Lord so terribly, Peter desperately needed a private interview with the Lord; and because the Lord had appeared to Peter, Peter was a strong witness to the love of God for man. He could readily testify that God loves man so much that He had sent His Son into the world to deliver man from his terrible sin and failure. He could readily testify that God forgives and saves man and gives him eternal life through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter's testimony was forceful, for he had personally experienced the forgiveness, the deliverance, the salvation, and the promise of eternal life from the lips of the resurrected Lord Himself.

**“But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you” (Mk.16:7).**

**“Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon” (Lk.24:34).**

2. There was the resurrection appearance to the twelve apostles. The term “twelve” was just a common or general term used to apply to the apostles of Christ. Judas was dead, having committed suicide. Jesus made several appearances to the apostles collectively, and He could have made others that are not recorded (Lk.24:33-36; Jn.20:19f).

The apostles had deserted the Lord in His hour of trial, failing Him miserably. Therefore they, as Peter, were strong witnesses to the love of God for man: that God had sent His Son into the world to die and to arise that men might live eternally with Him.

3. There was the resurrection appearance to five hundred believers at one time. Just when this appearance took place is not known. Perhaps it was in Galilee, which seems to have been an appointed meeting set up by the Lord: “After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee” (Mt.26:32). After He had arisen, He told the women to whom He appeared: “Be not afraid; go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me” (Mt.28:10). “My brethren” probably means all the disciples; moreover, as the word spread that He had arisen and wanted to meet His disciples in Galilee, it is doubtful a true believer would fail to keep the appointment.

The point is this: five hundred believers could testify of the love of God for men. God had sent His Son into the world and conquered death by raising Him from the dead. They could testify undeniably that God's way for saving man was through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, and through the promise of being personally raised from the dead someday out in the future.

4. There was the resurrection appearance to James. This is most likely James, the Lord's brother. Jesus had several brothers and sisters, and they had been terribly embarrassed by Him because of...

- His claims to be the Son of God.
- the rumors of insanity and devil-possession.
- the severe opposition by leaders and others.

The family of Jesus just did not understand nor believe His claims; therefore, they too opposed Him. By appearing to James, Jesus was able to prove beyond a doubt that His claims were true. Consequently, James became a significant witness for the Lord. Jesus was definitely the Son of God sent by God to demonstrate His love for man. Men, even those who have denied and been hostile to the Lord, can be saved by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note a striking fact: James even called Jesus “the Lord of glory.” Just think: James was reared with Jesus beginning from the earliest years of childhood stretching right on through the years of adulthood. If anyone ever had an opportunity to see and observe Jesus, it was James. He had every chance to see some act of disobedience, some sin, something contrary to the nature of God. However, James' testimony is: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord of Glory*,” the One in whom the very presence of God dwelt among us (Jas.2:1).

5. There was the resurrection appearance to all the apostles. To what appearance does this refer? The answer is unknown, but it could refer either to the appearance in the upper room (Jn.20:26) or at the ascension (cp. Acts 1:1f). Again, the point is that the apostles could give unquestionable evidence of the love of God: God has conquered death through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ by which He gives us assurance of living eternally with Him.

**5** (15:8-10) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** the fourth fact of the gospel is that there was one strong eyewitness, Paul himself. Note three facts.

1. Paul saw Christ after the Lord's ascension. The phrase "one born out of due time" (to ektromati) means a miscarriage, an abortion, an unnatural birth, a child born out of time. Paul is simply saying that he did not know and follow the Lord when the Lord walked upon the earth, but he saw the Lord after He had left the earth and ascended into heaven. Paul is, of course, referring to his experience on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1f), and perhaps to the visions granted him (2 Cor.12:1f).

2. Paul was radically converted and changed against all odds. Paul had a deep sense of unworthiness. Note exactly what he says, his estimate of himself:

- ⇒ "I am the *least* of the apostles."
- ⇒ "[I] am not meet [fit] to be called an apostle."
- ⇒ "Because I persecuted the church of God."

Before his conversion he had persecuted and killed early believers (Acts 7:58; 9:1f). He had also possessed a staunch pride in who he was and what he had achieved in his position and personal morality and righteousness (2 Cor.11:22; Ph.3:4-6). The sins of murder and pride gave Paul a deep sense of being the chief of sinners (1 Tim.1:15). Nothing less than having actually seen Christ face to face could change a man so radically. Nothing less than having actually seen Christ face to face could make a man give up so much and pay so great a price for preaching the gospel (2 Cor.6:4f; 11:22f; Ph.3:4f).

3. Paul was desperately driven to labor for Christ. To Paul the greatest thing in all the world was the grace of God, the fact that God loved him so much...

- that God forgave his terrible sins.
- that God allowed him to follow and serve His dear Son.
- that God allowed him to proclaim the glorious cure for the cancer of sin and death, even the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All that Paul was and all that Paul did was by the grace, the undeserved favor of God. As he himself declared: "By the grace of God I am what I am."

Because God had done so much for him, Paul labored ever so diligently for God. The word "labored" (kopiao) means to labor to the point of being weary and exhausted. Note his statement: he labored more than all the others that served Christ. Why? Because he owed it to Christ: he had sinned so terribly against the Lord. Note that he even gives the credit for his labor to the grace of God.

**6** (15:11) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** the fifth fact of the gospel is desperately needed by the world: there is only one gospel that is preached and that has to be believed. The facts of the gospel are the same facts...

- preached by all true preachers.
- believed by all true believers.

There is no gospel other than the gospel of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection is the only gospel that truly offers eternal life to men. The fact of the Lord's resurrection is the only truth that gives men victory over death. The fact of the Lord's death and resurrection assures man that God loves him and will raise him up to live eternally with Him.

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| <p><b>1 Some persons deny the resurrection</b></p>  | <p><b>B. Argument Two: The Consequences of Denying the Resurrection, 15:12-19</b></p> <p>12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?</p> | <p>15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.</p>   | <p>d. We lie about God &amp; bear witness against God</p>  |
| <p><b>2 The first set of consequences</b></p> <p>a. Christ is not risen</p> <p>b. Our preaching is empty</p> <p>c. Our faith is empty</p> | <p>13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:</p> <p>14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.</p>   | <p>16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:</p> <p>17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.</p> <p>18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.</p> <p>19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.</p> | <p><b>3 The second set of consequences</b></p> <p>a. Christ is not raised</p> <p>b. Our faith is empty: We are still in our sins</p> <p>c. Dead believers have perished</p> <p>d. We are to be pitied above all people</p> |

**DIVISION VIII**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, 15:1-58**

**B. Argument Two: The Consequences of Denying the Resurrection, 15:12-19**

(15:12-19) **Introduction:** the consequences of denying the resurrection of the dead are terrible, so terrible that Paul repeats some consequences to drive home the awful tragedy (v.13 cp. v.16; v.14 cp. v.19).

1. Some persons deny the resurrection (v.12).
2. The first set of consequences (v.13-15).
3. The second set of consequences (v.16-19).

**1** (15:12) **Resurrection:** some persons deny the resurrection of the human body. It is perfectly understandable how natural man can question the resurrection. (The answers to these objections will be given throughout the discussion of this chapter.)

- ⇒ Some persons have lost arms, legs, and other body parts in wars and accidents; and their body parts have remained in other parts of the world. Because of this fact, the resurrection is preposterous to some natural minds. How could their bodies ever be raised as a whole?
- ⇒ Other persons believe the soul of man is immortal, but that the body is only for this earth: it is the source of sickness and disease, pain and hurt, sin and evil, death and corruption. Therefore, it is impossible for the *same body* to be raised up. Such an idea is preposterous.
- ⇒ Still others spiritualize the resurrection saying such things as it takes place at death, or took place at Jesus' resurrection, or involves only the character and personality of a person.

Not understanding and disbelieving the resurrection of the human body was a problem for some in Paul's day, and the misunderstanding and unbelief had even seeped into the church at Corinth. Unfortunately the same can be said about some in the church even today. There are professing believers who just do not understand or believe in the resurrection of the human body.

The point is this: if we deny the resurrection of the believer's body, some very significant things result. It affects some things we do. There are some severe consequences that affect the whole Christian faith and everything that we believe.

**2** (15:13-15) **Resurrection, The—Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** the first set of consequences. If we deny the resurrection, four severe consequences immediately happen.

1. To deny the resurrection would be to say that Jesus Christ is not risen. The point is this: it is absurd to argue that God cannot raise up a dead body; He has already done it. He has already raised up a Man, the Man Christ Jesus. Paul declares loudly and clearly to every person who questions and disbelieves the resurrection of the human body: "Suppose there can be no resurrection of dead bodies. Do you know what this means? If there can not be a resurrection—if God cannot raise dead bodies—then it means that the resurrection of Christ never took place. A terrible consequence!"

The point is clearly stated: since a resurrection has taken place, the resurrection of the Man Christ Jesus, a future resurrection can take place. God can raise up bodies in the future just as He raised up the body of Jesus Christ.

2. To deny the resurrection (either of Christ or of us) means that our preaching is vain. The word "vain" (kenon) means empty, groundless, void of all truth and meaning. How does denying the resurrection of the body make our preaching meaningless? There are two ways.

- a. The message we preach is the gospel (*good news*) of the resurrected Lord who has been raised to give us the glorious privilege:
  - ⇒ of living forever in the presence of God.
  - ⇒ of having a personal face to face relationship with God.
  - ⇒ of being made perfect and serving God face to face in a new heavens and earth.

There is no way *disembodied spirits* can serve God. What is a disembodied spirit anyway? It takes a *body*, a whole and real person to serve God. If we are not to be whole and real persons then we cannot be

alive and serving God. The only way we can live with God eternally is for God to resurrect our bodies and make them perfect by changing their corruptible nature into an incorruptible nature.

Therefore, to deny the resurrection of Christ or of believers is to deny what we preach. Our preaching of the resurrected Lord and of our living forever is empty and meaningless. We may as well be doing something else; there is no need to preach a false hope.

- b. The message we preach is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for our sins and rose again conquering death for us. The fact that God raised Him from the dead is the glorious proof that He is the Son of God, the proof that God accepted His sacrifice for our sins (Ro.1:4). If Christ did not arise, then it means that God left Him in the grave, that He is no more than what other men are, a man doomed to die and remain in the grave forever with all other men. But if God did raise Christ up from the grave, then it means that death is conquered and that He will raise us up to live forever with Him.

The point is this: if there is no resurrection—no resurrection of Christ and no resurrection of us—then the consequence is terrible. Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. What we are preaching is empty and meaningless. We may as well keep quiet.

3. To deny the resurrection of Christ means that our faith is vain, that it is empty, groundless, and meaningless. If Christ is in the grave, then our faith is in a dead man, and no dead man can save a living man. We are doomed, for we are following a mere man, a man who is still dead and lying in a grave. Our faith is empty, groundless, and meaningless.

4. To deny the resurrection of Christ means that we are bearing a false witness, that we are deliberately lying. Very simply, the apostles bore strong testimony that Jesus Christ had been resurrected from the dead. If He did not arise, then they were liars. They were either lying or simply bearing witness to that which they had seen.

Now note the point, the last clause of the verse: if the dead do not arise, then Christ is not raised. This is clearly seen. Jesus Christ died; He was dead and buried in a grave:

- ⇒ If the dead can be raised, then Christ arose.
- ⇒ If the dead cannot be raised, then Christ did not arise.

If God can raise up the dead, then the very first person He would raise up would naturally be His own dear Son. And if He raised up His own Son, then He is bound to raise us up since His Son died to free us from death.

**“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:23-24).**

**“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses” (Acts 3:14-15).**

**“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).**

**“And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead” (Acts 10:39-41).**

**“And Paul as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (Acts 17:2-3).**

**“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).**

**“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:25).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Ro.10:9).**

**“And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:4).**

**“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:20).**

**“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour” (1 Th.4:4).**

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pt.1:3).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

**3** (15:16-19) **Resurrection, The—Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** the second set of consequences. In this particular set of consequences four severe things are said to happen if we deny the resurrection of the dead.

1. To deny the resurrection would be to say that Christ is not raised. If Christ arose, then we too shall arise just as He arose; if Christ did not arise, then we will not arise.

Paul is simply saying that what happened to Christ will happen to us. If He arose, then our resurrection is possible. He is our Savior; therefore, we too shall arise. If He did not arise, then being resurrected is not possible; He is not our Savior. Therefore, we shall not arise. The resurrection of Jesus Christ goes hand in hand with our resurrection. He arose to conquer death and to blaze the way for us, for our whole being—body and spirit—to be raised and to live forever with God.

**“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel” (2 Tim.2:8).**

2. To deny the resurrection (either of Christ or of us) means that our faith is vain (*mataia*). The word means fruitless or futile; that is, we are still in our sins. If Jesus Christ has not risen from the dead, then He is still dead, still in the grave; therefore, there is no redemption, no forgiveness of sins.

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:1-2).**

3. If Jesus Christ did not arise from the dead, then dead believers have perished. If believers are not to be resurrected, Jesus would be no more than any other *human* being. He would be powerless to penetrate the other world, the spiritual dimension of being. He would know no life beyond the life of this world. He, just as all other men have always done no matter how great their philosophy, would have perished in the ground of the earth. Therefore, all our loved ones who have gone on before are perished. They are nothing more than decayed flesh and bones lying in a cemetery. They have ceased to be, for if there is no resurrection, then Jesus Christ has not risen. A horrible consequence!

Note that deceased believers are “asleep in Christ.” This does not mean *soul-sleep*, but simply that they are at rest in Jesus, resting from all the pain and suffering, trouble and corruption of this world.

4. If there is no resurrection, then we are to be pitied above all people. Why?

- ⇒ Because believers are hoping in a false belief and philosophy. They are believing a lie, and they shall experience great disappointment.
- ⇒ Because believers are expecting the superspiritual power of God to help through the trials of this life, and if there is no resurrection, then God does not love us, and His power is a farce and a lie. It will not be present to help the believer through life.
- ⇒ Because the righteousness and strength and godly lifestyles of believers are misunderstood and opposed; therefore, the true believer suffers for Christ throughout life.
- ⇒ If there is no resurrection, no hope for salvation and eternal life, then the believer is suffering for nothing.
- ⇒ Because the true believer denies himself, giving and sacrificing *all he is and has* in order to reach and minister to a world reeling in desperate need and death. If there is no resurrection, then the believer is wasting his life and money.

**“And they [Peter and other apostles] departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41).**

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).**

**“And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation” (2 Cor.1:7).**

**“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us” (2 Tim.2:12).**

**“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward” (Heb.11:24-26).**

**“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13).**

**“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pt.5:10).**

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| <p><b>1 Christ assures life, guarantees the resurrection</b><br/> a. He has risen from the dead: Became the first fruits of the dead<br/> b. He has counteracted what Adam did: Reversed sin &amp; death<br/> <br/> c. He has fulfilled His purpose: Been the first to arise</p> <p><b>2 Christ assures the coming reign of God's Kingdom</b></p> | <p><b>C. Argument Three: The Consequences of Christ's Resurrection, 15:20-28</b></p> <p>20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.<br/> 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.<br/> 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.<br/> 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.<br/> 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered</p> | <p>up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.<br/> 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.<br/> 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.<br/> 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.<br/> 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.</p> | <p><b>dom: The end of all evil</b><br/> a. His subjection of all evil power &amp; enemies<br/> <br/> b. His subjection of that great enemy: Death<br/> c. His subjection of all things except God Himself<br/> <br/> d. His personal subjection to God</p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, 15:1-58**

**C. Argument Three: The Consequences of Christ's Resurrection, 15:20-28**

(15:20-28) **Introduction:** What is the best way for God to prove that He can raise the dead? The answer is obvious. There is no greater way for God to prove that He can raise the dead than for Him to actually raise a dead man. This He did when He raised up the Man Christ Jesus. The consequences of the Lord's resurrection are both phenomenal and glorious. Because He arose, we too shall arise. Since Christ has risen, we know that God has the power to raise the dead. His resurrection is the guarantee of our resurrection. No person could want for a greater hope nor for a greater promise.

1. Christ assures life, guarantees the resurrection (v.20-23).
2. Christ assures the coming reign of God's Kingdom: the end of all evil (v.24-28).

**1** (15:20-23) **Resurrection, The—Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** Christ assures life, guarantees the resurrection. He has done three marvelous works to guarantee it.

1. Christ has risen from the dead; He has become the first fruit of them that slept. The term "firstfruits" refers to the harvest of a farmer's first crop. The Jewish farmer was to take part of his very *first fruit* and give it as an offering to God. Note two points.

- ⇒ The word "first" means the first in order of time: the first fruit is to be reaped.
- ⇒ The offering of the first fruit to God assures God's blessing upon the rest of the harvest: the dedication of the first fruit guaranteed and assured the blessing of God upon *all the fruit* that followed.

The point is this: the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the first fruit of the harvest, the first resurrection of a Man who would never die again. Jesus Himself had raised others from the dead, but they were all to die again. But not Christ. Christ was raised from the dead to live forever, and His resurrection was the guarantee that we, too, shall be raised from the dead.

**"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Ro.8:11).**

Note the words, "but now." The words connect this passage to the former verses where some were arguing that Christ did not arise from the dead. If Christ did not arise from the dead, then the consequences are terrible, for it means that...

- our preaching is meaningless.
- our faith is futile.
- we are liars and false witnesses.
- we are still in our sins.
- our loved ones who have already died have perished.
- we are, of all men, most miserable.

"But now is Christ risen!" He is not dead; He is not lying as a decayed corpse in the grave. We are not living in hopeless misery. In fact, the very opposite is true. We have the greatest hope in the world, the hope of being resurrected from the dead. And the great guarantee of our resurrection is the resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself. He has risen; therefore, we shall arise. He is the *first fruit*—the guarantee, the seal, the assurance of our resurrection.

“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Ro.8:23).

“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col.1:18).

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” (1 Th.4:14).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev.1:5).

2. Christ has counteracted what Adam did: reversed the sin and death of Adam. He did this through His own resurrection and life. Adam and Christ are pictured as the two pivotal points of human history. Adam stands as the head of the human race, the first to bring death to man. Christ stands as the head of the human race, the first to intervene into the process of death and to arise from the dead. The place of Adam and Christ as the representative heads of the human race is discussed in detail in the Book of Romans (see outline and notes—Ro.5:12-21). Very simply stated, the sin of Adam brought death into the world, but the Man Jesus Christ brought the resurrection of life to the world. How is this possible? Note two things.

a. Note the words “in Adam all die.” The word “in” means to be inside, within, included, united, connected; to be vitally related; to be in the position and operation and power of something. Every person born into the world inherits the nature of his father and mother, which is a corruptible and dying nature. Adam was the first to have a corruptible and dying nature; therefore everyone born into the race of Adam inherits the very same corruptible and dying nature.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Ro.5:12; cp. Gen.2:15-17; 3:6f).

“For since by man came death” (1 Cor.15:21).

“Thy first father hath sinned” (Is.43:27).

b. Note the words “in Christ shall all be made alive.” The word “in” connects us to Christ just as it does to Adam. We are vitally connected and united to Christ. Just as we partake of the nature of Adam, of our mothers and fathers, so we partake of the nature of Christ. What is the nature of Christ?

⇒ The nature of Christ is a sinless and divine nature.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb.4:15).

“For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:26).

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pt.2:22).

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).

⇒ The nature of Christ is a resurrected nature.

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:25).

“[The power of God] which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:20).

“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).

Note the word “all”: it does not mean every human person shall be made alive. It means that all who are “in Christ shall be made alive.” All persons are not “in Christ”; that is, all do not believe and entrust their lives “in Christ” (Jn.3:16; Ro.10:9).

3. Christ has fulfilled and completed His purpose: He was the first to arise. Why was it necessary for Him to be the first to arise? Because He had to complete the work of salvation for man *before* man could be saved and raised up from the dead. He had to arise first; then man could arise.

⇒ No man can save himself; no man can arise from the dead. If a man is ever to arise, *Someone* with the power to conquer death must first of all arise. And then by His resurrection, that *Someone* must promise and guarantee that He will use the same power to raise man.

That *Someone* is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the firstfruit, the first Man to arise, and He assures and guarantees us that He will raise us up from the dead. Jesus Christ has completed and fulfilled His purpose upon earth. He has been the first to arise, and sometime out in the future, He will also resurrect us.

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (Jn.5:25).**

**“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jn.5:28-29).**

**“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn.6:40).**

**“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:25).**

**“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).**

**“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).**

**“To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints” (1 Th.3:13).**

**“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Th.4:13-18).**

**2** (15:24-28) **Resurrection, The—Kingdom of God:** Christ assures the coming reign of God’s kingdom, the end of all evil. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Kingdom of God*—Mt.19:23-24 for more discussion.) After Christ has resurrected believers, He will then move to deliver the kingdom to God. This clearly points to the end of time, the climax and consummation of human history. The Greek word (telos) means the purposed end, the determined goal, the destined climax, the sought after consummation. Note three significant facts:

- ⇒ The length of time between the resurrection of Christ and believers (v.23) has already been over 1900 years.
- ⇒ The length of time between the resurrection of believers and Christ’s delivering the kingdom to God is not given.
- ⇒ The words “then” (eita) and “when” (hotan) both indicate indefinite periods of time, long intervals of time.

These facts clearly indicate that great events and generations of time can occur between the resurrection of believers and the end of the world, for example, the one thousand year millennial reign of Christ. When will Christ deliver up the kingdom to God? After four things have happened.

1. Christ must first subject all evil power and enemies under His rule of righteousness and love (v.24-25). This refers to both human and spiritual enemies, to the evil of both men and Satan. When Christ returns in glory to rule and reign in majesty, he will subdue all the enemies of God and present the kingdom to God.

**Thought 1.** Today, sin and evil run rampant throughout the world. Any daily newsstand clearly proves the point through the reports of fighting and war, immorality and crime, selfishness and greed, corruption and death. The news can easily become discouraging and make a person wonder what the fate of society and man will ultimately be. But not to the true Christian believer. The day is coming when Jesus Christ Himself will “put all enemies under His feet,” all sin and shame, deceit and lying, violence and abuse, hurt and murder, crime and injustice—all enemies shall be subjected to Jesus Christ. The kingdom of love and righteousness will be presented to God and love and righteousness will rule forever and ever.

**“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Th.1:7-10).**

**“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the**

midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth” (Ps.110:1-3).

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Is.9:6-7).

“And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan.7:14).

2. Christ must subject the great enemy of man: death. Note that death is the last enemy that will be destroyed.
  - ⇒ Death has an end; death will cease to be; the reign of death will be stopped.
  - ⇒ Man *shall be* delivered once-for-all from death. Death *will be* swallowed up in victory.

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it” (Is.25:8).

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes” (Hos.13:14).

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor.15:54).

“[God’s purpose and grace] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Rev.20:14).

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev.21:4).

3. Christ must subject all things under Him and His rule, all things except God the Father. The verb “hath put under” is aorist tense which points to the finality, the once-for-all fact. Not only will the enemies of Christ be subjected to Christ, but *all things* will be subjected:

- |                                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| ⇒ all men                         | ⇒ all angels      |
| ⇒ all beings                      | ⇒ all nature      |
| ⇒ all the earth                   | ⇒ all the heavens |
| ⇒ all the universe, seen & unseen |                   |

Every thing that has ever existed or ever will exist, both visible and invisible, shall be under the rule and reign of Christ, under the rule and reign of His love and righteousness. Nothing shall be exempted from His authority, *except God Himself*.

“So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mk.16:19).

“Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God” (Lk.22:69).

“For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:34-36).

“[God’s mighty power] which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph.1:20-23).

“But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Heb.1:8-9).

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb.2:9-10).

“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (1 Pt.3:22).

“Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev.5:12).

4. Christ must subject Himself to God. This refers to the saving ministry and function of Christ, not to His eternal person and being. It does not mean that Christ is to become inferior to God and less than God. Such inferiority is impossible, for both the Son and the Father have the nature of God. They are One in their Godly nature, person, and being. It simply means that God sent Christ on the great mission to conquer all the enemies of God. Therefore, when Christ has completed His mission, He will return to God the Father and present all to God. When Christ presents all, He will also present Himself to His Father as the great and glorious conqueror. Barclay says it well:

*“It is not a case of the Son being subject to the Father as a slave or even a servant is to a master. It is a case of one who has accomplished the work that was given him to do, and who returns with the glory of complete obedience as his crown. As God sent forth His Son to redeem the world so in the end God will receive back a world redeemed, and then there will be nothing in heaven or in earth outside the love and the power of God” (The Letters to the Corinthians, p.169).*

**“Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth” (Ps.57:11).**

**“And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted” (Is.12:4).**

**“The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness” (Is.33:5).**

|   |   |   |   |
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| <p><b>1 Think &amp; ask yourself: If there is no resurrection, then why practice religious observances &amp; rituals?</b></p> <p><b>2 Think and ask yourself: Why should we put ourselves in jeopardy?</b></p> <p>a. If there is no resurrection,</p> | <p><b>D. Argument Four: The Religious Observances &amp; Personal Sacrifice, 15:29-34</b></p> <p>29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?</p> <p>30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?</p> <p>31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ</p> | <p>Jesus our Lord, I die daily.</p> <p>32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.</p> <p>33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.</p> <p>34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.</p> | <p>why face danger to witness?</p> <p>b. If there is no resurrection, why suffer savage threats &amp; ill treatment?</p> <p>c. If there is no resurrection, why not just live in pleasure?</p> <p><b>3 Watch being deceived: Evil associations corrupt behavior</b></p> <p><b>4 Awaken, sober up, sin not: Some do not know God</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, 15:1-58**

**D. Argument Four: The Religious Observances & Personal Sacrifice, 15:29-34**

(15:29-34) **Introduction:** the fourth argument for the resurrection of the dead is religious observances and personal sacrifice. If there is not to be a resurrection, then there is absolutely no need to live a religious life nor to sacrificially deny ourselves for Christ. If there is to be no resurrection, then our religious worship and personal sacrifice are empty and meaningless.

1. Think and ask yourself: If there is no resurrection, then why practice religious observances and rituals? (v.29).
2. Think and ask yourself: Why should we put ourselves in jeopardy? (v.30-32).
3. Watch being deceived: evil associations corrupt behavior (v.33).
4. Awaken, sober up, do not sin: some do not know God (v.34).

**1** (15:29) **Resurrection, Believers:** think and ask yourself—if there is no resurrection, why practice religious observances and rituals? The particular ritual mentioned here is baptism, but the question is applicable to all religious practices and rituals. Why worship, why be baptized, why observe the Lord’s Supper, why pray, why read the Bible if there is no resurrection of the dead? All religious worship and rituals are empty; they are meaningless and profit nothing if there is no resurrection. This is the meaning of this particular point and it is easily understood. However, the particular practice or form of baptism to which Paul refers is not so easily understood. What does he mean by the phrase, being “baptized for the dead.” Who is baptized, and who is dead? Someone is being baptized for someone who is dead. Who are the baptized persons, and who is the dead person or persons? Has the church ever practiced baptism for the dead, that is, allowed a living believer to be baptized for a loved one who had died before he or she could be baptized? The practice did take place in the second century, but as Leon Morris points out it was apparently by heretics (Leon Morris. *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. “Tyndale Bible Commentaries.” Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, p.219). Is it possible that the practice had begun as early as the early church and had seeped into the Corinthian church? Some think so, and some think this is the only possible explanation of the words. Others argue that this could not possibly be the meaning...

- because it is superstitious and a misunderstanding of what baptism is.
- because there is no other record of the practice until the second century and then it is apparently only practiced by heretical groups.
- because it has always been condemned as heresy by the main body of believers.
- because Paul would never refer to the practice without condemning it.

(For a more detailed discussion of this position and the arguments against it, see Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973, p.337.)

However, those who hold that the practice had seeped into the early church argue the following:

- ⇒ Paul does separate himself from the practice. Note the verse: Paul says “they,” not “we.” He disassociates himself.
- ⇒ Paul does sometimes differ with a practice, and yet uses the practice in an argument. (For example, he discusses the practice of attending a social function in the temple of an idol. He used the practice to argue his position without denouncing it, but he thought it was wrong, 1 Cor.8:10.)

Just what Paul means is not known, and it is extremely difficult to know, for there are over thirty different positions (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1930, p.192).

Note what could be two significant points.

- ⇒ When reading verse 29 and verse 30 together, there does seem to be a sharp contrast between “they” (v.29) and “we” (v.30). Paul does seem to be saying “they”: they who oppose me; they who deny the resurrection; they who are in error.
- ⇒ When comparing verses 30-34 with verse 29, there does seem to be a sharp contrast. Verse 29 uses the word “they”; verse 30 “we”; and verse 31, 33-34 “you” and “your.” This strongly suggests that “they” stand in opposition to Paul and the mainline believers of the church.

In light of the details of the Scripture itself, it seems best to say that “they” are...

- the persons who opposed Paul so strongly.
- the false teachers and persons who were denying the resurrection.
- the false teachers and persons who were allowing their followers to be baptized for their loved ones who had failed to be baptized before they died.

Following this interpretation, Paul is saying: if they agree that the dead do not rise, then...

- what shall they do who are being baptized for their dead?
- why are they being baptized for the dead? What they are doing is useless, empty, futile, meaningless. If they do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, they are practicing a ritual that will do them absolutely no good.

**2** (15:30-32) **Resurrection, Believers:** think and ask yourself—if there is no resurrection, why should we put ourselves in jeopardy every hour? The point is clear: the believer shall suffer persecution from the world. The true believer...

- separates and lives a different lifestyle than the world, and he witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ and His demand for righteousness and godliness.

The life and witness of the true believer is contrary to the world, and it convicts the world; therefore, the world opposes, ridicules, abuses, and tries to hush and get rid of the believer—as much as the law, neighborhood, and workplace will allow.

Why would a believer ever jeopardize himself—his life, job, position, friends, acceptance—if there is no resurrection?

Paul uses his own experience to strike the point home.

1. If there is no resurrection, why would he face danger to witness, to joy and rejoice over the conversion of people? Why would he seek to reach people for Christ and to stir joy and rejoicing in them if there is no resurrection? The price—risking one’s life and exposing oneself to persecution—is not worth it if there is no resurrection. Paul is saying, “I would not be jeopardizing my life if there was no resurrection of the dead.”
2. If there is no resurrection, why would he suffer threats, abuse, and ill treatment? This is the same argument, except Paul actually refers to some savage threat he experienced.
3. If there is no resurrection, why would he not eat, drink, and live in pleasure? He may as well, for there would be nothing after death. This life would be all there is.

**“And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die” (Is.22:13).**

**“And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Lk.12:19-21).**

**“But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Tim.5:6).**

**“And [they] shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices” (2 Pt.2:13-14).**

**3** (15:33) **Deception—Worldliness:** watch being deceived—evil associations corrupt behavior.

1. The phrase “be not deceived” (me planasthe) means do not be led astray, led in the error of such a false teaching. There is to be a resurrection of the dead. “They”—those who deny the resurrection—are wrong. Do not be deceived by their error. It is an utterly false teaching and it is corrupting.
2. The word “communications” does mean conversation, but it also means the communion among companions and associates.

The point is this: we should not associate with those who hold to error and false teaching. If we associate with them—accept them as friends and companions—they will influence us and corrupt our behavior, lead us into sin and error.

**Thought 1.** Our companions do influence us. If they do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, in the glorious life to come, then their beliefs, ideas, morals, speech, and behavior will...

- influence us
- loosen us
- weaken us
- pollute us
- mislead us

“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators” (1 Cor.5:9).

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat” (1 Cor.5:11).

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor.6:14).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim.3:13).

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed” (2 Jn.10).

“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment” (Ex.23:2).

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (Ps.1:1).

“Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men” (Pr.4:14).

“Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them” (Pr.24:1).

**4** (15:34) **Awaken—Resurrection:** awaken, sober up, sin not; for some do not know God. Note three points.

1. The word “awake” (eknepsate) means to become sober; to arouse out of a drunken, sleepy state. Some in the Corinthian church were following the false teachers as though they were drunken and senseless, in a stupor, in a stupid state. They desperately needed to awaken to righteousness—to sin not. The denial of a resurrection is totally wrong; it is sin. There is to be a resurrection of the dead. To deny it is to put oneself in a drunken, senseless, unthinking state of mind.

2. The phrase “some have not the knowledge of God” refers to those in error, the persons who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead.

3. The words, “I speak this to your shame” mean that the church should be ashamed for allowing the error in their midst. The very fact that the church would accept men who deny one of the cardinal doctrines is a shame. The church should be ashamed, for a person who does not believe in the resurrection of the dead (a cardinal doctrine) *does not have* “the knowledge of God.”

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor.15:34).

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph.5:14).

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 Jn.2:1).

“Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil” (Is.1:16).

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| <p><b>1 Two questions by an intellectual objecter</b></p> <p><b>2 The pictures demonstrating the resurrection</b></p> <p>a. Picture 1: The seed—it dies, then arises</p> <p>1) Has a different body after arising</p> <p>2) Has a body given by God</p> <p>b. Picture 2: Animal bodies—they differ</p> <p>c. Picture 3: Earthly &amp; heavenly bodies—the glory of their bodies differ</p> | <p><b>E. Argument Five: The Kind of Body, 15:35-49</b></p> <p>35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?</p> <p>36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:</p> <p>37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:</p> <p>38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.</p> <p>39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.</p> <p>40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.</p> <p>41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differ-</p> | <p>eth from another star in glory.</p> <p>42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:</p> <p>43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:</p> <p>44 It is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.</p> <p>45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.</p> <p>46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.</p> <p>47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.</p> <p>48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.</p> <p>49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.</p> | <p><b>3 The contrasting body of the resurrection</b></p> <p>a. Corrupt vs. incorrupt</p> <p>b. Dishonor vs. glory</p> <p>c. Weakness vs. power</p> <p>d. Natural vs. spiritual</p> <p><b>4 The strong fact: There is a natural body &amp; a spiritual body</b></p> <p>a. The Scriptural evidence: The first &amp; second Adams</p> <p>1) Their nature: A soul vs. a spirit</p> <p>2) Their order: Natural vs. spiritual</p> <p>3) Their origin: Earth vs. heaven</p> <p>b. The nature of men &amp; their destiny: Are patterned after Adam or Christ</p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, 15:1-58**

**E. Argument Five: The Kind of Body, 15:35-49**

(15:35-49) **Introduction:** what will the resurrected body be like? The kind of body we shall have throughout eternity has always intrigued men. The very picture of a body somewhat like our present bodies has even caused some persons to mock and ridicule the idea of the resurrection. This passage discusses the kind of body believers will receive in the resurrection.

1. Two questions by an intellectual objecter (v.35).
2. The pictures demonstrating the resurrection (v.36-41).
3. The contrasting body of the resurrection (v.42-44).
4. The strong fact: there is a natural body and a spiritual body (v.44-49).

**1** (15:35) **Resurrection, Body of:** two questions are asked by some objecter.

1. How are the dead raised up; how can a decayed, decomposed body arise? How can life possibly come back into a body, especially after it has decayed, and in some cases been scattered over the earth?
2. What kind of body would a resurrected person have? What kind of body would it be if it was decayed and decomposed?

Every generation has its skeptics who question and sometimes scoff at the idea of the resurrection and of a spiritual world where those who follow Christ will actually live with God forever. In fact, Christ Himself faced the very skepticism Paul is facing here (see outline and notes—Mt.22:23-33). Most skeptics make one great mistake: when they think of the resurrection, they think of a person raised in the very same body he had while on earth. Christ and Paul both show that this just is not the case. The resurrected body will not be like our present body. Our future bodies will apparently look like our present bodies, but their material and nature will be completely different. (See outline and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.21:1; Mt.22:23-33 for more discussion.)

**2** (15:36-41) **Resurrection, Body of:** the pictures demonstrating the resurrection. Nature is full of *examples and parallels* that clearly show the possibility of the resurrection. Man is just so familiar with the examples that he fails to think of them as *examples and parallels*. Note how strongly Paul introduces this point: he addresses the skeptic, "Fool." Paul is not speaking to the skeptic in contempt and bitterness, but he is angry at the lack of thought about the matter and at the to-

tal lack of belief in God and in His omnipotent power. Even if there were no parallels in nature, we should believe God. Therefore, Paul exclaims: “Fool, think—think about what you yourself do. You work and live in the midst of the very things that parallel and give example after example of the resurrection of the body.”

1. There is the picture of the seed and grain. Several points are made.
  - a. A seed is not quickened, cannot live unless it first dies. A seed has the potential of a new life and a new body in it, but it does not produce the new life and body until it dies. In fact, the seed cannot produce it unless it does die.
  - b. The seed that is planted is only a seed; it is not the full plant itself. The seed differs radically from the new life and body of the plant. What comes up out of the ground is radically different from what is put into the ground.
    - ⇒ Note how nature clearly shows us that the resurrected body will have a different nature than our present bodies.
  - c. God is the One who gives every seed its own body. God is the One who is behind the whole process, who is behind the seed and the plant. God is the One who causes the plant to arise from the death of the seed. It is His will, His power, His process that He set in motion at creation.

**Thought 1.** Those who are skeptical and question the resurrection make two gross errors—so said Jesus.

**“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God...God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Mt.22:29, 32).**

**“For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him” (Lk.20:38).**

**“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Ro.14:8).**

2. There is the picture of animals; they all differ. There are so many different bodies of animals—their organization, shapes, forms, natures—why can a man not be given a different body from the one he now has? Why can a man’s body not be reorganized and rearranged?

3. There is the picture of earthly and heavenly bodies (v.40-41). The bodies upon earth differ from the bodies of the heavens. Each has its own glory and each differs from the other, including the sun, moon, and stars.

The point is simply this: everywhere you look you see...

- an unlimited number of different bodies—different organizations, forms, shapes, arrangements, varieties.
- that God’s universe flows with planting and growing, life and change, organization and reorganization, disintegration and rebirth.

**Thought 1.** The major points to see are twofold:

- 1) Living things have both the nature and power to be reproduced in a different form or body. Therefore, it should not surprise us if we ourselves have the nature and power to be resurrected with a different nature and body.
- 2) All things have different bodies and a glory that differs from all other things. Therefore, we too will have a resurrected body with its own glory. The glory of our resurrected body will differ from the glory of our earthly bodies.

**3** (15:42-44) **Resurrection, Body of:** the contrasting body of the resurrection. There are four significant differences between our body now and the body that will be given us in the resurrection.

1. Our earthly body is corruptible; our resurrected body will be incorruptible. Corruptible means that they age, deteriorate, die, decay, and decompose. But our heavenly bodies will differ radically. They shall be incorruptible: never age, never deteriorate, never die, never decay, and never decompose. They will be transformed and never perish. They will be completely free from defilement and depravity, from death and decay.

**“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor.15:50).**

**“Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days” (Jn.11:39).**

**“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption” (Acts 13:36-37).**

**“All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Eccl.3:20).**

**“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption” (1 Cor.15:42).**

**“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor.5:1-2).**

2. Our earthly body is buried in dishonor; our resurrected body will be raised in glory. Our body is dishonorable, and nothing shows its dishonor any more than its death and burial. Every human body is ultimately shamed and disgraced, degraded and deprived of all it has. Every human body is doomed to become nothing more than a handful of dirt. Think about it. Nothing could be any more dishonorable than to take the wonderful mechanism and beauty of a man’s body and see it become nothing more than dirt. Yet that is exactly what happens.

But not the resurrected body: the human body will be transformed into a body of glory. Glory means to possess and to be full of *perfect light*; to dwell in the perfect light, brilliance, splendor, brightness, luster, magnificence, dignity, majesty and grace of God Himself.

**“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mt.13:43).**

**“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:17).**

**“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).**

**“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).**

**“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev.7:9).**

**“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps.73:24).**

**“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Ro.8:18).**

**“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:17).**

**“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim.2:10).**

**“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Pt.5:1).**

3. Our earthly body is buried in weakness; our resurrected body is raised in power. While on earth our body is ever so weak: subject to sickness, disease, and a host of other infirmities and limitations. Eventually it becomes so weak that it dies. In death the human body is utterly powerless: helpless, devoid of any strength and capability whatsoever. In death the human body is so powerless, it is unable to lift a simple finger. It can do nothing, absolutely nothing.

The resurrected body, however, is raised in power. It shall have a mind and body filled with strength, might, health, authority, and control. It will be a perfect body, never subject to disease, accident, or suffering. It will be a body so powerful that it will be able to control its acts and the circumstances around it—all for good.

4. Our earthly body is buried a natural body; our resurrected body is raised a spiritual body. Note exactly what is said:

**“There is a natural body [soma psuchikon] and there is a spiritual body [soma pneumatikon]” (1 Cor.15:44).**

Note that the spiritual body (soma) is still a body just like the earthly body (soma). The spiritual body still retains the qualities of the earthly body. The difference lies in this: it will no longer be a natural (soulish) body. It will be spiritual. What does this mean? In essence, the body will have a different composition: it will be made for a different world, a different dimension. The body will be perfected and glorified: no longer subject to aging, deterioration, death, decay, pain, tears, sorrow, or crying (Rev.14:4).

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21. See DEEPER STUDY # 1, Body, Resurrected—Jn.21:1 for more discussion.)**

**“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).**

**4** (15:44-49) **Resurrection, Body of:** the strong fact—there is a natural body and a spiritual body. In addition to what has already been given, there are three strong evidences that there is both a natural body and a spiritual body.

1. There is the evidence of Scripture: the evidence of the first Adam and the second Adam, which is Christ.
  - a. Their natures differed. The first Adam was made a living soul. This simply means that Adam was given “physical or human life” to live on this earth (see DEEPER STUDY # 5, *Soul*—Mt.22:37). Therefore, he could only pass on the physical or human life to his children or family. But not Christ: Christ was a quickening Spirit, that is, a life-giving Spirit. Therefore, He can give a *new kind of life* to His family.
  - b. Their order was properly placed. Adam, the natural and physical, was first; then came the spiritual which is eternal. Therefore, those who belong to Christ can be given spiritual bodies and live forever.
  - c. Their origin differs. The first Adam is of the earth: he was born of the earth. But Christ is the Lord from heaven. He is, therefore, able to transform those who are His so that they can live in heaven with Him.

**“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (Jn.3:13).**

**“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world....For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (Jn.6:33, 38).**

“The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?” (Jn.6:41-42).

“This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (Jn.6:50-51).

“This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever” (Jn.6:58).

“What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” (Jn.6:62).

“And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world” (Jn.8:23).

“Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me” (Jn.8:42).

“Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God” (Jn.13:3).

“Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God” (Jn.16:30).

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (Jn.17:5)

“The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven” (1 Cor.15:47).

2. There is the evidence of man’s nature and his destiny. Men pattern their lives either after Adam or Christ, either after the world or after heaven. They who live *for* the earth and its worldliness are those who are living *only* after the first Adam; therefore, the only body they will have will be a body of death; that is, a body that will be separated from God.

However, the persons who pattern their lives after the heavenly Christ, will be given a body just like the body of Christ, a perfect heavenly body. All persons who turn from the image of the earthly to the heavenly (Christ) will bear the image of the heavenly.

“It is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor.15:44).

“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor.15:49).

“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (2 Cor.5:2).

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).

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| <p><b>1 The change is needed</b><br/>                 a. Because man is mere flesh &amp; blood<br/>                 b. Because man is corruptible</p> <p><b>2 The change is a brand new revelation</b><br/>                 a. It involves both the dead &amp; the living<br/>                 b. It will be a quick, sudden change<br/>                 c. It will be at the end time, at the end of the world<br/>                 d. It is a surety</p> <p><b>3 The change will be the infusion of a totally new nature</b></p> <p><b>4 The change will swallow</b></p> | <p><b>F. Argument Six: The Radical Change of the Body, 15:50-58</b></p> <p>50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.</p> <p>51 Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,</p> <p>52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.</p> <p>53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.</p> <p>54 So when this corrupti-</p> | <p>ble shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.</p> <p>55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?</p> <p>56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.</p> <p>57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.</p> | <p><b>death; it will bring victory over the grave</b></p> <p>a. The victory was promised by God long ago</p> <p>b. Victory over the sting of death</p> <p>c. Victory over the strength of sin</p> <p><b>5 The change will be wrought through our Lord Jesus Christ</b></p> <p><b>6 The change demands staunch labor</b><br/>                 a. Undying labor<br/>                 b. Overflowing labor<br/>                 c. The reason: Will be rewarded</p> |
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**DIVISION VIII**

**THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, 15:1-58**

**F. Argument Six: The Radical Change of the Body, 15:50-58**

(15:50-58) **Introduction:** if a person is going to live eternally, if it is possible for a person to live in the presence of God, then the human body must first undergo a radical change. The human body must be completely remade. This passage discusses the change that is to take place.

1. The change is needed (v.50).
2. The change is a brand new revelation (v.51-52).
3. The change will be the infusion of a totally new nature (v.53).
4. The change will swallow death; it will bring victory over the grave (v.54-56).
5. The change will be wrought through our Lord Jesus Christ (v.57).
6. The change demands staunch labor (v.58).

**1** (15:50) **Body, Resurrection of:** there are two clearly understood reasons why the change is needed.

1. The human body is flesh and blood. It is physical, not spiritual. It is made of physical material and substance, not spiritual material and substance. It is of the earth, not of heaven; and they who are of the earth are physical and earthly, not spiritual and heavenly.

Man's body in its present state is made...

- to live in the physical world and dimension, not in the spiritual world and dimension.
- to oversee the kingdoms of this world, not to inherit the Kingdom of God.

2. The human body is corruptible, not incorruptible. This is clearly seen in everyday experiences. The human body ends: it ages, dies, decays, deteriorates, and wastes away to nothing but dirt and dust. It has embedded within its very nature the seed of corruption (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Pt.1:4. Cp.1 Pt.1:23.)

The point is that the human body must be completely changed if it is to ever become incorruptible and given the privilege of living in the Kingdom of God. The human body must be changed and recreated, totally remade.

**2** (15:51-52) **Body, Resurrection of:** the change is a brand new revelation. The word "mystery" means revelation, a fact that would never be known unless God revealed it. Man could never find out about the resurrection without God telling him. Man knows about the resurrection and radical change of man's body because God told him. Man has no other way to find out about it. It is one of the mysteries, one of the revelations that God has chosen to make known to man. And what a glorious hope it is! Note four quick facts stated about the radical change of the body.

1. The resurrection involves both the living and the dead. The word "sleep" refers to those who have passed on into the presence of the Lord and are now *resting* from their labor and suffering in this world (cp. v.18).

Note the words "we shall not all sleep." Paul is not saying that he and some others will be alive when the resurrection takes place. He is revealing a mystery about all believers: when Christ returns there will naturally be some believers still living and some who have already died. The point is that both the living and the dead will receive recreated bodies, new bodies, bodies radically and completely changed.

2. The resurrection will be a quick, sudden change. The word for “moment” (atomos) means indivisible, that which cannot be cut. It is the word from which we get the English word *atom*. The idea is that the resurrection will take place so quickly...

- that you could not divide the time into two moments.
- that you could not blink an eye.

3. The resurrection will be at the end time, at the end of the world. This is what is primarily meant by the *last trumpet*. It will be the last trumpet ever blown; however, it will be the trumpet that will summon the end of our bodies lying in the graves and living in this corruptible world. It will be the trumpet that will sound the end of the world as we now know it. (Cp. 1 Th.4:16.)

4. The resurrection and the change of the body are both an absolute surety. Note the strong affirmative “shalls” of this verse:

**“The trumpet shall sound.”**  
**“The dead shall be raised incorruptible.”**  
**“We shall be changed.”**

There is no question about the event to take place. God has revealed the glorious fact: He Himself shall raise the dead and change all our bodies.

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live....Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jn.5:25, 28-29).**

**“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn.6:40).**

**“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn.11:25).**

**“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor.15:22).**

**“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).**

**“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Th.4:16).**

**3** (15:53) **Body, Resurrection of:** the change will be the infusion of a totally new nature. Note two significant facts.

1. The nature of the believer’s present body is corruptible and mortal; the nature of his new body will be incorruptible and immortal.

⇒ The “corruptible and “mortal” nature means that men are earthly; that they age, deteriorate, die, decay, and decompose. Every man, no matter who he is, is earthly and will return to the earth once he dies unless Jesus returns while he is living on the earth.

⇒ The “incorruptible” and “immortal” nature means this: believers will be made heavenly; they will be transformed and given a *perfect nature* that will never age, deteriorate, die, decay, or decompose. They will be completely free from defilement and depravity. They will be given a body that is perfect, a body that is diametrically opposed to their present body, a body that is perfected forever to live with God in the new heavens and earth. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.21:1; note—1 Cor.15:42-44.)

2. The word “must” shows the absolute necessity for the change of man’s body. If man is to live with God, his body must be changed. It is essential, a must, an absolute necessity if man is to live forever.

**“Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Lk.20:36).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (Jn.8:51).**

**“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:26).**

**“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life” (Ro.2:7).**

**“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor.15:53).**

**“For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor.5:1).**

**“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th.4:17).**

**“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).**

**4** (15:54-56) **Body, Resurrection of:** the change will swallow death; it will bring victory over the grave. Paul pictures the believer in the future, as already standing before the Lord in the Kingdom of God. He sees the believer as already incorruptible and immortal. When that day comes, then it can be shouted that “Death is swallowed up in victory.” Note what is said about this glorious day of victory.

1. The victory was promised by God long, long ago.

**“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it” (Is.25:8).**

2. The victory conquered the “sting” of death. The “sting” of death is sin (v.56). There are two reasons why the sting of death will be gone forever.

- a. Sin gives death its power. Men die because of sin (Ro.5:12). When God gives man a perfect body, then the sting is removed. Death will be no more.
- b. Sin surrounds death with all its fears. If men are perfected, then sin is erased from the picture, and there is no death or surrounding fears. Death becomes helpless.

3. The victory will be over the strength of sin. What is it that gives power to sin, that gives sin control over men? It is the law of God. When believers stand perfected before God, the law hovering over men’s heads will be done away with. There are two reasons why the strength of sin will be gone forever.

- a. The law gives sin its power. The law and its standards show men their shortcomings. If men are perfected, then there is no need for the law because there is no sin (Ro.4:15)
- b. If men are perfected and there is no law, then there is no condemnation (Ro.5:13).

**“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor.15:26).**

**“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor.15:54).**

**“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).**

**“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev.21:4).**

**5** (15:57) **Body, Resurrection of:** the glorious victory over death has been wrought through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is through Him and Him alone that man can be resurrected from the dead and given an incorruptible and immortal body. How is it possible for man to live forever through the Lord Jesus Christ? Very simply, because He fulfilled the law of God. This means at least two things. (See note—Mt. 5:17-18; DEEPER STUDY # 2—Ro. 8:3 for more detailed discussion.)

1. Christ fulfilled the law of God by never sinning. He never broke the law of God, not even once. Therefore, He secured perfect righteousness; and because His righteousness is perfect and ideal, it becomes the model and pattern for all men. It stands for and covers the unrighteousness of all men. His perfect righteousness overcomes sin and its penalty—it condemns sin. It is to be noted that He condemned sin “through the flesh” (Ro.8:3).

2. Christ fulfilled the law in that He bore the condemnation and punishment of the law for man. As the Perfect and Ideal Man, Jesus Christ could bear all the violations and punishment of the law for man. Jesus Christ as the Ideal Man could die *for all men*.

When a person believes in Jesus Christ, truly believes in Him, God counts that person’s faith as righteousness. The person is not righteous, but God loves His Son so much that He honors any person who honors His Son. He takes the person’s *honor of His Son*, the person’s faith, and counts it as righteousness, as the right to live in His presence. It is the person of faith, the person who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ that shall be resurrected and given a body that is incorruptible and immortal. The victory over death is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

**“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit....For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:1, 3).**

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).**

**“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 Jn.5:4).**

**6** (15:58) **Body, Resurrection of:** the change demands staunch labor. Note four points.

1. The charge is to believers, genuine believers: “beloved brother.” The promise of a resurrected and changed body is not to unbelievers.

2. The believer is to be steadfast and unmoveable. Why? Because he has such a glorious hope: the hope of being resurrected and given an incorruptible and immortal body. The hope of this glorious fact should stir the believer to be steadfast and unmoveable in serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

- ⇒ The word stedfast (hedraioi) means to be firm, fixed, determined, purposed, faithful. The believer is to stand fast and fixed in his belief and labor for the Lord, determined to live for the Lord and to carry out his purpose for the Lord. The believer is to be faithful to the end.
- ⇒ The word “unmoveable” (ametakineto) means to be unyielding, unshaken, undisturbed. The believer is not to be fickle in his service for the Lord. He is to stand as solid as a rock in his beliefs and in the serving of the Lord.
3. The believer is to abound in the work of the Lord. Note two significant points.
- ⇒ The word “labor” (kopos) means toiling and working to the point of exhaustion and fatigue, to the point of collapse.
- ⇒ The word always means never cease, never stop, never slacken up, never quit, never retire.
4. The believer will be rewarded. What a challenge to the believer! Yet, how could less be expected when the promise of being resurrected and given a new body has been given to a person? The believer’s labor will not be in vain, that is, left empty and unrewarded. The believer who...
- is stedfast,
  - is unmoveable,
  - is always abounding and laboring in the work of the Lord,
  - will be rewarded: resurrected and given a new body.

**“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love” (Jn.15:9).**

**“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal.6:9).**

**“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim.4:5).**

**“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb.12:1).**

**“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.1:13).**

**“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev.3:11).**

**“The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger” (Job 17:9).**

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| <p><b>1 First, the instructions are for every church</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 16</b></p> <p><b>IX. THE FINAL THOUGHTS, 16:1-24</b></p> <p><b>A. Some Instructions on Financial Collections, 16:1-4</b></p> <p>Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.</p> | <p>2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.</p> <p>3 And when I come, whosoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.</p> <p>4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.</p> | <p><b>2 Second, the instructions</b></p> <p>a. When: On the first day<br/>b. Who: Every one of you<br/>c. How: Lay "in store"<br/>d. Why: God has prospered<br/>e. When: Regular services<br/>f. Give—but hand pick those who handle the collection</p> |
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**DIVISION IX**

**THE FINAL THOUGHTS, 16:1-24**

**A. Some Instructions on Financial Collections, 16:1-4**

(16:1-4) **Introduction:** this passage spells out some wise instructions on church offerings and collections. The instructions have too often been ignored; and the result has been scandal, rumor, and destruction of the cause of Christ. (See outlines and notes—Acts 20:4-6; 2 Cor.8:16-24 for more discussion.)

1. First, the instructions are for every church (v.1).
2. Second, the instructions (v.2-4).

**1** (16:1) **Stewardship:** first, the instructions on giving are for every church. Note that Paul had given the very same instructions to the churches of Galatia which numbered several churches. What Paul taught here, he apparently taught everywhere. This seems to be the set order in which church offerings and collections are to be handled.

**“As I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.”**

The collection referred to was a special offering being taken for the poor believers in Jerusalem (cp. Ro.15:26; 1 Cor.16:1, 3; 2 Cor.8:1f; 9:1f; Acts 24:17). For some reason the Jerusalem believers were suffering extreme poverty. Some commentators have speculated that the suffering was due...

- to severe persecutions by the Jews (cp. 1 Th.2:14-16).
- to the failure of common ownership which the early church practiced, expecting the Lord’s immediate return (cp. Acts 4:32-37).

It had been some thirty years since the early church had begun to practice common ownership of goods. The opinion of some is that the system had failed and caused widespread poverty among the Jerusalem believers.

Whatever the immediate cause of the poverty, the Jerusalem believers were in desperate need. Their need was so desperate that a worldwide offering from all Christian churches was needed to meet the crisis.

**Thought 1.** The lesson is clear. The church must meet the desperate needs of men: the needs of the poor, the hungry, the diseased, the homeless, the lost, and the multitudes of others who have little if anything in this world including health and hope. Believers must give, and give sacrificially. Believers must do all they can. The instructions of this Scripture are for all the churches of the world.

**“Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away” (Mt.5:42).**

**“He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise” (Lk.3:11).**

**“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Lk.12:33).**

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**2** (16:2-4) **Stewardship—Offerings:** second, the instructions. Note six significant points.

1. When is the offering to be received? “Upon the first day of the week,” which is Sunday. According to the Jewish calendar, the first day of the week was Sunday. The Jews, of course, worshipped on the Sabbath, but the early Christian believers began to worship on the first day of the week. Their primary reason for switching the day of worship was to commemorate the resurrection of the Lord. In fact, they even began to call the first day of the week *The Lord’s Day* (cp. Jn.20:19; Acts 20:7; Rev.1:10).

Note: the believers were not to make only occasional offerings, they were to give regularly, every Lord’s day: “Upon the *first day of the week.*”

**“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor.16:2).**

2. Who is to give? “Every one of you.” The instruction is clearly stated. But why would God expect the poor to give as well as the middle class and the rich? Paul deals with this same offering in another passage and gives two strong reasons why everyone is to be involved in meeting the needs of the world (2 Cor.9:12-14).

- a. Giving stirs people to praise God. Praising God...
  - *excites* and motivates people
  - pleases God
- b. Giving builds a strong fellowship among believers (2 Cor.9:14).

**“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (2 Cor.9:6).**

**“For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men” (2 Cor.9:12-14).**

**“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16; cp. Pr.11:25; 22:9; Is.58:10; Lk.6:38).**

3. How is the offering to be given? By laying “in store,” that is, by laying aside one’s offering. This could not mean that a person is to keep his offering “stored up” or set aside for long periods of time before giving it. Paul explicitly says that it is to be given to the church every week *so that there will be no need for a special offering* when he comes to the church. Therefore, to lay “in store” must mean...

- to put the offering in the *storehouse*, that is, the treasury of the church.
- to lay the money aside at home during the week so that the person will not spend the offering.

**Thought 1.** The importance of this point can never be over-stressed. How often believers spend the Lord’s money simply because they failed to set it aside.

**“Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase” (Pr.3:9).**

**“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal.3:10).**

4. Why are believers to give? Because God has prospered them. God looks after His people; He blesses them. The Lord Jesus clearly taught that all the necessities of life would be given to His people. Therefore, God expects believers to give as He has prospered them. Closely note the principle: a believer is to give on the basis of his prosperity. This definitely means that the rich are to give generously, very generously. (See outline and notes—Mt.19:16-22; 19:23-26; 19:27-30 for more discussion.)

**“Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea” (Acts 11:29).**

**“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (2 Cor.8:12).**

**“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor.9:7).**

**“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim.6:17-19).**

**“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee” (Dt.16:17).**

5. Where are believers to give the offerings? At the regular services of their church. Paul is clear: there is not to be the need for a special offering when he returns to the church. The offering is to be taken weekly as they meet for worship.

**“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor.16:2).**

**“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal.3:10).**

6. In receiving the offering there was one administrative function that had to be carefully handled. The men who were to handle the offering were to be hand-picked. Note that they were to be men of character:

- ⇒ men whom the church could “approve” and trust to handle the money.
- ⇒ men whom Paul could commend through letters of commendation. He would have to write letters in their behalf to the Jerusalem church.

Note also that Paul himself would not touch the money. He would thereby be above reproach at all times. Verse four really stresses the point: if his schedule allows him to make the journey to Jerusalem, then the men will still personally deliver the money to the Jerusalem believers.

**Thought 1.** This is a lesson that needs to be heeded by all preachers, whether pastor, evangelist, or teacher.

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 Concern 1: To reach &amp; to nurture all</b><br/> a. To “pass through” Macedonia<br/> b. To “winter” in Corinth</p> | <p><b>B. Some Personal Concerns of Paul, 16:5-24</b></p> <p>5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.<br/> 6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.<br/> 7 For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.<br/> 8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.<br/> 9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.<br/> 10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.<br/> 11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.<br/> 12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.<br/> 13 Watch ye, stand fast in</p> | <p>the faith, quit you like men, be strong.<br/> 14 Let all your things be done with charity.<br/> 15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)<br/> 16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.<br/> 17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.<br/> 18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.<br/> 19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.<br/> 20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.<br/> 21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.<br/> 22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.<br/> 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.<br/> 24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.</p> | <p><b>immature believers</b></p> <p><b>5 Concern 5: Paul’s shining examples</b><br/> a. Stephanas’ household<br/> 1) The first believers<br/> 2) Addicted to the ministry<br/> 3) Submit to such ministers<br/> 4) Submit to all who help &amp; labor<br/> b. Fortunatus &amp; Achaicus<br/> 1) Messengers of the church<br/> 2) Personally refreshed Paul’s spirit<br/> 3) Acknowledge them</p> |
| <p><b>2 Concern 2: A disciple’s welfare (Timothy’s)</b><br/> a. Receive him<br/> b. Support him, cp. 6-7</p>                | <p>11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.<br/> 12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.<br/> 13 Watch ye, stand fast in</p>  | <p>11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.<br/> 12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.<br/> 13 Watch ye, stand fast in</p>   | <p><b>6 Concern 6: To stress love and not division</b><br/> a. In the final salutation</p>   |
| <p><b>3 Concern 3: A brother following the will of the Lord (Apollos)</b></p>   | <p>11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.<br/> 12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.<br/> 13 Watch ye, stand fast in</p>  | <p>11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.<br/> 12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.<br/> 13 Watch ye, stand fast in</p>   | <p>b. The terrifying importance of love for Christ</p>   |
| <p><b>4 Concern 4: To exhort</b></p>  | <p>13 Watch ye, stand fast in</p>  | <p>13 Watch ye, stand fast in</p>   | <p>c. The love of Paul for all</p>   |

DIVISION IX

THE FINAL THOUGHTS, 16:1-24

**B. Some Personal Concerns of Paul, 16:5-24**

(16:5-24) **Introduction:** Paul’s heart burned with a passion to reach, grow, and help people for Christ. This was so true that even in his final words to a church, his passion and concern to help is clearly seen.

1. Concern 1: to reach and to nurture all (v.5-9).
2. Concern 2: a disciple’s welfare (Timothy’s) (v.10-11).
3. Concern 3: a brother following the will of the Lord (Apollos) (v.12).
4. Concern 4: to exhort immature believers (v.13-14).
5. Concern 5: Paul’s shining examples (v.15-18).
6. Concern 6: to stress love and not division (v.19-24).

**1** (16:5-9) **Paul, Ministry:** Paul’s first concern was to reach and nurture everyone he could. Note the points of the outline, and the beat of Paul’s heart is clearly seen.

1. Paul planned to “pass through” Macedonia, that is to make quick visits to the churches in Macedonia.

**Thought 1.** There is always a need to keep in touch with God’s people, strengthening and building them up. This was the constant beat of Paul’s heart.

“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31).

“Beside, those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (2 Cor.11:28).

**“Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith” (1 Th.3:10).**

2. Paul wanted to spend the winter with the Corinthian church. Note the practice and expectation of Paul that churches would support the ministry of the preachers (cp. v.11).
3. However, Paul had to remain at Ephesus until Pentecost. Note the two reasons for staying at Ephesus:  
⇒ The opportunity for reaching and growing people was great: there was a “great door” opened to Paul.

**“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Cor.16:9).**

**“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord” (2 Cor.2:12).**

**“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name” (Rev.3:8).**

- ⇒ The adversaries of the gospel were many (cp. Acts 19 for a picture of the adversaries). Therefore, the young church needed his help to walk through the trial of opposition.

**“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).**

**“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).**

Note: Paul was able to carry out his plans (Acts 20:2-3).

- 2** (16:10-11) **Paul, Ministry:** Paul’s second concern was for a disciple’s welfare, the welfare of Timothy. It was Paul’s plan for Timothy to visit Corinth (1 Cor.4:17), and the Book of Acts tells us that he indeed did visit Corinth right after this. Timothy was Paul’s own disciple. He was young; therefore, he still had much growing to do and needed a great deal of encouragement (cp. 2 Tim.1:6f). Paul feared the church in Corinth might be somewhat hesitant in accepting him. Note four strong lessons.

1. The word “despise” is a strong word meaning to treat as nothing, as worthless, as a nobody. It means to treat with contempt; to look down upon. The use of this word shows the deep concern Paul had for the welfare of this disciple.
2. Churches are to be very receptive to young members.
3. Despite his youth, Timothy was a minister who worked for the Lord just like Paul did (v.10).
4. Churches are to support young ministers as they serve the Lord (v.11).

**“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Mt.9:37-38).**

- 3** (16:12) **Paul, Ministry:** Paul’s third concern was to make sure that a brother followed the will of the Lord. As the verse says, the brother was Apollos. Remember that the division within the church was caused partly by those who favored Apollos’ preaching over Paul’s. The rivalry between Paul and Apollos existed only in the minds and actions of the Corinthians. No such rivalry existed as far as Paul and Apollos were concerned. They were “brothers” and fellow servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each was gifted and called as the Lord so willed. Note: they consulted with one another about the possibility of Apollos making a trip to Corinth.

- 4** (16:13-14) **Paul, Ministry:** Paul’s fourth concern was to exhort immature believers. There are five charges in this exhortation, and all five are in the present tense; that is, this is the way believers are to live. These things are to be continually done.

1. “Watch” (gregoreite): to be awake, alert, and constantly on guard; never to be sleepy-eyed or sluggish; never to let one’s guard down.

**“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mt.26:41).**

**“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor.10:12).**

**“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col.4:2).**

**“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night nor of darkness. therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober” (1 Th.5:5-6).**

2. “Stand fast in the faith”: do not listen or give heed to false teachers and false doctrine; do not question the word and truth of Christ. Stand against those who mishandle and abuse the Word of God.

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:1-2).**

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pt.5:8).

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).

“Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev.3:11).

3. “Quit you like men” means either to be courageous as real men or to quit living like immature men. It means to live as courageous men of God.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

“I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man” (1 Ki.2:2).

“Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me” (Job 40:7).

“Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors” (Is.46:8).

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none” (Ezk.22:30).

4. “Be strong”: to grow in strength; to be men of real strength; to stand against the world and its enticements.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Eph.6:10).

“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.2:1).

5. Do all in love: the word “with” should be translated “in.” The believer is to live “in” love and to do all “in” love. Remember the love chapter, 1 Cor.13. The greatest answer to the division and other problems within the church was love. Love must prevail in the hearts and behavior of believers and their church.

“By love serve one another” (Gal.5:13).

“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Pt.4:8).

“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him” (1 Jn.2:10).

“And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also” (1 Jn.4:21).

**5** (16:15-18) **Paul, Ministry:** Paul’s fifth concern was to set forth shining examples for the church to follow.

1. There was the example of Stephanas and his household. Note what is said about this lay servant and his household.

⇒ They were the first converts of Achaia, which was the large province of which Corinth was a part. Imagine the courage it took to be the first to step forward for Christ, especially in a society that had become a cesspool of immorality, injustice, and worldliness.

⇒ They not only ministered to others, they were addicted to meeting the needs of believers. The word “addicted” (etaxan) means they devoted themselves, appointed themselves, diligently gave themselves to meeting the day to day needs of the believers.

Paul says that such a dynamic example is to be followed. In fact, any person who is so devoted to the ministry of the Lord is to be followed.

**Thought 1.** Those who devote their lives to serve the Lord and are faithful in their ministry are to be highly esteemed and followed as leaders.

“That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth” (1 Cor.16:16).

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb.13:17).

2. There was the example of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. Two men are now mentioned with Stephanas. These three men were the messengers sent by the Corinthian church to Paul. Paul says three simple things about them:
- ⇒ They had been faithful in their duty as appointed by the church, and had actually gone beyond, sharing even more.
  - ⇒ They had refreshed his spirit just as they would refresh the spirit of the Corinthians by being faithful to their charge.
  - ⇒ They serve as shining examples of what believers should be. Such faithful believers are to be acknowledged.

**6** (16:19-24) **Paul, Ministry:** Paul's sixth concern was to stress love and not division. These verses are the final words of Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church. Note how his stress is upon love and brotherhood.

1. There was the final salutation. Four salutations are given and each one stresses the bond of love and unity that is in Christ.
  - a. There was the salutation from all the churches of Asia. The Corinthian believers were not the *only* church on the globe: not superior, not better, not super-spiritual. The church was a part of the whole, one unit among many, and the others were now sending their greetings. They were all the followers of the Lord Jesus, and they belonged to the body of the Lord as much as the Corinthian church.
  - b. There was the salutation from Aquila and Priscilla, two former leaders of the Corinthian church (see Introduction, Special Features, the Church at Corinth).
  - c. There was the salutation from all the brothers who were with Paul. Note the stress upon "brothers" and the holy kiss, a term and act of unity and brotherly love.
 

**"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph.2:19).**

**"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb.2:11).**

**"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor.13:11).**

**"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Pt.3:8).**

**"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Ph.1:27).**

**"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph.4:3).**
  - d. There was the salutation of Paul. Paul's signature was the sign of the authenticity of his letters (Col.4:18; 2 Th.3:17).
2. There was the terrifying importance of love for Christ. The word "anathema" means accursed; under the ban; cast away. It is something doomed to utter destruction. Paul uses the word four times (Ro.9:3; 1 Cor.12:3; 16:22; Gal.1:8; cp. Acts 23:14). The word "maranatha" means the Lord comes! The idea is that any man who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ will be accursed. And the Lord is coming: they will be accursed.
3. There was the love of Paul for all. This is clearly seen in his benediction of grace and expression of love for the believers and their church.
 

**"But the fruit of the Spirit is love" (Gal.5:22).**

**"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col.3:14).**

**"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 Jn.4:16).**

**THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE**

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**CORINTHIANS**



# THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

## INTRODUCTION

**AUTHOR:** Paul, the Apostle (see I Corinthians, Introductory Notes, Author).

**DATE:** A.D. 56-57.

There is an indication that the Epistle was written almost immediately after hearing of the church's repentance (2 Cor.2:13; 7:2-16). The letter was probably written from the province of Macedonia, more specifically from the city of Philippi.

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** "The church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia" (2 Cor.1:1).

**PURPOSE:** Paul writes for three reasons.

1. To vindicate the purity of his life and the authority of his ministry.
2. To crush the false accusations against him with a final blow, and to solidify the church more firmly in the gospel.
3. To encourage the church to complete its special mission project to the poor saints in Jerusalem and Judea.

**SPECIAL FEATURES:**

1. The City of Corinth (see I Corinthians, Introductory Notes, Special Features, point 1).
2. The Church at Corinth (see I Corinthians, Introductory Notes, Special Features, point 2).
3. II Corinthians is "The Epistle That Combats the Severe Charges Against Paul." There was a certain person in the Corinthian Church who caused great grief to Paul. This person evidently stood face to face with Paul when Paul made a hurried and painful visit to Corinth. This divisive person slandered Paul and his character beyond imagination. The Corinthian Church as a whole became affected—tragically so (2 Cor.2:5-6)—so much so that several cliques were formed against Paul. It was Paul himself that was being attacked, both his character and his right and authority as a minister of the gospel.

The attacks and accusations were so severe that Paul made it clear that his relationship with the church was to remain at a standstill until they dealt with the offender (2 Cor.2:1-4). An idea of the severity of the accusations and just what they were can be gleaned from a study of II Corinthians (see notes—2 Cor.1:12-22; 3:1). The seriousness of the situation is seen when one tries to imagine the statements made against Paul: "Some...think of us as if we walked according to the flesh" (2 Cor.10:2); and "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom...we have had our conversation [behavior, conduct] in the world" (2 Cor.1:12).

It was accusations such as these that were thrown in Paul's face when he made his hurried visit to Corinth. This is the reason commentators label this visit the "*painful visit*." The accusations and their seriousness and severity were a threat to Paul's ministry. Thus Paul was forced to pen his "severe letter" to the Corinthian Church (see I Corinthians, Introductory Notes, Special Features, point 3).

The personal distress of the whole situation can be gleaned from the above and from a study of the letter. In fact, a quick scanning of long passages such as 2 Cor.1:3-2:17 will clearly show Paul's distress: "God...who comforts us in all our trials" (2 Cor.1:4); "the sufferings of Christ abound in us" (2 Cor.1:5); "ye are partakers of the sufferings" (2 Cor.1:7; cp. 2:5-6); "our trouble which came to us in Asia...." (2 Cor.1:8-9). This certainly refers to the trials caused by the Corinthian Church, as well as the Ephesian disturbance recorded in Acts. "The testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity [holiness] and godly sincerity [purity, moral purity], not with fleshly wisdom...I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end" (2 Cor.1:12-13).

What all this shows is that Paul underwent such strain and stress from the accusations and trouble within the church that it almost did him in. It was almost fatal. He actually faced death (2 Cor.1:8-10). He adds, "Our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Cor.7:5).

See I Corinthians for a complete outline of these events (Introductory Notes, Special Features, point 3).

4. II Corinthians is "The Most Personal of Paul's Epistles." It opens up his life for all to see. It shows that he was human, just like all other men; he experienced joy and pain, victories and setbacks.

5. II Corinthians is "The Epistle of the Minister and the Ministry." A quick glance at the General Outline will show this. A study of the Epistle stirs the heart of the minister to endure and proclaim Christ more than ever before.



## OUTLINE OF II CORINTHIANS

### I. THE GOD OF PAUL, 1:1-11

- A. God and His People, 1:1-2
- B. God and Suffering, 1:3-11

### II. THE PERSONAL DEFENSE OF PAUL, 1:12-2:11

- A. Paul Answers Charges Against Himself: A Minister's Answer to His Attackers, 1:12-22
- B. Paul's Reasons for Delaying a Visit to the Church: When a Minister is Under Attack, 1:23-2:4
- C. Paul's Treatment of an Offender: Church Discipline and Forgiveness, 2:5-11

### III. THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16

- A. The Ministry: An Overview, 2:12-17
- B. The Ministry: Its Credentials, 3:1-5
- C. The Ministry: Its New Covenant, 3:6-18
- D. The Ministry: Its Demands, 4:1-6
- E. The Ministry: Its Sustaining and Enduring Spirit, 4:7-18
- F. The Ministry: Its Hope and Assurance of An Eternal Home, 5:1-10
- G. The Ministry: Its Compelling Motives, 5:11-16
- H. The Ministry: Its Message, 5:17-6:2
- I. The Ministry: Its Call to Consistency and Endurance, 6:3-10
- J. The Ministry: Its Call to Separation and Consecration, 6:11-7:1
- K. The Ministry: Its End—A Transforming Revival, 7:2-16

### IV. THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL COLLECTIONS, 8:1-9:15

- A. The Challenge to Give, 8:1-15
- B. The Men Who Handle the Collection, 8:16-24
- C. The Givers Who Please God, 9:1-7
- D. The Motives for Giving Generously and Sacrificially, 9:8-15

### V. THE MINISTER'S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14

- A. The Minister: His Warfare and Weapons, 10:1-6
- B. The Minister: His Right to Be Accepted, 10:7-18
- C. The Minister: His Warning Against Seduction, 11:1-15
- D. The Minister: His Boast and Costly Labors, 11:16-33
- E. The Minister: His Spiritual Experiences, 12:1-10
- F. The Minister: His Behavior Before the Church, 12:11-21
- G. The Minister: His Final Warning, Prayer, Challenge, and Blessing, 13:1-14



**THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE  
CORINTHIANS**

|                                   |   |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
|                                   | <b>CHAPTER 1</b>  | Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:<br>2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. | <b>believer's call</b><br><b>2 God is the source of brotherhood among believers</b><br><b>3 God is the source of the church and of all saints</b><br><b>4 God is the source of grace &amp; peace</b> |
| <b>1 God is the source of the</b> | <b>I. THE GOD OF PAUL, 1:1-11</b><br><br><b>A. God and His People, 1:1-2</b><br><br>Paul, an apostle of Jesus |  |  |

**DIVISION I**

**THE GOD OF PAUL, 1:1-11**

**A. God and His People, 1:1-2**

(1:1-2) **Introduction:** this is the introduction of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, but note a striking point. Note how God and His people are stressed. God is the *source* of all that concerns His people.

1. God is the source of the believer's call (v.1).
2. God is the source of brotherhood among believers (v.1).
3. God is the source of the church and of all saints (v.1).
4. God is the source of grace and peace (v.2).

**1** (1:1) **Ministers, Call of:** God is the *source* of the believer's call. Paul says that he is "an apostle...by the *will of God.*" By "apostle" he means that he has been called to be a messenger, an ambassador, a witness, a teacher, a missionary, a minister for God. Paul says that he has been called by God to serve God. He has been appointed by God to be the messenger of God. He has been chosen by God to work for God. God is the source of his call and appointment. Paul's work and employment are due to God. What he does in life—his work and ministry—he does because God chose him to do it. His life's work is not due to men; it is not even due to his own choice. It is due to God and to God alone.

Note that the very first thing Paul does is stress his apostleship. Some of the Corinthian believers were questioning and denying Paul's call by God (2 Cor.1:21; 3:1, 5-6; 10:10; cp. 1 Cor.9:1-2).

**Thought 1.** A believer does not serve God because he chooses to serve God, nor because other men choose him to serve God. A person does not preach and teach or minister and pastor because he thinks the ministry is a good profession to enter. A person serves God because God chooses and gifts him to serve. God is to be the source of the believer's call, not men.

**"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (Jn.15:16).**

**"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor.5:20).**

**"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)" (Gal.1:1).**

**"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal.1:11-12).**

**"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps.40:8).**

**"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Is.6:8).**

**2** (1:1) **Brotherhood:** God is the source of brotherhood among believers. Paul calls Timothy "our brother," which means that he was a brother in Christ. Timothy was a young man who had been led to the Lord at a very early age. Paul had sensed God's call upon Timothy's life, so Paul encouraged him to give his life to the ministry. This Timothy did, serving and ministering with Paul all over the Roman world (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Timothy*—Acts 16:1-3 for more discussion). Note that Timothy is with Paul in the district of Macedonia (probably the city of Philippi) while Paul is writing this letter to the Corinthians. Apparently Timothy had just returned from the mission tour which Paul had mentioned in his first letter to the Corinthians. Paul had said that Timothy was on a mission tour making his way to the Corinthians (1 Cor.4:17), but he also said that there was a possibility that Timothy might not be able to extend his mission tour as far as Corinth (1 Cor.16:10). We do not know if Timothy ever reached Corinth or not.

The point is this: the messenger of God, no matter how great his call or ministry, is not better or superior to other believers. Just think of Paul, who he was and what a great ministry he had. His call and ministry were to be respected, but his great call and ministry did not make him a superior person. He served God not because he was a better person, but because God had a work to do and out of His sovereign mercy God had called Paul to do it.

**Thought 1.** The messenger of God is not above *other servants*; he is a *brother* to all other servants. Regardless of his call and ministry, he is one among all brothers who serve *under the will of God*.

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

- 3** (1:1) **Church:** God is the source of the church and of all saints or believers (see note, *Church*—1 Cor.1:2-3; DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—1:2 for discussion).

Note that Paul is writing not only to the church at Corinth, but to all the other churches in Achaia. He knew that writing would help all the churches, so he wanted the letter to be circulated among them all.

- 4** (1:2) **Grace—Peace:** God is the source of grace and peace (see note, pt.4—1 Cor.1:2-3; see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Grace*—1 Cor.1:4 for discussion).

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p><b>1 God is the Father of mercies &amp; the God of all comfort</b></p> <p><b>2 God comforts the sufferer—so that he might be a testimony to other sufferers</b></p> <p><b>3 God matches the comfort to equal the sufferings</b></p> <p><b>4 God uses suffering to stir other believers</b><br/> a. To encouragement<br/> b. To salvation<br/> c. To patiently endure<br/> <br/> d. To sharing</p> | <p><b>B. God and Suffering, 1:3-11</b></p> <p>3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;</p> <p>4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.</p> <p>5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.</p> <p>6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.</p> <p>7 And our hope of you is</p> | <p>stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.</p> <p>8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:</p> <p>9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:</p> <p>10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;</p> <p>11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.</p> | <p><b>5 God uses suffering to teach trust</b><br/> a. God allows great suffering<sup>DS1</sup><br/> <br/> b. To teach trust in God, not in self<br/> <br/> c. To teach a daily trust for deliverance</p> <p><b>6 God uses suffering to teach prayer &amp; thanksgiving</b></p> |
|--|---|---|--|

**DIVISION I**

**THE GOD OF PAUL, 1:1-11**

**B. God and Suffering, 1:3-11**

(1:3-11) **Introduction:** suffering has always posed a problem for man. It may be disease, accident, trial, temptation, abuse, death—no matter what the suffering is, every person who suffers wonders, “Why me? Why do I have to suffer this affliction?” Suffering is the great discussion of this passage: “God and Suffering.”

1. God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort (v.3).
2. God comforts the sufferer—so that he might be a testimony to other sufferers (v.4).
3. God matches the comfort to equal the sufferings (v.5).
4. God uses suffering to stir other believers (v.6-7).
5. God uses suffering to teach trust (v.8-10).
6. God uses suffering to teach prayer and thanksgiving (v.11).

**1** (1:3) **Suffering—Mercy—Comfort—God, Nature:** God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.

1. The word “mercies” (oiktirmon) means compassion, pity, and mercy. It means looking upon people in need and having compassion and mercy upon them.
  - ⇒ Note that God is not the God of mercies but the *Father* of mercies. His very nature and behavior toward us is that of a Father, not of a God. He is our Father, a Father who is merciful and compassionate, and who shows His mercies and compassions upon us.
  - ⇒ Note that the word *mercies* is plural. God does not show mercy just once, nor just here and there. God shows His mercies upon us continuously (cp. Ro.12:1; Ph.2:1; Col.3:12; Heb.10:28).
2. The word “comfort” (parakleseos) means to be by the side of another; to relieve and support; to give solace, consolation, and encouragement. But there is always an underlying meaning to the word. There is the idea of strength, an enablement, a confidence. It consoles and relieves a person, but it strengthens him at the same time. It charges a person to go out and face the world. Note the word is used ten times in 2 Cor.1:3-7.
  - ⇒ Note that the word *comfort* (parakleseos) is the same word that is used for the Holy Spirit (paraklete). The Holy Spirit is given the title *The Comforter* by Christ.

**“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (Jn.14:15-18).**

3. How do we know God is like this? How do we know that God is “the Father of mercies” and the “God of all comfort”? *Because of Jesus Christ.* God is “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It was God...
  - who “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).
  - who demonstrated “his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).

A father could show no greater mercy than to give the life of his son to save others. This is exactly what God did: He gave Christ to die for His enemies, for those who were in rebellion against Him. God has had mercy upon us, and He continues to have mercy upon us. He continues to pour out His mercy and comfort upon men. Why? Because of His nature: His very nature is that of a Father—a Father of mercies and a God of all comfort.

**“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:4-7).**

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:5).**

**“But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children” (Ps.103:17).**

**“For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds” (Ps.108:4).**

**“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not” (Lam.3:22).**

**“And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil” (Joel 2:13).**

**“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy” (Mic.7:18).**

**2** (1:4) **Suffering—Affliction—Trials—Trouble—Comfort:** God comforts the sufferer so that he might be a testimony to other sufferers.

1. The word “tribulation” (thlipsei) means to be weighed down exceedingly; to be pressed and crushed. It is the picture of a beast of burden being crushed beneath a load that is just too heavy. It is the picture of a person having a heavy weight placed on his breast and being pressed and crushed to the point that he feels he is going to die. Note the word is used four times in 2 Cor.1:3-7.

2. Note the words “us” and “all tribulation.” Paul is *not only talking* about his own trials and sufferings, but about ours as well. God comforts us all—all believers. He does not have favorites; His mercies and comfort are for everyone. And note: He comforts us in “*all*,” not in just a few of our trials and sufferings. We do not have to bear a single trial or moment of suffering by ourselves. Our Father—the Sovereign Majesty of the universe who controls all—is not off in the distance someplace far removed from us. His Spirit, the precious Holy Spirit, is right here with us to comfort us in all our suffering.

- ⇒ God’s purpose in comforting us is to make us a testimony to others.
- ⇒ God comforts us so that we can comfort others who are suffering.
- ⇒ God carries us through trials so that we can carry others through trials.
- ⇒ God strengthens us so that we can strengthen others.
- ⇒ God helps us so that we can help others.
- ⇒ God encourages us so that we can encourage others.

**“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God” (Is.40:1).**

**“So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” (2 Cor.2:7).**

**“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do” (1 Th.5:11).**

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).**

**3** (1:5) **Suffering—Trials—Comfort:** God matches the comfort to equal the sufferings. Note that the sufferings being stressed are “the sufferings of Christ,” that is, the very kind of sufferings which Christ Himself bore. What kind of sufferings did Christ bear? Very simply, Christ bore every kind of suffering imaginable, even the suffering of death. He had to experience every situation, condition, and trial of man in order to become the *Perfect Sympathizer or Savior*. For this reason, He experienced the most humiliating experiences possible. He experienced...

- being born to an unwed mother (Mt.1:18-19).
- being born in a stable, the worst of conditions (Lk.2:7).
- being born to poor parents (Lk.2:24).
- having his life threatened as a baby (Mt.2:13f).
- being the cause of unimaginable sorrow (Mt.2:16f).
- having to be moved and shifted as a baby (Mt.2:13f).
- being reared in a despicable place, Nazareth (Lk.2:39).
- having His father die during His youth (see note, pt.3—Mt.13:53-58).
- having to support His mother and brothers and sisters (see note, pt.3—Mt.13:53-58).
- having no home, not even a place to lay His head (Mt.8:20; Lk.9:58).
- being hated and opposed by religionists (Mk.14:1-2).
- being charged with insanity (Mk.3:21).
- being charged with demon-possession (Mk.3:22).

- being opposed by His own family (Mk.3:31-32).
- being rejected, hated, and opposed by listeners (Mt.13:53-58; Lk.4:28-29).
- being betrayed by a close friend (Mk.14:10-11, 18).
- being left alone, rejected, and forsaken by all of His friends (Mk.14:50).
- being tried before the high court of the land on the charge of treason (Jn.18:33).
- being executed by crucifixion, the worst possible death (Jn.19:16f).

Note that each of these experiences reaches the depth of humiliation. Christ stooped to the lowest point of human experience in every condition in order to become the *Perfect Sympathizer* (Savior). He can now identify with and feel for any person's circumstances.

**“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb.2:16-18).**

**“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:15-16).**

The point is this: no matter what the suffering is nor how terrible it may be, God showers us with the comfort of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He does not just give us some strength and comfort to bear the suffering; He gives us *all the strength and comfort* necessary to handle all the suffering. There are no trials too great, no pressures too heavy, that God cannot match them with the comfort of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has borne every trial and suffering for us.

**“And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not” (Lk.7:13).**

**“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (Jn.14:18).**

**“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).**

**4** (1:6-7) **Suffering—Trials—Comfort:** God uses suffering to stir up other believers. A person who suffers often becomes self-centered and begins to feel sorry for himself. He sometimes begins to feel self-pity and apathy and to want special attention. He may even become bitter. A believer must never let this happen. This is what these two verses are all about. Note that both the *affliction* and the *comfort* are for the same purposes. God uses both suffering and comfort in a believer to stir four things in other believers.

1. God uses suffering to stir consolation or comfort in others who suffer (see note, *Comfort*—2 Cor.1:3 for discussion).
2. God uses suffering to stir salvation. A person cannot trust God today and not trust Him tomorrow. A person cannot bless God when things are going well and curse God when things go bad. A person who truly believes in God trusts Him no matter the circumstance. He continues with God throughout life...
  - through the good times as well as the bad,
  - through suffering as well as health,
  - through rejection as well as acceptance,
  - through persecution as well as honor.

The point is this: when a believer sees another believer being comforted through some suffering, he is stirred to continue in the faith. He is stirred to continue on in the way of salvation no matter how great the suffering he has to bear.

**“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Mt.24:13).**

**“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:17).**

3. God uses suffering to stir endurance. Very simply, when we suffer and allow God to comfort us, others are encouraged to endure through their sufferings.

4. God uses suffering to stir sharing among believers. Believers who suffer are not to become self-centered, bitter, discouraged, apathetic, nor are they to begin complaining. They are to allow God to comfort them. This should be the hope and expectation of every believer. God expects us to suffer with the right attitude, to allow Him to share His comfort with us. We are to share the comfort of God with others, and believers should be able to expect us to bear up under suffering. They should be able to expect us to know the comfort of God so that we can share His comfort. How can a person share the comfort of God unless he has suffered and experienced the comfort of God?

⇒ God expects us to bear suffering and to receive His comfort.

⇒ Other believers expect us to bear suffering and to receive God's comfort.

Why? Because we are to be comforting and ministering and helping each other. But how can we comfort each other unless we have experienced the comfort of God through suffering?

God uses our suffering to stir sharing with others. We are all to be busy in sharing God's comfort with each other. This is to be the hope and expectation that we have in each other.

**“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Ph.2:1-2).**

**“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor.4:17-18).**

**5** (1:8-10) **Suffering—Trials—Comfort:** God uses suffering to teach trust. God allows great suffering. He allowed Paul, probably the greatest missionary of all time, to experience terrible suffering time and again. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Cor.1:8-10 for more discussion.) What was the suffering that is referred to in these three verses? We do not know. There is no record of it anywhere in Scripture. At first reading, it seems to be referring to the mob violence in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41). However, this is unlikely, for Paul apparently escaped the particular trouble mentioned in the account of Acts.

The point to see is that God allowed Paul to suffer some terrible trouble. And note the intensity of the trouble: “we were pressed [weighed down, crushed by a very heavy weight]”...

- out of measure.
- above strength.
- we despaired even for our life.
- we had the sentence of death in ourselves (sensed he was going to die).

Why does God allow His dear servant to go through such suffering, especially when he is such a great servant, a servant who labors so faithfully for God? There are two primary reasons.

1. Note that God is called the “God which raises the dead.” The one thing that man must learn is that he cannot save himself; he cannot raise himself up from the dead. Only God can save man and raise him up and give him eternal life. Suffering teaches man that he is helpless to save himself. If he wishes to be saved, he must trust God. Therefore, suffering teaches man that he is not self-sufficient. Man must have the presence and help of God if he wishes to conquer the sufferings of this world—the sufferings that eventually end in the suffering of death.

2. God allows suffering to teach a daily trust for deliverance. Note: Paul says that God continued to deliver him through the trials of life and that he continued to trust God to deliver him. The point is that we must trust God daily, trust Him to deliver us from daily sufferings.

**“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).**

**“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us” (2 Cor.1:10).**

**“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Tim.4:18).**

**“And deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:15).**

**“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).**

**“Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord” (Jer.1:8).**

**“He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions” (Dan.6:27).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(1:8-10) **Paul, Sufferings:** Paul suffered greatly.

1. Paul’s life was threatened by a huge, angry mob led by Demetrius, the silversmith (Acts 19:23-40).
2. Paul knew the trouble that awaited him in Asia. “Trials which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews...in every city...bonds and afflictions await me” (Acts 20:18-27).
3. Paul says Priscilla and Aquila...risked their lives for him (Ro.16:3-4).
4. Paul says Andronicus and Junia...were his fellow prisoners (Ro.16:7).
5. Paul expresses the great victory experienced through terrifying trials (1 Cor.4:9-13).
6. Paul fought with beasts at Ephesus (1 Cor.15:32).
7. Paul says he was crushed by some fearful burden which made him despair of life itself. He told himself it was the sentence of death (2 Cor.1:8-10).
8. Paul expresses an extremely anxious mood while the memory of his days at Ephesus was still vivid (2 Cor.4:8-12; 6:4-11; cp. Acts 20:18-19).
9. Paul lists his terrifying trials. Clement of Rome says that Paul “was seven times in bonds,” which seems to agree with Paul’s description (2 Cor.11:23-27).
10. Paul, at some point while a prisoner in Rome, experienced some sorrow so great that it threatened to crush him into a frightening despair: he had feared lest “sorrow upon sorrow” befall him (Ph.2:27).

**6** (1:11) **Suffering—Trials—Comfort:** God uses suffering to teach prayer and thanksgiving. This is a great lesson on suffering and prayer: the prayers of believers “help” us. Paul definitely says that the prayers of others helped him.

Prayer causes God to move in our behalf and to deliver us through our suffering. And when we are strengthened and delivered, everyone praises God. Intercessory prayer, prayer for others, works. God hears and answers prayer. He hears and answers our prayers for others. This is the reason Scripture stresses intercessory prayer.

**“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints” (Ro.15:30-31).**

**“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).**

**“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Ph.1:19).**

**“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Col.4:12).**

**“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jas.5:16).**

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| <p><b>1 He had a pure conscience</b><br/> a. A life of holiness<br/> b. A life of godly sincerity<br/> c. A life lived by God's grace, not in fleshly wisdom</p> <p><b>2 He did not write one thing &amp; mean another</b><br/> a. He meant only what he wrote<br/><br/> b. His only motive: To rejoice in the day of Christ</p> <p><b>3 He was not fickle &amp; indecisive in his plans</b><br/> a. He changed his plans</p> | <p><b>II. THE PERSONAL DEFENSE OF PAUL, 1:12-2:11</b></p> <p><b>A. Paul Answers Charges Against Himself: A Minister's Answer to His Attackers, 1:12-22</b></p> <p>12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.</p> <p>13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end;</p> <p>14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.</p> <p>15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might</p> | <p>have a second benefit</p> <p>16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea.</p> <p>17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay?</p> <p>18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.</p> <p>19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.</p> <p>20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.</p> <p>21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;</p> <p>22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.</p> | <p>1) To visit Corinth, 1 Cor.16:5<br/> 2) To "pass by...&amp; to come again"<br/> 3) He had done neither—to spare them, v.23</p> <p>b. He did not plan like a worldly man plans—selfishly</p> <p><b>4 He was not inconsistent in his message &amp; preaching</b><br/> a. For Jesus Christ was not fickle &amp; inconsistent<br/><br/> b. For all the promises of God are sure—in Christ</p> <p><b>5 He was just as much in Christ &amp; anointed as others</b><br/> a. Established by God<br/> b. Anointed by God<br/> c. Sealed by God<br/> d. Secured by the Spirit</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE PERSONAL DEFENSE OF PAUL, 1:12-2:11**

**A. Paul Answers Charges Against Himself: A Minister's Answer to His Attackers, 1:12-22**

(1:12-22) **Introduction—Paul, Accusations Against:** Paul was criticized with what seems an innumerable list of charges. These criticisms or charges, which called forth the writing of this letter, are found primarily in the following passages. (See *PAUL*, Master Subject Index.)

1. 2 Corinthians 1:12-21. The charges were:
  - a. Unholy and improper conduct (v.12).
  - b. Hidden and selfish motives (v.13; cp. 3:12).
  - c. Fickle and indecisive (v.15).
  - d. Inconsistent in his message and preaching (v.18; cp. 6:3).
  - e. Weak and shaky in the faith (v.21).
  - f. Unanointed for the ministry (v.21; cp. 3:5).
2. 2 Corinthians 3:1. The charge was that he praised himself and lacked letters of commendation.
3. 2 Corinthians 4:1-2. The charges were:
  - a. Being sometimes faint-hearted and slack.
  - b. Doing some shameful, disgraceful, scandalous things.
  - c. Walking about deceiving people.
  - d. Mishandling the Word of God.
4. 2 Corinthians 5:12-15. The charge was that Paul was beside himself, mad, insane.
5. 2 Corinthians 7:2. The charges were:
  - a. Wronging people; treating people unjustly.
  - b. Corrupting, injuring, and destroying people.
  - c. Defrauding, cheating, and stealing from people.
6. 2 Corinthians 10:1-13. The charges were:
  - a. Walking after the flesh (unsaved or carnal) (vs.1-2).
  - b. Being a coward (vs.1-2; cp. 11:32).
  - c. Not of Christ (v.7).
  - d. Claiming unauthorized authority (v.8).
  - e. Having a weak appearance (v.10).
  - f. Being a poor speaker (v.10; cp. 11:6).
  - g. Exceeding his authority (v.13).

7. 2 Corinthians 12:11-18. The charges were:
- Not being an apostle (v.11).
  - Damaging the church's image (v.13).
  - Taking money through middle men (vs.17-18; cp. 8:20-22. See note, pt.2—2 Cor.12:13-18.)

These criticisms, so long in number, point out one thing. Paul was an extraordinary servant of God. Several other factors point to the same conclusion: his experience of every conceivable trial and suffering (2 Cor.4:8-12; 11:23-33); his special vision of heaven and the revelations given at that time (2 Cor.12:1f); his unusual thorn to keep before his mind that he was but a mere man—except in the mission and responsibility to which God had called him (2 Cor.12:7f); and his dramatic vision of the Lord at conversion (Acts 9:1f).

It is probably true to say that God chose Paul, a mere man, to make of him an example for all men. For although most ministers and Christian believers...

- have suffered some of the things Paul suffered
- have been criticized for some of the things for which Paul was criticized
- have experienced some unspeakable spiritual experiences
- have been given a thorn of some suffering
- have perhaps been converted dramatically

...there is hardly a servant who would claim to have had all the experiences that Paul had. He was a servant to whom we can all look as an example and as an encouragement—no matter what trouble confronts us.

**“But the Lord said unto him [Ananias], Go thy way: for he [Paul] is a chosen vessel....” (Acts 9:15-16).**

The present passage gives Paul's answer to some of the charges against him.

- He had a pure conscience (v.12).
- He did not write one thing and mean another (v.13-14).
- He was not fickle and indecisive in his plans (v.15-17).
- He was not inconsistent in his message and preaching (v.18-20).
- He was just as much in Christ and anointed as others (v.21-22).

**1** (1:12) **Conscience—Believer, Life:** Paul had a pure conscience. He was not pricked by a violated conscience, nor consumed or nagged by guilt. The testimony of Paul's conscience was that of purity.

1. Paul lived a life of simplicity (aploteti), which means singleness of mind, a mind set upon God and being unmoved. It is the opposite of duplicity, of a dual mind and conduct. It means not being distracted or turned aside, not being double minded. It means setting one's life upon God and staying there. It means determining to follow God in all the simplicity or singleness of mind possible and doing it.

**“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Acts 2:46).**

**“For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil” (Ro.16:19).**

**“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor.11:3).**

**“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ” (Eph.6:5).**

**“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God” (Col.3:22).**

**“The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me” (Ps.116:6).**

**“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Ps.119:130).**

Note: some translations have the word “holiness” (hagioteti) instead of “simplicity.” This would simply mean that Paul lived a life of holiness, not of filth and uncleanness.

2. Paul lived a life of “godly sincerity” (eilikrineia theou) which means purity. It is the unadulterated, the pure that has been shaken and rolled through a sieve. It means the unadulterated, the pure that shows up unstained and untainted when examined in the sunlight. Paul is saying that he is pure, unstained, untainted, unadulterated in his conduct and behavior. This word is used only one other time by Paul in 1 Cor.5:8.

**“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ” (2 Cor.2:17).**

**“That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Ph.1:10).**

**“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Tit.2:7).**

**“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth [godly sincerity]” (1 Jn.3:18).**

**“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD” (Josh.24:14).**

3. Paul lived by the grace of God, not in fleshly wisdom. By “fleshly wisdom” is meant the human, natural, corrupt wisdom of men. It is the natural reasoning of the human mind. Paul is saying that he did not use his own reasonings...
- to set his mind upon God
  - to make new year resolutions
  - to discipline his body
  - to change his life
  - to govern his behavior
  - to control his conduct

What Paul did was set his mind upon the grace of God. By grace is meant the glorious favor of God in saving us and in showing us how to live. God’s grace has not only given us the written Word of God to tell us how to live; it has given us the living Word of God, His very own Son to live and walk as a Man upon the earth. God’s grace has given us Jesus Christ to demonstrate and show us exactly how God wants us to live. Jesus Christ shows us how to live with a pure conscience. Jesus Christ Himself is the gift of God, the grace of God to the world. God has favored the world by giving His very own Son to the world.

The point is this: Paul lived by God’s grace, by Jesus Christ. He set his mind and life upon Jesus Christ, not upon rules and principles thought up by his own fleshly mind. He gave his heart and life to Christ; therefore, God forgave his sins and removed his guilt. Thereby, he had a pure conscience.

**“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16).**

**“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (2 Cor.1:12).**

**“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim.1:5).**

**“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers” (1 Tim.1:9).**

**“Holding the mystery of the faith in pure conscience” (1 Tim.3:9).**

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

**“Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly” (Heb.13:18).**

**“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully” (1 Pt.2:19).**

**“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation [behavior] in Christ” (1 Pt.3:16).**

**2** (1:13-14) **Paul, Writings—Ministry:** Paul did not write with a hidden and deceptive motive. Some in the church were saying that Paul’s first letter (1 Corinthians) was full of deception, claiming that Paul did not really believe in nor live the things he had written about. It was charged that in writing about spiritual matters, he was only trying to sound pious and to secure the support of the church. Paul’s response was twofold.

1. He meant and lived exactly what he had written: all that he had written and only what he had written—no more, no less. He was utterly sincere, and what he had written was the truth. There was no hidden meaning nor any duplicity in what he said; what they read and understood was exactly what he meant.

2. He had only one motive: to rejoice in the day of Christ. The Corinthians had acknowledged his testimony in the past and rejoiced in it, even as he had in their testimony. His only motive was to write and live in such a way that he and God’s people could rejoice in the day of the Lord Jesus.

**3** (1:15-17) **Paul, Ministry:** Paul was not fickle and indecisive in his plans. The story lying behind this point is interesting. Paul had changed his plans, and by such he had left himself wide open to the charge of indecisiveness. Just what happened is unknown. One possibility is as follows.

1. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, telling the Corinthians that he was going to visit them on his way back from Macedonia (1 Cor.16:5).

2. He later made the plans mentioned here—to visit on his way to Macedonia and on his return—thus seeing them twice (2 Cor.1:15-16).

3. But he did neither; therefore, some in the church were saying that Paul could not be trusted; that he made promises that he did not keep; that he was indecisive, fickle and frivolous; that he could not be depended upon; that he was not definite; that he could not be trusted to stick to his word “yes, yes” or “no, no.”

There is possibly another reason for Paul changing his plans.

1. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, but he later heard that the letter had not achieved the desired effect.

2. So, he struck out for Corinth, making a quick visit. He was verbally attacked with severe accusations (2 Cor.1:12-22). His presence caused such a disturbance and had so little effect that he left the church a brokenhearted man. (See note—2 Cor.1:23-24 for more discussion.)

3. After regaining his composure and spiritual strength, he fired off a “harsh, severe letter” that has since been lost.

4. Sometime later, Paul so anxiously wanted to know the response of the Corinthians that he set out to meet Titus, the carrier of the letter, on his return trip. He meets Titus in Macedonia and learns that the letter went a long way in correcting the corruption in the church.

5. So Paul sits down to write again. He writes 2 Corinthians (his third letter to them) to further deal with the charges against himself and the corruption in the church.

In either case, what Paul is saying is that he was not indecisive and fickle. He changed his plans because he was the center of controversy and disturbance within the church—unjustifiably so—and the best way for him to handle the situation was to write and not visit (cp. 1 Cor.16:5; 2 Cor.1:15-17, 23-2:4).

**Thought 1.** Every believer must guard and protect what he promises. He should do everything he can to keep his word. It is the change of plans and the breaking of promises, whether justified or not, that causes the charge of being indecisive, fickle, untrustworthy, and undependable.

“Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?” (Jer.2:36).

“Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty” (Hos.10:2).

“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk.9:62).

“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (Jas.1:8).

**4** (1:18-20) **Paul, Accusations Against:** Paul was not inconsistent in his message and preaching. Some in the church were saying that Paul’s word could not be trusted, that *what he preached and taught could not be trusted*. If a man treats his word so lightly, how can anything he says be trusted? How can we be sure that God has revealed His Word to Paul?

Emphatically, Paul declares that his words were not the words of a vascillator nor were they inconsistent. Note how emphatically Paul answers those who oppose him: “*As God is true* so is what I preach: my words were not the words of a vascillator, not yes and no; not this is true, then turning around and saying this is false. I did not preach one thing and then another.” Paul gives two forceful reasons why he preached with strong affirmation and authority, two reasons why he insisted that what he preached and taught was the truth.

1. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, was not fickle and inconsistent. He was the absolute truth; therefore, He had to proclaim “yes”—that is, nothing but the truth. The Son of God could have nothing to do with uncertainty and inconsistency, with being untrustworthy and undependable. What he preached and taught had to be the truth.

“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)” (Acts 10:36).

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (Acts 17:2-3).

2. All the promises of God are sure and certain in Christ. In Christ all the promises of God...

- are “yes”—fulfilled in Him.
- are “amen”—so be it; yes, indeed.

And when we say “Amen,” we glorify God.

The point is this: the preaching of Paul, Timothy, and Silas to the Corinthians was not untrustworthy. It is dependable. It is the truth coming from the very words of the Son of God Himself. The very words and truth of the Son of God, of Jesus Christ, have been passed on down to the Corinthians through Paul and the other apostles. The preaching and teaching of both Christ and Paul are “Yes! The promises of God in Christ are true.” And “Amen! Yes indeed.”

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

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor.4:5).

“The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment” (Pr.12:19).

“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” (Zech.8:16).

“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Mal.2:6).

**5** (1:21-22) **Paul, Ministry:** Paul was just as much in Christ and anointed as others. The word “us” refers primarily to Paul. He is comparing himself with the Corinthians and he is also including those who oppose him. In no uncertain terms, Paul says that the same God who has worked in the Corinthians has also worked in him. Note the four great things that God does for believers.

1. God “establishes” (bebaion) believers. The word means to confirm; to make firm, steadfast, and constant.

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Ro.16:25).

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Col.2:6-7).

“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work” (2 Th.2:16-17).

2. God “anoints” believers: the word means to be consecrated and qualified for service.

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Lk.4:18).**

**“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (1 Jn.2:20).**

**“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).**

3. God “seals” (sphragizo) believers. The word means to mark, to stamp, to place a seal upon. God places His seal, His stamp, His mark upon believers.

**“[God] hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor.1:22).**

4. God gives “the earnest of the Spirit” in the hearts of believers. The word “earnest” (arrobos) means guarantee, security, deposit, payment. It was the first installment paid on an item to guarantee that the rest would be paid. It was the engagement ring that guaranteed the marriage.

God has given the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of eternal life. The Holy Spirit is an advanced payment, a down payment on His promise to believers.

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Ro.8:16).**

**“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:6).**

**“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1 Jn.3:24).**

**“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” (1 Jn.4:13).**

**“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth” (1 Jn.5:6).**

## 2 CORINTHIANS 1:23-2:4

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|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 It was best for him to spare the rod of discipline</b></p> <p>a. He is not a tyrant<br/>b. He is a helper &amp; friend<br/>c. Each stands in his own faith</p> | <p><b>B. Paul's Reasons for Delaying a Visit to the Church: When a Minister is Under Attack, 1:23-2:4</b></p> <p>23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.</p> <p>24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.</p> | <p>ness.</p> <p>2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?</p> <p>3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all.</p> <p>4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.</p> | <p><b>3 It was best for him not to conflict with those whom he loved</b></p> <p><b>4 It was best for him not to be attacked &amp; hurt time &amp; again</b></p> <p>a. To write a letter causes less hurt than a visit<br/>b. To be accused by those who should be his joy would hurt</p> <p><b>5 It was best for him to write a strong appeal<sup>ost</sup></b></p> |
| <p><b>CHAPTER 2</b></p>  |   |   |   |
| <p><b>2 It was best for him not to be the cause of pain</b></p>  | <p><b>But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heavi-</b></p>   |   |   |

### DIVISION II

#### THE PERSONAL DEFENSE OF PAUL, 1:12-2:11

#### **B. Paul's Reasons for Delaying a Visit to the Church: When a Minister is Under Attack, 1:23-2:4**

(1:23-2:4) **Introduction:** What should a minister do when he is under attack by some persons in the church? Paul faced the problem, and it almost broke his heart. In fact, he changed his plan of ministry because of it. He had planned to return to Corinth, but he could not because he was the center of controversy, being heavily criticized. Rumors and falsehoods were flying everywhere, and he stood no chance of ministering to the people. Therefore, he had to go elsewhere and do what he could for Corinth from a distance. In this passage Paul gives the reasons why he could not presently minister in Corinth.

1. It was best for him to spare the rod of discipline (v.23-24).
2. It was best for him not to be the cause of pain (Ch.2, v.1).
3. It was best for him not to conflict with those whom he loved (v.2).
4. It was best for him not to be attacked and hurt time and again (v.3).
5. It was best for him to write a strong appeal (v.4).

**1** (1:23-24) **Minister—Paul, Ministry:** it was best for the minister to spare the rod of discipline. Some within the Corinthian church were attacking Paul, accusing him of every conceivable weakness and fault (see note, *Paul, Accusations Against*—2 Cor. 1:12-22). Some in the church had also become corrupt, morally and doctrinally—living in sin and teaching contrary to the Word of God.

The point is this: Paul felt it best that he not be with the church in the midst of such controversy and corruption. Therefore, he changed his plans: he did not go to them as he had originally planned. Note why: if he had gone to them, it would have been necessary for him to carry the rod of discipline so long as they were corrupt. As the minister of God, he had spiritual authority over their welfare; therefore, he would be forced to deal with their sin and shame.

But note a crucial point: in mentioning ministerial authority, he does not mean...

- that he had dominion over their faith.
- that he had the authority of a tyrant.
- that he controlled their spiritual lives.
- that he could dictate and take authority over their behavior.

What he means was this: when he came to them, he wanted to be able to minister to them, to be as he says, a “helper of their joy.” This simply means that his job as a minister was...

- to be a helper.
- to work along with them.
- to join them in their efforts to grow.
- to help them in fulfilling their joy in Christ.

Note that Paul says, “By faith ye stand [firm].” They did not stand firm because of him, but because of their faith in Christ. Paul had no personal power to make people believe in Christ nor could he make people stand firm in Christ; he could only help them. They had to make the effort to fulfill the *joy of life* themselves. He was only the *helper* in their joy. He was only the minister to serve *with them*. They had to seek the joy of the Lord and the joy of life themselves.

Again, the point is this: Paul felt it was best that he not be with the church, for they were not standing firm in Christ. They were engulfed in controversy over him and in sin before God. If he had gone to them, he would have become involved in discipline and not ministry. He would not have been able to help them in their growth in Christ, not while they were unwilling to seek the *joy of life in Christ*.

“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pt.5:2-3).

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb.13:17).

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jer.3:15).

“And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord” (Jer.23:4).

**2** (2:1) **Minister—Paul, Ministry, Trips to Corinth:** it was best for the minister not to be the cause of pain. Note Paul’s words, “But I determined...that I would not come again to you *in heaviness*.” This just cannot apply to Paul’s first visit to Corinth, for his first visit did not end in failure and rejection. When Paul first left Corinth, he was filled with joy over the great success God had given. Therefore, he must be speaking about some other visit when the church rejected him and cut his heart, causing great heaviness.

Note also the statement in Chapter 1:23, “I came not as yet [ouk eti elthon] to Corinth.” The statement can be equally translated, “I came no more to Corinth.” This, too, points toward Paul having made a quick visit to Corinth after writing his first letter, a visit that resulted in the people rejecting him and breaking his heart (see *Introduction, Special Features*, pt.3—1 Corinthians for more discussion).

The point is strong: Paul loved and cared for the people and their church; he just did not want to be the cause of more pain and hurt; therefore, he stayed away.

**3** (2:2) **Minister—Paul, Ministry:** it was best for the minister not to conflict with those whom he loved. Very simply, if Paul returned to the church, his presence would only cause pain, not gladness and joy. His presence would only cause a gloom and heaviness to settle over the congregation because of the rumors and controversy about him. There could be no gladness or joy until the rumors and sin were stopped.

**Thought 1.** A minister’s presence should bring joy and cheer to a congregation, not conflict and stress.

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).

“A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken” (Pr.15:13).

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Pr.17:22).

**4** (2:3) **Minister—Paul, Ministry:** it was best for the minister not to be attacked and hurt time and again. Paul longed to minister, not to have controversy and sin swirling around him, certainly not in the church. Therefore, he had written a letter urging the church to put the Lord first and to quit the controversy. The letter which he had written is the discussion of the next verse and point. His point in this verse is tragic: if he had come to them, he would be cut and hurt just as he had been before. Those who should have brought joy to him would only have attacked and criticized him again. And he just could not bear to be hurt and sorrowed by their rejection again. He could not bear to be the center of controversy and disturbance again.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not” (Mt.23:37).

“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31).

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ” (Ph.3:18).

“But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord’s flock is carried away captive” (Jer.13:17).

“I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word” (Ps.119:158).

**5** (2:4) **Minister—Paul, Ministry:** it was best for the minister to write a strong appeal. Paul chose to write before he returned to the Corinthians. His heart was just broken; he could not face them and go through the pain and controversy again. The words “affliction and anguish” mean deep sorrow and distress, unbelievable pain and hurt, grief and heaviness of heart.

⇒ Note that Paul had shed many tears over the situation.

⇒ Note also that Paul had written the church not to cause grief for them, but that they might know his love for them—a love that overflowed with concern and care.

It should be kept in mind that Paul’s purpose and the church’s purpose is to reach and grow people. This was the beat of Paul’s heart. He wanted nothing to do with controversy and shame. He wanted to love and care for people.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 1:23-2:4

“For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established” (Ro.1:11).

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you” (Gal.4:19-20).

“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again” (Ph.1:23-26).

“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh” (Col.2:1).

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(2:4) **Paul, Writings:** the letter Paul refers to is either 1 Corinthians or a *painful letter* that has presently been lost (see note—2 Cor.1:15). This verse, when taken with the tone of the whole passage, gives great weight to a *painful* letter being written between 1 and 2 Corinthians. (See *Introduction, Special Features*, pt.3—1 Corinthians for more discussion.)

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 There was the offender</b><br/> a. Not a personal matter<br/> b. A matter for the whole church</p> <p><b>2 There was church discipline &amp; correction</b></p> <p><b>3 The first purpose for discipline: To restore the offender</b><br/> a. Thru forgiveness<br/> b. Thru comfort</p> | <p><b>C. Paul's Treatment of an Offender: Church Discipline &amp; Forgiveness, 2:5-11</b></p> <p>5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.</p> <p>6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.</p> <p>7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch</p> | <p>sorrow.</p> <p>8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.</p> <p>9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.</p> <p>10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;</p> <p>11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.</p> | <p>c. Thru godly repentance<br/> d. Thru love</p> <p><b>4 The second purpose for discipline: To free the church to fulfill its ministry</b></p> <p><b>5 The forgiving spirit of the minister (Paul)</b><br/> a. To help the church<br/> b. To please Christ</p> <p>c. To keep Satan from getting an advantage</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE PERSONAL DEFENSE OF PAUL, 1:12-2:11**

**C. Paul's Treatment of an Offender: Church Discipline & Forgiveness, 2:5-11**

(2:5-11) **Introduction:** When a person within the church is causing trouble, what should the church do? If the divisive person is criticizing and attacking the minister or others in the church, causing controversy and disturbance, should he be disciplined and corrected? If he is gathering a clique to oppose the minister or some program in the church, what should be done with him? Should he be left alone to do his damage and disturbance? Or, should he be dealt with? Church discipline is the subject of this passage.

1. There was the offender (v.5).
2. There was church discipline and correction (v.6).
3. The first purpose for discipline: to restore the offender (v.7-8).
4. The second purpose for discipline: to free the church to fulfill its ministry (v.9).
5. The forgiving spirit of the minister (Paul) (v.10-11).

**1** (2:5) **Church Discipline—Division:** there was the offender, a person who caused grief for the whole church. Some interpreters believe the offender was the immoral man dealt with in 1 Cor.5:1f. Others think he was the ringleader of those who opposed Paul. It is not necessary to know who the offender was to understand the passage; however, the weight of the Scripture points toward the offender being the ringleader of the opposition to Paul. How do we know this? Because the problem being dealt with was not immorality (v.1-11). There is no hint of a moral problem in these verses. The problem concerned someone who had mistreated Paul, someone who had made him the center of controversy, someone who had criticized and insulted him to such a degree that it had caused him severe pain and heaviness of heart (see outline and notes—2 Cor.1:23-2:4).

The point is this: there was a person in the church who was attacking the minister of God, Paul. The man was stirring up controversy and causing a great disturbance, and terrible grief and pain. The name and ministry of the church were being affected throughout the community.

Note a crucial point: the attacks against the minister, Paul, were not just a personal matter; that is, the attacks did not just affect the minister. The attacks affected the whole church. The man was guilty of disturbing and hurting the whole church—a very serious offense to God.

⇒ The offender needed to be dealt with lest he be destroyed.

**“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are [you is plural, meaning the church]” (1 Cor.3:17).**

⇒ The offender needed to be dealt with in order to free the minister to serve without the hindrance of controversy.

**“Who art thou that judgest another man's servant [God's servant]? to his own master [God] he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand” (Ro.14:4).**

⇒ The offender needed to be dealt with in order to free the church from controversy, so that it could focus upon the ministry.

**“Only let your conversation [conduct, behavior] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

**2** (2:6) **Church Discipline—Division:** there was church discipline and correction. Apparently, one person had initially poisoned and led a clique of people to oppose Paul. Paul had insisted that the church deal with the problem and discipline the offender. Note two points.

1. The church voted on the matter and the majority agreed. They did discipline the offender. Note that the vote was not unanimous; it was only a majority (“many”).
2. Some in the church felt the discipline was not stern enough. They wanted the offender to be disciplined more severely.

**Thought 1.** There have been and always will be questions and different opinions about church discipline. Just like Corinth...

- some feel that the church should discipline; others feel that it should not discipline.
- some feel that discipline should be light; others feel that it should be more heavy-handed.

There are three lessons seen in this passage thus far:

1. A man was committing so much wrong in the Corinthian church that the minister felt the man had to be disciplined and corrected. Therefore, the minister encouraged the church to deal with the matter.
2. The church followed the advice of the minister and considered the matter, and the majority of the church members agreed. They disciplined and corrected the offender.
3. Not everyone agreed with the discipline, nor with the severity of the discipline. However, the church did discipline the man, and the man was corrected despite differences of opinion. The minister and the majority of church members did rule.

“I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare” (2 Cor.13:2).

“Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness [discipline], according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction” (2 Cor.13:10).

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).

“A man that is an *heretick* after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself” (Tit.3:10-11).

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb.13:17).

**3** (2:7-8) **Church Discipline:** the first purpose for discipline is the restoration of the offender. This is critical to note: it is one of the two major purposes for church discipline. Any believer who attacks God’s minister and disturbs the church must be corrected. The offending brother must be corrected not only for the sake of the church and the minister, but for his own sake. The offending believer must be restored to the point that he loves God and the people of God, including the minister of God.

Note that the man had repented of his sin: he was gripped with sorrow—much sorrow (v.7). Therefore, the purpose of the discipline had been achieved. Hence, Paul encouraged the church to restore him. Note the four things involved in restoration.

1. There is the *forgiveness of the church*. The man had committed a terrible sin: criticizing and attacking God’s minister, disturbing the fellowship of the church, and affecting the name and witness of the church in the community. There was the danger of some church members holding bad feelings and not forgiving the man. The exhortation of Paul and Scripture is strong: “Forgive him.”

Forgiveness would also involve bringing the person back into the fellowship of the church if he had been excommunicated or had his membership withdrawn.

“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (Mk.11:25).

“And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil” (Lk.11:4).

“And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Lk.17:4).

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ hath forgiven you” (Col.3:13).

2. There is the comfort or the encouragement of the church. The man needed to be comforted and encouraged. Unquestionably, he felt shame and embarrassment, for he had been the focus of church-wide attention and discipline. He would also be wondering just how people really felt about him. Would they be forgiving and accepting or withdrawn and begrudging. The man had created a scandal and hurt both Paul and the church; therefore, the only way he could ever be comforted and relieved of guilt would be for both Paul and the church to strengthen him in that comfort and assurance.

“So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” (2 Cor.2:7).

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:11-14).

“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God” (Is.40:1).

3. There is the repentance of the offender. The man who attacked Paul had repented. He had demonstrated a repentant, godly sorrow (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Godly Sorrow*—2 Cor.7:10). Therefore, it was time for restoration. The purpose for the discipline had been achieved.

However, note Paul’s concern and warning. There is danger that the discipline can last too long and be too severe. There is a point at which the discipline can become destructive instead of corrective. Where is that point? The offender must be *forgiven and comforted*...

- before he is “swallowed up with sorrow,” that is, before he falls into deep depression and despair.

Once he has repented and demonstrated genuine sorrow, he is to be restored back into the fellowship of the church.

“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations [arguments, discussions]” (Ro.14:1).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

4. There is the assurance and demonstration of love by the church. The believers were to go out of their way to show the man that he was loved. The discipline and correction were only to straighten out the mess and to get everyone back on the track of loving one another and ministering for the Lord.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you [sacrificially]” (Jn.15:12).

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind [loving] one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:31-32).

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another [sacrificially]” (1 Jn.4:10-11).

**4** (2:9) **Church Discipline:** the second purpose for the discipline was the obedience of the church to its mission. Very simply, as long as the church allowed the man to continue his disturbance, the church could not focus upon its mission and ministry. It could not do its work; it was being disobedient to God, allowing controversy and division to rule. Its fellowship was being ruined, and its very purpose for being upon earth was being drastically affected.

The point is this: Paul had instructed the church to discipline the offender in order to *prove its obedience* to Christ.

- ⇒ If the church was concerned about obeying Christ, then it had to deal with the man.
- ⇒ If the church was not concerned with obeying Christ, then it would continue to allow its minister to be attacked, focusing its attention on controversy instead of on its ministry.

As stated, the second purpose for disciplining the offender was to free the church from controversy, allowing it to focus upon its mission and ministry.

It is through the correction of offenders and disturbances that the church proves...

- its love for the offending brother and its minister.
- obedience to Christ “in all things.”

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).

**“Only let your conversation [conduct, behavior] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

**5** (2:10-11) **Church Discipline:** there was the forgiving spirit of the minister. Paul says that he forgave the man for three reasons.

1. Paul forgave the man in order to help the church and himself. The very foundation and nature of the church is forgiveness. The church exists because God forgives our sins. Therefore, if the church refuses to forgive a person who truly repents, the church is denying its very nature and purpose for existing. The church has no reason for ever existing if it does not forgive and restore people into the fellowship.

The point is this: the minister must take the lead in forgiving and in teaching forgiveness. Therefore, Paul forgave the man and encouraged the Corinthian church to forgive the man as well. As Paul says, “I forgave it [the wrong done me], for your sakes.”

2. Paul forgave the man for the sake of Christ. “In the person of Christ” means in the presence or face of Christ, that is, before Christ. Christ is so displeased with an unforgiving spirit, that he refuses to forgive the sins of any man who is unforgiving. The heart of Christ pours out in forgiveness; therefore, he expects all men to be forgiving of others. Paul loved Christ, loved Him with all of his heart; therefore, Paul could not cut the heart of Christ with an unforgiving spirit. Paul had to forgive the man for the sake of Christ.

3. Paul forgave the man to keep Satan from getting an advantage. The results would have been tragic.

- a. Satan would have had an advantage over the man. If the church had not forgiven him...
  - he would have remained out of the church, *out in the world*.
  - he would have been subject to falling into depression and despair, to being swallowed up with sorrow.
- b. Satan would have had an advantage over Paul. Paul’s ministry would have become ineffective, for God could no longer bless a man who did not do what he was preaching: forgiving the sins of men.
- c. Satan would have had an advantage over the church for the same reason. God would not be able to use the church any longer, for it would be denying its very purpose for existing. Instead of opening its doors to the repentant sinner, it would be closing its doors to meeting the needs of people—people who are ever so precious to God.

Note what Paul says: “We are not ignorant of his [Satan’s] devices.” Satan has great influence upon men and their affairs. Believers must not be ignorant of his devices to tempt and destroy people.

**“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil” (Eph.4:26-27).**

**“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph.6:10-11).**

**“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jas.4:7).**

**“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pt.5:8-9).**

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| <p><b>1 The minister is gripped with a passion</b><br/>                 a. The passion to preach<br/><br/>                 b. The passion to help churches</p> <p><b>2 The minister always triumphs in Christ</b></p> | <p><b>III. THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16</b></p> <p><b>A. The Ministry: An Overview, 2:12-17</b></p> <p>12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,<br/>                 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.<br/>                 14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth</p> | <p>us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.<br/>                 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:<br/>                 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?<br/>                 17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.</p> | <p>a. Wrought by God<br/>                 b. Wrought by spreading the knowledge of God</p> <p><b>3 The minister is a sweet fragrance to God</b></p> <p>a. He is the fragrance of life to the saved<br/>                 b. He is the fragrance of death to the perishing</p> <p><b>4 The minister has stern demands laid upon him</b><br/>                 a. Not to corrupt God's Word<br/>                 b. To be sincere<br/>                 c. To be of God<br/>                 d. To live in God's sight<br/>                 e. To speak in Christ</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

**A. The Ministry: An Overview, 2:12-17**

(2:12-17) **Introduction:** this is a clear picture of the minister and the ministry to which God has called him. It is a strong challenge for the minister to be just what God has called him to be and to do just what God has called him to do.

1. The minister is gripped with a passion (v.12-13).
2. The minister always triumphs in Christ (v.14).
3. The minister is a sweet fragrance to God (v.15-16).
4. The minister has stern demands laid upon him (v.16-17).

**1** (2:12-13) **Minister—Ministry:** the minister is gripped by a burning passion to preach and a deep concern for troubled churches. Paul is still describing his great love and concern for the believers in the Corinthian church (v.4).

When he was forced to leave Ephesus (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Cor.1:8-10), he had planned to go to Corinth, but the personal attacks against him by some members made it unwise (see outline and notes—2 Cor.1:23-2:4). Instead of making a personal visit, he felt it would be much wiser to try to solve the problem by writing a stern letter to them. He apparently sent Titus to Corinth with the stern letter and with instructions to do what he could to help the church in correcting the controversy. After he had done all he could, Titus was supposed to meet Paul in Troas where Paul would be ministering. The point is twofold.

1. The minister had a burning passion to preach Christ. Paul could not sit still; he had to preach Christ. He wanted to minister in Corinth, but the Corinthian church had allowed a clique to form against him. Therefore, it was impossible to minister there. But Paul could not cease to minister; God had called him and he could not fail God. The passion to preach Christ burned within him. The Corinthians might shut the door to his ministering among them, but they could not stop him from ministering elsewhere. Therefore, he changed his plans; he went to Troas. And because he was faithful in seeking opportunities to preach and minister, the Lord opened a great door of ministry for him at Troas.

“...necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God” (Lk.9:60).

“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

2. The minister had a deep concern for troubled churches. The Corinthian church was in trouble, serious trouble. As with any faithful minister, Paul's heart reached out to all involved. Week after week passed, apparently stretching into several months, and no word had come from Titus about the welfare of the Corinthian church. Paul was anxious and concerned. As he said, “I had no rest [relief] in my spirit.” The situation got to Paul: he could not stand the suspense any longer. Therefore, he struck out for Macedonia looking for Titus along the great highway stretching across the province.

“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31).

“Beside, those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (2 Cor.11:28).

“For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults” (2 Cor.12:20).

“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (Gal.4:11).

“Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith” (1 Th.3:10).

**2** (2:14) **Minister—Victory:** the minister always triumphs in Christ. Paul found Titus, and he covers the meeting in Chapter 7. The news was glorious: the church had responded and experienced revival. Just the thought of what had happened in the church caused Paul to break forth in thanksgiving. Paul had every reason to thank God, for he had been heavily criticized and attacked by a clique in the church and the church was about to be destroyed by controversy and divisiveness. He thanked God for the glorious triumph which God always gives to His ministers through Christ. God never fails His ministers, and He had not failed Paul. He had caused Paul to *triumph in Christ*.

The picture of triumph is descriptive. It is the picture of a military commander returning to Rome after some great victory. The commander was always welcomed into the city in a great march of triumph. Most people have seen such scenes in films either on television or in movies.

What Paul pictures is the triumph of Christ. He sees God giving Christ the glorious and triumphant victory as the Word of God is proclaimed throughout the world. And Paul sees himself, as a minister of God, being a part of that glorious and triumphant victory.

Note several points.

1. It is God who causes the minister to triumph. God Himself is looking after the minister, never taking His eyes or care off His dear servant. The journey may sometimes get rough, and the minister may even be attacked and abused, but God never forsakes the minister.

2. God always causes the minister to triumph over all attacks and all trouble and problems. The true minister of God will never know defeat—not permanently. Even if he falls and fails for a period of time, God will eventually reach him and restore him and continue to use him. God will *always* cause His dear servant to triumph over all. There is nothing, absolutely nothing that can conquer and gain the final victory and triumph over God’s minister—not if he is truly called of God. The glorious triumph over all is assured.

3. The triumph of the minister is “*in Christ*” and in Christ alone. The minister must...

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| • believe in Christ   | • minister in Christ |
| • trust in Christ     | • live in Christ     |
| • be called in Christ | • move in Christ     |
| • serve in Christ     | • be in Christ       |

The minister is no different from anyone else: his only victory is in Christ. He must trust and live in Christ just as everyone else. He is not acceptable to God apart from Christ. His acceptance before God is based upon the same thing as everyone else’s: faith in Christ. Therefore, to triumph “*in Christ*” the minister must be “in Christ”; that is, he must *believe in and live in Christ*. The minister triumphs in Christ and in Christ alone.

4. God uses the minister to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere. This is the reason God causes the minister to triumph: to spread the glorious message of Christ all over the world. God is out to reach every person He can: to see to it that every person knows about the love of Christ. The word “savour” simply means fragrance or aroma, like the fragrance of a flower. God spreads the fragrance of His Word through His ministers.

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Ro.8:35-37).

“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place” (2 Cor.2:14).

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 Jn.5:4-5).

“And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations” (Rev.2:26).

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels” (Rev.3:5).

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev.3:12).

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev.3:21).

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Rev.21:7).

**3** (2:15-16) **Minister:** the minister is a sweet fragrance to God, for he spreads the message of Christ among the saved and the perishing. The picture is that of a flower. The flower is a sweet fragrance to men; therefore, the flower is acceptable to men. The minister is a sweet fragrance to God; therefore, the minister is *acceptable* to God. But it means more than just being acceptable, much more. It means this: to God the minister is...

- |              |              |                          |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| • acceptable | • satisfying | • worthy of attention    |
| • pleasing   | • fulfilling | • worthy of care         |
| • enjoyable  | • precious   | • worthy of preservation |

**Thought 1.** This is a most reassuring and comforting truth to the minister, especially the minister who is under attack as Paul had been. The minister is precious, very precious to God; he is under the wing of God's eternal love and care.

Note what it is that makes the minister a sweet fragrance to God: it is the fact that the minister spreads the message ("knowledge") of Christ. And note to whom he spreads it: to both the saved and the perishing. The minister is the fragrance of life to those who are saved and the fragrance of death to those who perish. Wherever the faithful minister is, he spreads the fragrance of life and death, the message that men can have life in Christ or else the message that men shall die without Christ—die and be separated from God eternally.

Picture the faithful minister in a room with a group of people. The minister's presence and words give off a fragrance to everyone present.

1. To the saved, the minister represents the life that is in Christ, the fact that our lives are to be dedicated to God and ministering to the needs of people. The minister spreads the fragrance of "life unto life," that people can live now and live forever.

2. To the unsaved (those who perish), the minister represents death, the fact that one does not believe in the life of Christ represented by the minister. Therefore, the minister spreads the fragrance of death unto death, that people are dead to God now and shall be eternally dead to God in the hereafter.

**Thought 1.** The message of Christ is either life or death to a person.

1) Christ is either counted precious and accepted or counted unworthy and rejected.

**"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner" (1 Pt.2:7).**

2) Christ is either loved as the Light of the world or hated as the Light of condemnation.

**"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (Jn.3:19-20).**

**4** (2:16-17) **Minister:** the minister has stringent demands laid upon him. The minister has an awesome responsibility. Just imagine being responsible for a message that involves both *eternal life and eternal death*.

Who is sufficient or qualified for such a task? Is any man? Paul says, "Yes," but not many. The only men who are qualified are those who meet five stringent demands.

**"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim.1:12).**

1. The qualified man does not "corrupt the word of God." The word "corrupt" (*kapeleuontes*) is taken from an old word meaning huckster or peddler. It means to peddle, to adulterate, to whittle down, to contaminate, to tamper with the Word of God. It means to mix other things into the gospel, for example, personal ideas, speculations, the latest religious fads or novel ideas.

**"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Mt.22:29).**

**"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (2 Cor.2:17).**

**"But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor.4:2).**

2. The qualified man is "sincere" (*eilikrineia*). This means that the minister and his motives are pure and unadulterated, that he and his motives have been shaken and rolled through a sieve. The minister is unstained and untainted when inspected. He is in the ministry to serve God and to help people. He is not in the ministry because he respects it as a profession, nor for any other reason. God has called him, and he is gripped by the necessity to serve God.

**“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ” (2 Cor.2:17).**

**“That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Ph.1:10).**

**“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Tit.2:7).**

3. The qualified man is “of God.” He is called, commissioned, and sent by God; and he lives by the grace and strength of God and for God. It also means that he is “of God,” of God’s nature and character, living a *godly life*.

**“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children” (Eph.5:1).**

**“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pt.1:15-16).**

4. The qualified man lives “in the sight of God.” He is conscious and aware of God’s presence, knowing that he lives and moves in the sight of God every moment of every day. He knows...

- that God *sees* him in his every need; therefore, God looks after and cares for him.
- that God *sees* everything he does; therefore, he walks carefully and righteously so that he can please God.

**“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:3-6).**

**“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever” (Heb.13:20-21).**

5. The qualified man “speaks in Christ.” He speaks in the communion and fellowship and power of Christ. He does not speak in his own energy and strength, but in the energy and strength of Christ. He lives in fellowship with Christ; therefore, when he witnesses and preaches, he is able to share the fellowship and presence of Christ under the anointing of the Lord’s presence.

**“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Jn.15:4-7).**

**“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:20).**

**“And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Lk.24:32).**

**“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor.1:9).**

**“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb.10:22).**

**“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).**

**“The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth” (Ps.145:18).**

| CHAPTER 3   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|   | <b>B. The Ministry: Its Credentials, 3:1-5</b>  | 3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. | <b>3 Credential 2: Lives written by Christ through the minister</b> |
| <b>1 The minister's credentials are not letters of commendation</b> | Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? | 4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:  | <b>4 Credential 3: Being qualified &amp; made fit by God</b>        |
| <b>2 Credential 1: Lives written upon the minister's heart</b>      | 2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:  | 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;  |   |

### DIVISION III

#### THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16

##### B. The Ministry: Its Credentials, 3:1-5

(3:1-5) **Introduction:** churches often have to consider the credentials of ministers, in particular when they are either seeking a new minister or handling some problem surrounding a minister. What are the credentials that should be considered? The present passage gives several important considerations.

1. The minister's credentials are not letters of commendation (v.1).
2. Credential 1: lives written upon the minister's heart (v.2).
3. Credential 2: lives written by Christ through the minister (v.3).
4. Credential 3: being qualified and made fit by God (v.4-5).

- 1** (3:1) **Ministers, Qualification:** the minister's credentials are not letters of commendation. There were those in the Corinthian church who accused Paul...
- of pride and arrogance
  - of acting as though he was *the* messenger of God, more special than others
  - of claiming that what he said was the Word of God itself and what others said was less than the Word of God
  - of acting as though he had a corner on the truth
  - of praising and commending himself
  - of exalting himself above others

Paul had just declared that he did not corrupt the Word of God as many do, and that his ministry was based upon a true call of God (2 Cor.2:17). He knew that those who opposed him were going to jump on his claim and again accuse him of exalting himself—accuse him of acting as though he was *the* messenger of God who had a corner on the truth. Therefore, Paul begins to head off and prevent the accusation.

Very simply, why should the Corinthians or anyone else listen to Paul, the minister? What credentials does he have that should cause people to listen to him and his claims?

In answering the questions and in establishing his credentials, there is one basic truth: the minister's credentials are not letters of commendation. Men always have and probably always will place some confidence in letters of reference or commendation, but as all responsible people know, such letters are often exaggerated and uncertain. They are not always accurate or truthful. Therefore, a person is not really known until he has proven himself on some field of ministry or in some position.

Note: Paul says that some in the Corinthian church had used letters of reference to recommend themselves to the church. This apparently refers to some other teachers or ministers in the church, perhaps the very ones who were opposing Paul. Paul's point is this: his commendation to the church is not letters of reference, but something of far more value. The credentials he presents to the church mean much more, far more than letters of commendation.

**Thought 1.** The minister's letters of commendation are not his primary credentials. He is not qualified for the ministry because some people think highly of him, nor because some people recommend that he minister or enter the ministry. There are some qualifications, some credentials that mean far more than excellent letters of commendation.

- 2** (3:2) **Minister—Paul, Ministry:** the first credential of the minister is the human lives written upon his heart. Two striking things are being said.
1. Paul says that the Corinthian believers were written upon his heart. Anyone who knew him could see that he deeply cared for the Corinthian church; that he was always praying for them and expressing love and concern for them. He cherished them. They were dear to him, so dear that he could actually say that they were *written in his heart*.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 3:1-5

The point is this: people are far more important than letters. A minister's commendation is not letters of recommendation, but a heart...

- that has people written upon it
- that endears people to itself
- that loves and cares for people
- that deeply feels for people
- that cannot let people go
- that must reach and grow people for Christ

This is the true letter of commendation that should matter to a church: a heart that has people written upon it.

2. Paul says that the fact was known and read by all men. Anyone could look and read the lives of the Corinthian believers and tell that they were in the heart of Paul. Paul had gone to Corinth to minister to the people, and some had been reached and others grown in the Lord. Their testimony was his letter of commendation, and their testimony before the world was far more important than a letter of commendation.

**Thought 1.** A minister's greatest commendation is the changed lives of people. The fact that a minister has led people to Christ and grown them in Christ speaks far more than letters of commendation.

**“Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord” (1 Cor.9:1-2).**

**“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (1 Th.2:19-20).**

**“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves” (1 Th.5:12-13).**

**“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim.5:17).**

**“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation” (Heb.13:7).**

**Thought 2.** The believer is said to be “read by all men.” Day by day believers must be careful what they write by their lives, for the public is closely observing and reading exactly what they do.

**3** (3:3) **Minister—Paul, Ministry:** the second credential of the minister is the lives written by Christ *through* the minister. This is a critical point to note, for the minister is not the one who converts and changes the lives of people.

1. It is Christ and Christ alone who converts and grows people.

- a. The lives of believers are said to be “the epistle [letter] of Christ.” Christ is the author of the believer's life, the author of his conversion and righteousness. Whatever change is wrought in the believer's life—whatever love, joy, peace, and assurance of life—is all due to Christ.
- b. The lives of believers are not written with ink which men use, but with the *Spirit of the living God*. Christ uses the Spirit of God when He wishes to communicate a message to men.
  - ⇒ He does not write the message upon tables of stone as He did when He gave the commandments to Moses.
  - ⇒ he writes upon the fleshy tables of the heart. He puts his message upon the hearts of men, which causes men to live changed lives.

2. It is the minister who ministers to the lives of believers. Note the words “ministered by us.” Paul is saying that Christ creates the letter, the lives of believers, and the minister looks after and cares for it.

**Thought 1.** The greatest commendation that a minister can have is not letters of recommendation, but...

- Christ written in the lives of people
- the Spirit of the living God written in the conduct and behavior of people
- the law of God written upon the hearts of people

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

**“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pt.1:23).**

**“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).**

**4** (3:4-5) **Minister—Paul, Ministry:** the third credential is the minister being qualified and made fit by God. Paul declares two significant points about his ministry.

1. He was made fit for the ministry through Christ. He was not sufficient for the ministry, not in and of himself. His only sufficiency was of God. He could not make himself fit for the ministry even if he had wished to do so. He had no power...

- to change the heart of a person
- to give life to a person

## 2 CORINTHIANS 3:1-5

- to give the assurance and security of God's presence and care to a person.
- to give the Spirit of God to a person.
- to write the law of God in the heart of a person.

Only Christ could do such spiritual work; therefore, only Christ can qualify and fit the minister to share God's Word with people. The gift of life and the power to give life is of God and of God alone.

⇒ Therefore, no man could share the gift of life unless God called him to share it.

⇒ And no man has the power to share the gift of life unless God gives him the power.

2. Note the words "to God-ward." The words mean that the minister serves God and that he serves before God, before the gaze and inspection of God. The minister is not only qualified and made fit by God, he is responsible to God for how he ministers. The minister has no greater commendation than the fact that he is qualified and fitted for the ministry by both Christ and God.

The point is striking: a minister's credentials are the presence and power of Christ in his life...

- the fact that God is moving and working in and through his ministry
- the fact that great works are being done that could not be done by the sufficiency of men
- the fact that great works are being done that could be done only by God

**"John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (Jn.3:27).**

**"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (Jn.15:4-5).**

**"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor.3:5).**

**"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim.1:12).**

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p><b>1 The minister serves a new covenant</b></p> <p><b>2 The old was a written law; the new is the Spirit</b></p> <p><b>3 The old kills; the new gives life</b></p> <p><b>4 The old was glorious; the new is more glorious</b><br/>a. Illust. by Moses</p> <p>b. Is clearly evident</p> <p><b>5 The old brought condemnation; the new brings righteousness</b></p> <p><b>6 The old faded away; the</b></p> | <p><b>C. The Ministry: Its New Covenant, 3:6-18</b></p> <p>6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.</p> <p>7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:</p> <p>8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?</p> <p>9 For the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.</p> <p>10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.</p> <p>11 For if that which is done</p> | <p>away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.</p> <p>12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:</p> <p>13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:</p> <p>14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.</p> <p>15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.</p> <p>16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.</p> <p>17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.</p> <p>18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.</p> | <p><b>new is permanent</b></p> <p><b>7 The old spoke with veiled meanings; the new speaks with plain meaning</b><br/>a. Veiled meanings illustrated by Moses</p> <p>b. Veiled understanding remains even today under the old covenant</p> <p>c. Veiled understanding is removed only by turning to Christ, Ex.34:35</p> <p><b>8 The new covenant brings liberty through the Lord Jesus Christ</b><br/>a. In Him is liberty<br/>b. In beholding Him we are transformed into His image</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

**C. The Ministry: Its New Covenant, 3:6-18**

(3:6-18) **Introduction:** this is a graphic picture of the minister's ministry—he serves the new covenant. This passage is also a graphic contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant.

1. The minister serves a new covenant (v.6).
2. The old was a written law; the new is the Spirit (v.6).
3. The old kills; the new gives life (v.6).
4. The old was glorious; the new is more glorious (v.7-8).
5. The old brought condemnation; the new brings righteousness (v.9-10).
6. The old faded away; the new is permanent (v.11).
7. The old spoke with veiled meanings; the new speaks with plain meaning (v.12-16).
8. The new covenant brings liberty through the Lord Jesus Christ (v.17-18).

**1** (3:6) **Covenant—Minister:** the minister serves the new covenant. The word "testament" (diathekes) is better translated *covenant*. It means an agreement made between two parties; a contract drawn up between two or more people; a special relationship set up and established between persons. In the Old Testament period of history, God had set up an old covenant between Himself and man which is here called the covenant of the letter. This simply means a written covenant or the covenant of the law. Since Christ, He has set up a *new covenant* with man which is here called the "new covenant of the Spirit." This is simply another way of describing the covenant of grace or of the gospel (Heb.8:8). Vine points out that this covenant is called the "new" (Heb.9:15), the "second" (Heb.8:7), and the "better" (Heb.7:22). (*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co. No date listed.)

The point is this: God used to deal with man by law, but now He deals with man *through the Holy Spirit*. The law was the old covenant between God and man. The Spirit is the new covenant between God and man. Today, since Christ, the minister serves the new covenant of the Spirit, not the old covenant of the law.

This is significant for the minister: it means that the new covenant has to do with God's Spirit, that is, with a *personal relationship* with God. Therefore, the only way a minister can share the new covenant of God's Spirit with people is for God to allow Him. *It is God's presence and God's Spirit* being dealt with; therefore, no man can share God's presence and God's Spirit unless God allows him. God has to make the man fit, able, and adequate. This is what Paul is saying. God has allowed us to share His Spirit, His new covenant. God *has called us* and qualified and equipped us to minister the new covenant. And the new covenant of His Spirit—of a personal relationship with Him—is far superior to the old covenant.

**2** (3:6) **Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant was a written law; the new covenant is the Spirit of God Himself. The old covenant was written words and letters, a written document, a set of laws that men had to obey (Ex.24:1-8). The fact to note is this: the law was external; it sat outside man and insisted that man subject himself to the rule and obey it.

The new covenant is different, entirely different. It is internal, within man. It is a *personal relationship* with God, a relationship that is created by God Himself. When a person believes in God's Son, God places His Spirit in the heart of the person, and the person becomes a *Spirit filled* person.

**"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jn.14:26).**

**"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor.3:16).**

**"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

**3** (3:6) **Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant or law killed; the new covenant gives life. How does the law kill? There are two ways.

First, when society sets a law before a man, he has to obey it. If he fails to obey it, he breaks and severs his relationship with society and he has to bear the punishment of a broken and severed relationship. He has to be put away, cut off, separated from society. The punishment for breaking God's law is the same: when a man breaks God's law, he breaks and severs his relationship with God. He cuts himself off from God; he has no relationship, no connection, no life with God. The law kills him, his relationship and life with God.

Second, the law is only letters and words written on paper, stone, or wood. It is external and outside man. It only commands; it does not give man the power to do the command. The will, ability, and power to obey are entirely left up to the man. The man may wish to keep the commandment, but he may not have the will or power to keep it. Therefore, he breaks the law, and the law kills him. It should be noted that the law not only kills man externally, but through guilt and despair, it kills his human spirit and will, sapping his energy, ambition, drive, and hope.

**"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Ro.10:5).**

**"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal.3:10).**

**"The man that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal.3:12).**

The new covenant is different, wonderfully different. The Spirit gives life. He gives life by doing two things.

1. The Holy Spirit enters a believer's life, imparting the "divine nature" of God to him (2 Pt.1:4). The believer becomes a "new creation," a "new man," a spiritual man with a transformed mind that focuses upon God.

**"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pt.1:4).**

**"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor.5:17).**

**"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph.4:24).**

**"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col.3:10).**

2. The Holy Spirit infuses the desire to please God. And, although the new man fails often, he is pricked by the indwelling Spirit of God to confess, ask forgiveness, and to cast himself afresh upon the strength and care of God. His whole desire is now to trust God, to depend upon Him completely for life and breath and all the necessities of life. Simply put, his whole life is now wrapped up in God and the things of God.

**"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn.1:9).**

**"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Pt.5:7).**

**"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt.6:33).**

**4** (3:7-8) **Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant or law was glorious; the new covenant is more glorious.

1. How can the law which kills and ministers death be said to be glorious?

⇒ The law was glorious in that it was given to Moses by God Himself—face to face.

⇒ The law was glorious in that it reveals the nature of God Himself, that He is holy and righteous and must be approached in holiness and righteousness.

⇒ The law was glorious in that it pointed men to their desperate need for salvation. It showed men as nothing else could that they were sinners and short of God's glory and desperately needed a Savior.

The glory of the old covenant is illustrated by Moses' experience in receiving the law from God. God Himself gave Moses the law face to face, and being in the presence of God caused Moses' face to shine with the glory of God. In fact, the glory upon Moses' face was so bright, the people could not continually look upon him (Ex.34:30).

Note what Paul says: the glory of God which was upon Moses' face was to pass away. Paul is saying that this was a symbol of God upon the old covenant. The glory of God upon the old covenant was to pass away. The old covenant, the law, was meant to be only a temporary arrangement between God and man.

2. The new covenant is different, gloriously different. The difference is clearly seen in the thought provoking question asked: if the old covenant that ministered death was glorious, how shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? The answer is obvious: the ministry of the Spirit is to give life to men and the power to live life; and life is far more glorious than death. In fact, life is *eternally* more glorious than death.

**5** (3:9-10) **Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant or law brought condemnation; the new covenant brings righteousness. The law condemned a man when he broke the law. He was condemned to a broken and severed relationship with God. The man was to die. However the new covenant, the Spirit of God, imparted righteousness, the very nature of God to a man (2 Pt.1:4). Therefore, the glory of the new covenant exceeds the old covenant so much that by comparison the old covenant has no glory at all (v.10).

**6** (3:11) **Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant or law faded away; the new covenant remains and is permanent. As Matthew Henry points out: when the sun rises, the light of a lamp fades and diminishes (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol.5. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., p.614). It might be added that its function is no longer needed. The light of the lamp is superceded by a much greater light.

The glory of the new covenant is permanent. Its glory and function will never be superceded. There will be no new relationship set up between man and God, no new way for man to become related to God. The final covenant between God and man has been set and established forever. If a man is ever to have a relationship with God, he must allow God's Spirit to enter his heart and life. There is no other way to live with God. If a man wishes to live forever with God, he must invite God's Spirit into his life.

**"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Ro.8:9).**

**"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [eternally] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Ro.8:11).**

**"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live [eternally]" (Ro.8:13).**

**Thought 1.** The point of this whole section (v.6-11) is to discuss the new covenant which the minister serves. The minister does not serve the old covenant of the law; he serves the new covenant of God's Spirit.

**"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt.26:28)**

**"For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Ro.11:27).**

**"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezk.36:26-27; cp. Heb.8:8-13).**

**7** (3:12-16) **Covenant, Old vs. New:** the old covenant spoke with veiled meaning; the new covenant speaks with plain (outspoken, clear, and bold) meaning.

1. The new covenant gives such a glorious hope that the minister of God can proclaim it clearly and boldly. Of course, the reason he can proclaim it so clearly and boldly is because the new covenant is given by the Spirit in a clear and unveiled message.

**"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor.2:12-13).**

2. The old covenant was not like the new covenant. The old covenant was set up by God with veiled meanings.
- a. The veiled meaning is illustrated by Moses. When the people saw the glory of God shining in the face of Moses, Moses had to put a veil upon his face. Why? Because the people withdrew from the glory of God, and because the people were not to see the fading away of the glory from Moses' face. Note the exact words of Paul: Moses veiled his face so that they "could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." Paul is saying that what Moses did was an illustration of how man sees the old covenant or law. Man looks at the law and sees that he is to obey it if he wishes to please God. Therefore, man works and works to keep the law, believing all the time that he is earning the favor and acceptance of God. Man is blinded to the real meaning of the law. The glory and meaning of the law are veiled from his sight; he is unable...
    - to see the real meaning of the law
    - to see that the law was given to reveal the nature of God's glory and perfection
    - to see that man comes short of the glory and perfection of God

- to see that man cannot keep the law, not perfectly
- to see that the law was given to show man his desperate need for a Savior

**“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27).**

**“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ” (2 Cor.3:14).**

**“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).**

**“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).**

**“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim.3:7).**

**“They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course” (Ps.82:5).**

**“But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel” (Mic.4:12).**

- b. Even today when the Old Testament is read, those who still follow the law are blinded to the truth. The veil still remains covering the true glory of God. They still do not understand the true purpose of the law: to point men to their need for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Christ and Christ alone who has removed the veil to the glory of God. Men can face and see the glory of God only in Jesus Christ.

**“I and my Father are one” (Jn.10:30).**

**“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him” (Jn.10:36-38).**

**“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (Jn.14:9-10).**

- c. The veil of the old covenant is removed only when a person turns to the Lord. When a person truly turns to Jesus Christ, he is shown how Jesus Christ is the glory of God and the *end*, purpose, and fulfillment of the law. The veil is removed from the law, and he understands the marvelous glory of God.

**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Gal.3:24-25).**

**8** (3:17-18) **Covenant, New:** the new covenant brings liberty through the Lord Jesus Christ. Note that the Lord is identified as the Spirit: “the Lord is that Spirit.” This does not mean that the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the same Person. They are two different Persons, but they are one in their Godhead and Deity. Jesus Christ is One with the Spirit in the same way He is one with God the Father: one in mind, spirit, being, nature, and essence. Therefore, they are one in will, purpose, and work.

**“He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you” (Jn.16:14-15).**

Note how the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all involved in showing and revealing salvation to man. This is what is meant by saying the Lord is that Spirit. The Lord Himself was actually the One who secured salvation and liberty for man, but it is the Spirit who is actively involved in revealing the truth of salvation and liberty to man. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

1. In Christ there is liberty and freedom: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty [freedom].”
  - a. Christ frees the believer from the dominion of sin.

**“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Ro.6:14).**

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- b. Christ frees the believer from the law.

**“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Ro.7:4).**

**“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Ro.7:6).**

**“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal.5:18).**

- c. Christ frees the believer from the bondage of fear.

**“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage agan to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Ro.8:15).**

- d. Christ frees the believer from the power of Satan, which is the fear of death.

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).**

- e. Christ frees the believer from the bondage of corruption.

**“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God....and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Ro.8:21, 23).**

2. In beholding Christ, believers are transformed into His image. The phrase “we all” means believers, those who have turned to Christ...

- who have had the veil removed from their face
- who stand face to face with the glory of the Lord

When a believer receives Jesus Christ as his Savior, he is given the privilege to stand face to face with Christ. This simply means that he is given the privilege to know and understand Christ. Note several points.

- a. The phrase “open face” means that the believer is given the privilege of standing face to face with Christ, the privilege of knowing Christ personally and learning all about Him. There is no veil over the face or eyes of the believer, nothing to keep him from knowing the Lord.
- b. The object of the believer is to behold the glory of the Lord. This means to behold the Godhead and deity of the Lord, the splendor, brilliance, and excellence of His person and Being. Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became Man. His “glory” refers to the glorious fact that He as the Son of God did become Man. When a person grasps this fact, he understands the “glory of the Lord,” the incomprehensible fact that the Lord paid the supreme and ultimate price, the unbelievable price, for the salvation of man.

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

- c. The believer, however, never grasps the full glory of the Lord. No man, who is only finite and flesh, could ever understand the Lord, who is infinite Spirit. The believer only sees and understands the glory of the Lord as in a glass or a mirror. That is, he only sees a reflection of the Lord, not the full image. Presently, the believer is able to see the Lord only through the Word and the Holy Spirit; in the future, he shall stand face to face with the Lord throughout all eternity. Then he will know the Lord even as the Lord now knows him.

**“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Cor.13:12).**

- d. The believer is changed or transformed into the image of Christ from glory to glory. This probably means two things.
  - ⇒ When the believer beholds (grasps, understands, studies, lays hold of) the glory of the Lord, the same glory is created in him.
  - ⇒ When the believer beholds the glory of the Lord, the believer progresses and grows from one stage of glory to a higher stage.

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| <p><b>1 The ministry demands constancy, demands that we not faint</b></p> <p><b>2 The ministry demands honesty &amp; integrity in life &amp; ministry</b></p> <p>a. To renounce dishonesty<br/>b. Not to walk deceptively<br/>c. Not to tamper with God's Word<br/>d. To proclaim the truth openly &amp; in purity</p> <p><b>3 The ministry demands</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 4</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>D. The Ministry: Its Demands, 4:1-6</b></p> <p>Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;<br/>2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.<br/>3 But if our gospel be hid, it</p> | <p>is hid to them that are lost:<br/>4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.<br/>5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.<br/>6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.</p> | <p><b>not hiding the gospel</b></p> <p>a. Hid to the lost<br/>b. Hid because Satan has blinded the minds of unbelievers<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p><b>4 The ministry demands servitude, demands that we preach Christ &amp; serve man, not self</b></p> <p><b>5 The ministry demands personal conversion, demands the very presence of God Himself shining in a person's heart<sup>DS2</sup></b></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

**D. The Ministry: Its Demands, 4:1-6**

(4:1-6) **Introduction:** the demands of the ministry are clear and are to be heeded by every minister of Christ.

1. The ministry demands constancy, demands that we not faint (v.1).
2. The ministry demands honesty and integrity in life and ministry (v.2).
3. The ministry demands not hiding the gospel (v.3-4).
4. The ministry demands servitude, demands that we preach Christ and serve man, not self (v.5).
5. The ministry demands personal conversion, demands the very presence of God Himself shining in a person's heart (v.6).

**1** (4:1) **Ministry—Stedfastness—Faint Not:** the ministry demands constancy, demands that one never faint. The words "faint not" (ouk egkakoumen) mean not to give up, not to lose heart, not to become discouraged, spiritless, faint-hearted, despondent, or discouraged. The minister, Paul, did not quit or give up for any reason, not even because of persecution or weariness and exhaustion. There are two reasons why he did not quit.

1. The minister did not quit because of the greatness of his ministry: "We have *this ministry*." "This ministry" refers to the great task God had given him, the task of proclaiming the *new covenant*, the message that man can now have a glorious relationship with God through the Spirit of God. This ministry is the ministry of the glorious gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ, that men can now be saved and forgiven their sins and redeemed to live forever in the glory of God. (See former outline and note 2—2 Cor.3:6-18 for a discussion of the new covenant.) No greater task could be given a person than to proclaim the cure for death to men. That cure is the new covenant, the glorious news about Jesus Christ. Because of this great task, Paul did not faint; he did not quit, no matter the demands or circumstances.

2. The minister does not quit because he has received mercy. Paul had personally received the mercy of God.  
⇒ God's mercy had forgiven his sins and given him life forever with Christ.

**"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph.1:7).**

**"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of this grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph.2:4-7).**

⇒ God's mercy had given him his great task: to be a minister and to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

**"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph.3:8; cp. Ro.15:15-16; 1 Cor.15:9-10).**

**Thought 1.** The servant of God must never faint, regardless of circumstances. Neither weariness nor opposition are to drive the minister to quit. He must not shrink from the ministry for any reason. His task is too great, and God's mercy has done too much for him and will continue to sustain him.

**"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Mt.10:22).**

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).

“Only let your conversation [behavior, conduct] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (Jas.1:12).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom *resist stedfast* in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pt.5:8-9).

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).

**2** (4:2) **Ministry—Word of God—Dishonesty—Deceit—Preaching:** the ministry demands honesty and integrity in life and ministry. Note four points.

1. The minister is to renounce dishonesty, “the hidden things of dishonesty.” The word “dishonesty” (aischunes) means shame, disgrace, scandal. The hidden or secret things that shame and disgrace men, that cause scandals are to have no part in the minister’s life. The minister is to renounce all secret and hidden...

- immorality
- feelings
- greed
- desires
- covetousness
- methods
- thoughts
- ambitions

The minister is to live an *open and above-board life*, a life of honesty and integrity.

“If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles [home]” (Job 11:14).

“Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil” (Is.1:16).

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Ro.6:11-12).

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor.15:34).

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation [behavior] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph.4:22).

“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so *easily beset us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb.12:1).

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pt.2:11).

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn.1:9).

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:1-2).

2. The minister is not to “walk in craftiness” (panourgiai). The word means trickery, cunning, cleverness, shrewdness, evil design. It means a man who will do anything and use any means to get what he wants. Note the minister is not to “walk” this way; he is not to walk using and misusing people, circumstances, events, and things for his own end. The minister of God is to walk as Jesus walked.

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph.4:1).

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (Eph.5:15).

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).

3. The minister is not to handle “the word of God deceitfully” (dolountes). The word means to falsify, adulterate, corrupt, deceive, ensnare. It is “the Word of God”; that is, it has come from God, not man. The Author of the Word of God is God. God is the *Authority* of the Word of God. The minister is only the *spokesman* for God; therefore, he is...

- not to falsify the Word of God
- not to adulterate the Word of God
- not to corrupt the Word of God
- not to deceive or ensnare people by mishandling the Word of God

The minister is not to *add* the ideas, traditions, philosophies, or speculations of men to the Word of God. Neither is he to take away portions of Scripture, denying that they are the Word of God; nor is he to neglect, ignore, or keep silent about some part of God’s Word. The minister of God is not to distort the Word of God in any form or fashion.

“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Dt.4:2).

“What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Dt.12:32).

“Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Pr.30:6).

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Mt.22:29).

“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ” (2 Cor.2:17).

“But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:2).

“As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Pt.3:16).

“And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev.22:19).

4. The minister proclaims the truth honestly, openly, and purely. The minister is to be true to the truth of God as revealed in God’s Word. He is to be both humble and receptive before God in his study and prayer life. He is not to be wise in his own conceits. And when he goes before people, he is to proclaim and teach the truth as God’s Word reveals it. As Charles Hodge says:

*“Those ministers who are humble and sincere, who are not wise in their own conceit, but simply declare the truth as God has revealed it, commend themselves to the consciences of men. That is, they secure the testimony of the conscience even of wicked men in their favour” (An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973, p.83).*

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

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).

“Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (Jn.18:37).

“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Eph.4:25).

“The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment” (Pr.12:19).

“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” (Zech.8:16).

“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Mal.2:6).

Note: Paul was being accused of these four things. (See note 2 Cor.1:12-22 for more discussion.) There were some in the church who were charging Paul with...

- being sometimes faint-hearted
- doing some shameful, disgraceful, and scandalous things
- walking about deceiving people
- mishandling the Word of God

**3** (4:3-4) **Ministry—Gospel—Satan:** the ministry demands openness, never hiding the gospel. Paul never mishandled the Word of God; he never deceived people with a false gospel. He was honest and true to the gospel; he openly proclaimed the gospel in all its purity. If the gospel was hid to men, if there were men who did not believe...

- it was not due to Paul’s faint-heartedness. He had proclaimed the gospel with all the energy he had and under the most severe circumstances. He had been as steadfast as a man could be.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6

- it was not due to Paul's living an impure life nor to Paul's mishandling of the Word of God. Paul had proclaimed the pure Word of God, the pure gospel, just as the Word of God had revealed it.

Paul says that the gospel was and is hid to men for two terrible reasons.

1. The gospel is "hid" to men because they are "lost" (apollumenois). The word means perishing. Men are on the road to being lost, to perishing. They have turned away from God and are travelling in the opposite direction along the road that leads to perdition. The word "perishing" means to be lost, to be in the process of being destroyed or ruined, corrupted and put to death.

The thing to note is this: when a person is on the road to perdition, he has *turned away* from God and is pointed in the *opposite direction*. He is *travelling away* from God. He has deliberately separated himself from God and severed all ties with God.

Therefore he cannot see God, nor the things of God. His face and eyes are not turned toward the gospel, but toward the world that perishes. The gospel is hid to him because he is perishing, because he is travelling the road of the lost, the road of those who are perishing. He is simply facing in the wrong direction, looking away from the gospel.

2. The gospel is hid to men because the "god of this world" has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. Note several facts.

- a. The "god of this world" is Satan (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Satan*—2 Cor.4:4 for discussion).
- b. Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers lest they should believe the gospel. This is Satan's purpose: to keep people from believing the gospel and from becoming followers and worshippers of the Lord Jesus. How does he blind a person's mind? By appealing to his flesh, by enticing him with the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 Jn.2:15-16). If Satan can get a person to focus his life upon himself and the world, the person will become enslaved to his flesh and the things of the world. This is clearly seen in the enslaved habits of...
  - possessing more and more
  - eating more and more
  - lusting more and more
  - seeking more and more
  - drinking more and more
  - smoking more and more
  - cursing more and more
  - indulging more and more

The more evil a person sows, the more enslavement he reaps. Satan is able to blind the person's mind more and more. The point is simply this: Satan blinds the mind of a person by appealing to his flesh (sensual appetites) and hooking him on the pleasures of sin. And the more he becomes hooked, the blinder and harder he becomes to the gospel.

- c. Jesus Christ is the "image of God." When Jesus Christ came to earth, men were able to see God, to see exactly what God is like:
  - ⇒ loving, compassionate, caring
  - ⇒ healing, restoring, saving
  - ⇒ correcting, disciplining, controlling
  - ⇒ holy, righteous, just

A person could look at Jesus Christ and see exactly what God is like.

**"I and my Father are one" (Jn.10:30).**

**"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him" (Jn.10:37-38).**

**"And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me" (Jn.12:45).**

**"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (Jn.14:9).**

**"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Ph.2:6).**

**"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb.1:3).**

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(4:4) **Satan:** Scripture definitely teaches that Satan is real, a living person who lives in the spiritual world or dimension of being. He is a living being who opposes God.

1. Scripture says that Satan rules and reigns over the world.

- a. Jesus called Satan several things:

⇒ Satan is "the prince of this world."

**"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jn.12:31).**

**"Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (Jn.14:30).**

**"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (Jn.16:11).**

⇒ Satan is the “evil one” from whom we must pray to be delivered.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil [the evil one, referring to Satan in the Greek]” (Mt.6:13).

⇒ Satan is a “liar” and a “murderer.”

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (Jn.8:44).

b. Paul called Satan the following:

⇒ The “god of this world.”

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).

⇒ The “prince of the power of the air.”

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph.2:2).

c. Peter called Satan the “adversary” of man.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pt.5:8).

d. John called Satan the Devil and Satan.

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years” (Rev.20:2).

2. What does it mean when Satan is called the “god of this world”?

a. It means that Satan’s evil nature and ways rule throughout the world. Any news report on any given day is clear evidence of this fact. The nature and ways of Satan are such things as these:

⇒ selfishness and pride

“How are thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son the morning! how art thou cut down to the gound, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Is.14:12-14).

⇒ lust and greed

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (Jn.8:44; cp. Jas.4:1-3).

⇒ anger and murder

“...He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him” (Jn.8:44).

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Mt.5:21-22).

⇒ lies and deception

“...When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (Jn.8:44).

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:3-4).

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of

**light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor.11:13-15).**

- b. It means that Satan rules over the kingdom of this world. Again this fact is clearly evident in any daily news report and in the history and behavior of nations and governments. It should always be remembered that when Satan tempted Jesus, he claimed to possess all the kingdoms of the world and to have the authority to give them to whomever he wished.

**“Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Mt.4:8-9).**

This, of course, does not mean that every government or government leader is a puppet of Satan. There are many godly leaders serving in the governments of the world, and many governments serve their citizens in godly ways. It means that the systems of *governments and leaders* who base their rule on the evil nature and ways of Satan are under his control. A government leader cannot be of God—he has to be of Satan—if his rule is based upon such things as...

- selfishness and pride
- lust and greed
- wrath and murder
- lies and deception

**4 (4:5) Ministry—Preaching:** the ministry demands servitude, demands that we preach Christ and serve man, not self.

1. The minister must preach Christ, not self.
  - ⇒ The minister does not preach to build himself up in the eyes of people.
  - ⇒ He does not preach his own ideas, notions, thoughts, opinions, or philosophy.
  - ⇒ He does not preach to impress people with his charisma, ability, fluency, speech, or leadership.

The minister preaches Jesus Christ and Him alone (see note, *Preaching*—1 Cor.1:17; 2:2; 9:16-23 for discussion). Note what he preaches: “Christ Jesus *as* Lord.” In the Greek, there is no definite article (the). The message of the gospel is that “Christ Jesus *is* Lord.”

- ⇒ *Christ* means the Messiah, the Messianic Savior promised by God from the beginning of history.
- ⇒ The *Messiah is Jesus*, the carpenter from Nazareth.
- ⇒ Jesus is Lord, the Lord God Himself.

**“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).**

**“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).**

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

**“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)” (Act 10:36).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Ro.10:9).**

**“[God’s power] which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church” (Eph.1:20-22).**

**“[Christ] who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Ph.2:6-9).**

**“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:5).**

2. The minister must serve men, not self. Note the word “servant” (*doulos*): it means bond-slave. The minister is to be a slave to others, serving and ministering to them. He is to be as devoted to people as a slave is to his master; as ready to help them and to meet their needs as a slave would be required to do by his master. Note why: for Jesus’ sake. What does this mean?

Jesus became our servant or slave. He sacrificed Himself every day and He did it for us. He struggled and struggled to overcome the world and the flesh for our sake, to conquer sin and lust, to gain freedom from the enslaving bondages and habits of life. Jesus Christ suffered daily and then sacrificed Himself in the ultimate sense by dying and bearing our punishment for us. He gave Himself for our sakes, became a slave to us in order to save us. Therefore, all ministers are to become servants to men, to sacrifice themselves in serving men for the sake of Jesus Christ—because Jesus Christ did it for

the minister. No higher service can be done than to serve others for the sake of Christ, the sake of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

**“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Mt.10:42).**

**“But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all” (Mk.10:43-44).**

**“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet” (Jn.13:14).**

**“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**5** (4:6) **Ministry:** the ministry demands personal conversion, demands the very presence of God Himself shining in one’s heart. The reason Paul preached Christ is that God had shined in his heart, that is, God had actually entered his heart and converted him. Note several points.

1. Conversion is said to be such a dramatic experience that it is best illustrated as light breaking through and overcoming darkness. In fact, creation is the only dramatic event strong enough to illustrate conversion. Conversion is so dramatic that it is like creating something new: a new creature, a new man.

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

**“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal.6:15).**

**“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).**

**“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).**

**“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (Jn.3:19-21).**

**“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph.5:8).**

**“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Ph.2:15).**

2. Conversion is wrought by God. It is God Himself who shines in our hearts and converts us.

**“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.16:17).**

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**

**“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood” (Gal.1:15-16).**

**“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor.2:10).**

**“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pt.1:23).**

**“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn.5:1).**

3. Conversion is seeking “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” It is the knowledge that the glory of God was in Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ was the image of God.

**“Christ, who is the image of God” (v.4. See note—1 Cor.4:3-4 for more verses.)**

**“[Christ] Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Col.1:15).**

**“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col.2:9).**

**“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim.3:16).**

**“That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting” (1 Tim.6:14-16).**

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:3).

“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt.16:16).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (Jn.1:1-2).

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:4).

### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(4:6) **Glory:** this is a picture of creation. God commands the light to “shine out of darkness” (Gen.1:3; cp. Jn.8:12; Jas.1:1). Creation is the only event dramatic enough to illustrate conversion.

The word “glory” is used time and time again in connection with Jesus Christ. (See DEEPER STUDY # 4—Mt.6:9; Jn.17:1-4.)

1. In the Old Testament, the Jews spoke of the Shekinah glory of God. Shekinah simply means “that which dwells.” The Shekinah glory was the visible presence of God which sometimes shone among men. God’s glory came at times when God was very near and very close to His people. (Cp. Ex.16:10; 24:16-17; 40:34; 1 Ki.8:11; Is.6:3; Ezk.1:28.)

2. The glory of Jesus Christ is the very presence of God in Christ—permanently. God dwelt in Him and He in God. God was manifested in His body and in His life at all times (cp. Jn.1:14; 17:5; 2 Cor.4:6; Jas.2:1-2; 2 Pt.1:16-18).

3. The glory which Jesus Christ gives to His followers is the very presence of God. God dwells in the believer and the believer dwells in God. God manifests Himself to the world in the believer’s life (cp. Jn.15:1-5, 22; 1 Cor.3:16; 6:19; Gal.2:20).

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 The presence of God sustains</b></p> <p><b>2 The power of God sustains</b></p> <p>a. Saves from distress</p> <p>b. Saves from despair</p> <p>c. Never forsakes</p> <p>d. Saves from destruction</p> <p><b>3 The spirit of dying daily sustains</b></p> <p>a. He bears the dying of Christ</p> <p>b. That Christ may be seen in his body</p> <p>c. That others might receive life thru his dying</p> <p><b>4 The spirit of faith sustains</b></p> | <p><b>E. The Ministry: Its Sustaining &amp; Enduring Spirit, 4:7-18</b></p> <p>7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.</p> <p>8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;</p> <p>9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;</p> <p>10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.</p> <p>11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.</p> <p>12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.</p> <p>13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it</p> | <p>is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;</p> <p>14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.</p> <p>15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.</p> <p>16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.</p> <p>17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;</p> <p>18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.</p> | <p><b>5 The hope of being resurrected sustains</b></p> <p><b>6 The need of others &amp; the glory of God sustain</b></p> <p><b>7 The inner man being renewed day by day sustains</b></p> <p><b>8 The hope of eternal glory sustains</b></p> <p>a. Because afflictions are light when weighed against future glory</p> <p>b. Because our eyes are not focused on the physical &amp; temporal, but on the spiritual &amp; eternal</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

**E. The Ministry: Its Sustaining and Enduring Spirit, 4:7-18**

(4:7-18) **Introduction:** the diligent minister faces trial after trial. He experiences fatigue and weariness, strain and pressure, trouble and doubt, criticism and opposition, conflict and persecution—the list could go on and on. The minister needs a strong spirit of endurance. He needs a very special power to sustain him. This passage deals with his enduring spirit, with the things that do sustain him. It is a desperately needed discussion.

1. The presence of God sustains (v.7).
2. The power of God sustains (v.7-9).
3. The spirit of dying daily sustains (v.10-12).
4. The spirit of faith sustains (v.13).
5. The hope of being resurrected sustains (v.14).
6. The need of others and the glory of God sustain (v.15).
7. The inner man being renewed day-by-day sustains (v.16).
8. The hope of eternal glory sustains (v.17-18).

**1** (4:7) **Indwelling Presence—God:** the presence of God sustains the minister. This is a precious, yet very striking verse. “This treasure” refers back to the former verse (v.6). It is the presence of God Himself shining in the believer’s earthly vessel, in his heart, in his earthly body.

1. God’s presence is a treasure, a precious and priceless treasure.
2. God’s presence is placed into (enters) earthen vessels. God enters our bodies, bodies that are like earthly vessels made of pottery or glass. They are ever so weak and worthless, corruptible and perishable. Yet imagine—God’s presence is placed into such earthly bodies!
3. God’s purpose for entering our bodies is to show His power by overcoming all weaknesses, even death itself.
  - ⇒ “The excellency of the power” is a picture of the grandeur, glory, and preeminence of His power. It is the excellency, the great and overcoming power of God.

The presence of God in our hearts and bodies is power.

- a. It is the power to convert and transform us into new creatures.

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

- b. It is the power to convert and transform us into new men.

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).

c. It is the power to put His divine nature into us.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).

d. It is the power to give us life, both abundant and eternal.

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn.10:10).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

The point is this: the treasure of God’s presence is in this earthly vessel, this earthly body that is ever so weak and frail. God does so much for us, and it is all wrought by Him. Therefore, God and God alone gets all the credit, and He is thereby praised (cp. v.15). As the verse says, the power is of God, not of us.

**Thought 1.** No man can dispute his mortality, for no man can convert and transform himself into an eternal being. Only the presence of God, this glorious treasure, can enter our lives and change us into eternal beings. The presence of God alone can sustain us.

“Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?” (Job 10:9).

“What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?” (Ps.89:48).

“All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Eccl.3:20).

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Cor.4:7).

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor.4:16).

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor.5:1).

“For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life” (2 Cor.5:4).

**Thought 2.** The glorious treasure of God’s presence lives within the believer—in the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor.3:16).

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).

“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (2 Tim.1:14).

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).

**2** (4:7-9) **God, Power:** the power of God sustains the minister. The minister (and believers) of God faces all kinds of trouble and difficult situations in life. However, he has one great resource: the presence and power of God within him. God never forsakes him; God saves and delivers him through every situation and trial, no matter how difficult.

1. The minister (or believer) may be troubled on every side, but God’s power saves him from distress.

⇒ “Troubled” (thlibomenoi) means to be pressed, squeezed, oppressed, hedged in, pressured.

⇒ “Distressed” (stenochoroumenoi) means to be kept in a narrow, cramped place; to be crushed.

⇒ “On every side” means in every imaginable way and place and occasion.

The minister experiences all kinds of trouble and pressure. He sometimes feels as though he is pressured and troubled beyond what he can bear. It is as though a heavy weight is pressing in upon him and about to crush him. But then God steps in and saves him from being distressed and crushed. The presence and power of God sustains His dear minister.

2. The minister (or believer) may be perplexed, but God's power saves him from despair.
- ⇒ "Perplexed" (aporoumenoi) means to be at a loss, to be doubting, not knowing, questioning, wondering which way to go, what to do, what to say. It means being perplexed and unable to find an answer.
  - ⇒ "Despair" (exaporoumenoi) means to be hopeless, to have no confidence or assurance, to be without any sense of security.

The minister is often perplexed, not understanding why this or that happened, what should be done or said, how the situation should be handled, and on and on. Sometimes situations become so puzzling that he is almost stymied and the threat of despair faces him. There is the danger that his confidence and assurance will be shaken. But again, the presence and power of God steps in and saves the minister from despair. God gives him hope and stirs his confidence and shows him the way out. God never allows him to be overcome by despair.

**"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Ro.15:4).**

3. The minister (or believer) may be persecuted, but he is not forsaken. Ministers are sometimes opposed, and sometimes the opposition is hot and severe. The persecution may be behind his back or to his face. It may take such forms as...
- ridicule
  - isolation
  - martyrdom
  - jokes
  - criticism
  - withdrawl
  - mockery
  - threats
  - confrontation
  - abuse
  - slander
  - neglect
  - imprisonment
  - being ignored
  - being censored

However, God never forsakes, abandons, or deserts his dear servant. God never leaves him alone. The companionship of God, His presence and power, is always with His dear servant.

4. The minister (or believer) may be cast down, but he is never destroyed.
- ⇒ "Cast down" (kataballomenoi) means to be smitten down, struck down, or knocked down.
  - ⇒ "Destroyed" (apollumenoi) means to perish, to die, to strike out.

The minister may be struck down, but he is never allowed to strike out; he may be knocked down, but he is never knocked out. As William Barclay says:

*"The supreme characteristic of the Christian is not that he does not fall, but that every time he falls he rises again. It is not that he is never beaten, but he is never ultimately defeated. He may lose a battle, but he knows that in the end he can never lose the campaign"* (William Barclay. *The Letters to the Corinthians*. "Daily Study Bible Series." Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, p.223).

**"...lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Mt.28:20).**

**"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (Jn.14:16-18).**

**"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (Jn.14:27).**

**"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor.4:16).**

**"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph.3:16).**

**"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Ph.4:6-7).**

**"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Col.1:11).**

**"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever" (2 Tim.4:18).**

**"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb.13:5).**

**"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen.28:15).**

**"And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Ex.33:14).**

**"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them" (Dt.33:27).**

**"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great" (Ps.18:35).**

**"And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever" (Ps.41:12).**

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint” (Is.40:31).

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is.43:2).

“And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar [gray] hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Is.46:4).

**3** (4:10-12) **Minister—Self-Denial—Cross:** the spirit of dying daily sustains the minister. Note three points.

1. The minister is to bear in his own body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and he is to do it all the time—continually—as he walks about day by day. Simply put, Paul...

- carried about the dying of the Lord Jesus
- took up the cross of Christ (cp. Lk.9:23)
- died to self, that is, to his own desires and wishes
- denied himself in order to live for Christ

Paul died to self. “Dying” means the sense in which Jesus was *dying every day*. When Jesus came to earth, He came to secure a perfect righteousness for man. To do this, He had to live a sinless life; He had to struggle against sin every day. He had to die to self, to deny His own desires and live for God. He had to struggle against the daily temptations which men face, and He had to conquer them all.

Spiritually, the Lord Jesus was always dying to self, that is...

- always subjecting His body: its passions and urges
- always denying His will in order to do God’s will
- always struggling to conquer the pressures of temptation
- always wrestling against the forces of evil and never giving in to them

Physically, the Lord Jesus was always dying to self. He was always expending enormous energy to share the truth. As RVG Tasker says, he experienced continuous hunger and thirst, and subjected his body to exhausting days and sleepless nights for the sake of others. He faced continuous opposition from political and religious leaders in order to share and preach the truth (RVG Tasker. *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. “Tyndale Bible Commentaries.” Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1958, p.73f).

A true minister of the gospel is to *die daily*; he is to die to the point that the actual passing from this life into eternity is but the final stage of suffering and death for him.

2. The minister is to die to self so that Christ might be seen in his body. Paul denied himself so that the presence of Christ could be seen conquering the flesh, temptations, and trials of life. When Paul disciplined his body and kept it under control—when he put his urges and desires to death—when he denied his will and did God’s will—he demonstrated that Jesus Christ lived within his body. The life of Jesus was manifested and shown to be in his body.

3. The minister is to die to self so that others might receive life. When a minister dies to self, really denies himself so that Christ can live in his body and conquer the flesh and trials of life, others see the power of Christ. They too long for such power. They are led to turn to Christ in order to receive the same conquering life and power. They are led to seek life in Christ, life that is abundant in this world and eternal in the next world.

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Lk.9:24).

“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Ro.6:2).

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:11).

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:24).

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Ph.3:8).

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col.3:3).

**4** (4:13) **Minister—Faith:** the spirit of faith sustains the minister. When nothing else sustains the minister, his faith will sustain him. The minister may be tempted to give up: the trouble and pressure against him may be so great that he is tempted to leave the ministry. to never share the gospel again. However as stated, when nothing else sustains the minister, his faith will sustain him. His faith will not allow him to become discouraged to such a point that he would leave the ministry and fall into the depths of despair. The minister’s faith is the same great faith that the Psalmist David had (Ps.116:10). And in the words of Charles Hodge:

*“The Psalmist was greatly afflicted; the sorrows of death compassed him, the pains of hell gat hold of him, but he did not despair. He called on the Lord, and he helped him. He delivered his soul from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling. David’s faith did not fail. He believed, and therefore, in the midst of his afflictions, he proclaimed his confidence and recounted the goodness of the Lord. Paul’s experience was the same. He also was sorely tried. He also retained his confidence, and continued to rely on the promises of God”* (Charles Hodge. *An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972, p.97).

By faith the minister believes the promises of God: he stays in the ministry and continues to speak just as David and Paul did. The minister believes with all his heart...

- that the presence of God will sustain him
- that the power of God will sustain him
- that the spirit of dying daily will sustain him

“Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (Jn.6:28-29).

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Ro.10:17).

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Eph.6:16).

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb.11:1).

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed” (Jas.1:5-6).

“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 Jn.3:23).

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 Jn.5:4).

**5** (4:14) **Minister—Resurrection, The:** the hope of being resurrected sustains the minister. The minister bears in his body the “dying of the Lord Jesus” (denies himself and dies daily) for one great reason: he knows that he is to die some day.

Above all else, the one thing the minister wants is to be with Jesus; therefore, that glorious day of resurrection, the day of full redemption, is ever before his eyes. The minister suffers and bears all—he continues to preach and teach, to serve and meet the needs of people—all because he knows that the day of resurrection is coming. Just as God raised up the Lord Jesus, so God is going to raise him up to be with all those to whom he has ministered.

How does the minister know this? Because God raised up the Lord Jesus. When God raised up Christ, He demonstrated that it was His will to raise the dead, and that He had the power to raise the dead.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (Jn.5:25).

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jn.5:28-29).

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn.6:40).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn.11:25).

“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11).

“And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power” (1 Cor.6:14).

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor.15:19-22).

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Th.4:16-18).

**6** (4:15) **Minister:** the need of others and the glory of God sustain the minister. Note the words “all things.” The minister of God bears all things for two reasons: for the sake of the people and for the glory of God. The minister bears and suffers all...

- so that people can experience the abundant grace of God. As he ministers to people, they learn more and more about God. They experience more and more of God’s wonderful grace and blessings.
- The result is a marvelous happening: the people joy and rejoice in God. They walk around offering up praise and thanksgiving to God, and God is thereby glorified.

The minister refuses to be defeated, because people need the grace of God and because God needs to be glorified. And the only way people will glorify God is for them to experience the grace and blessings of God.

**Thought 1.** The purpose of the minister is twofold.

1) He is to meet the needs of people. Fulfilling his ministry will sustain him with a great sense of satisfaction.

“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:16).

“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more” (Acts 20:25).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).

2) He is to lead people to praise and glorify God.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (Jn.15:8).

“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.15:6).

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pt.2:9).

**7** (4:16) **Minister—Inner Man:** the inner man being renewed day by day sustains the minister. Note three significant points.

1. The minister does not faint (cp. v.1). He does not give up or quit; he does not lose heart or become discouraged; he does not allow anything to defeat him: not people, circumstances, events, fatigue, exhaustion, or even persecution and severe opposition. Nothing, absolutely nothing can drive him from the ministry nor keep him from preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Keep in mind the things that give him the strength to continue preaching: the presence and power of God (v.7-9); the spirit of his faith (v.13); the hope of the resurrection (v.14); the needs of people and the glory of God (v.15).

2. The minister’s outward man perishes every day.  
 ⇒ The “outward man” is the *earthen vessel* (v.7), the *human body* (v.10), the *mortal flesh* (v.11), and the *earthly house* (5:1).

⇒ The word “perish” (*diaphtheiretai*) means to age, wear out, waste away, deteriorate, decay, corrupt, and die. Paul says that his “outward man” or body was wearing out and wasting away every day. It was in the process of perishing and dying.

3. The minister’s “inner man” is renewed day by day. The inner man is...  
 • the spirit of man that has been “born again” or created anew by the Spirit of God (Jn.3:3, 5-6).  
 • the spirit of man that was dead in trespasses and sins until it was quickened and made alive by Christ (Eph.2:2, 4-5).  
 • the “new creature” (2 Cor.5:17) and the “new man” (Eph.4:24; Col.3:10).  
 • the highest and deepest part of a man’s being where the Holy Spirit dwells.  
 • the “hidden man of the heart” (1 Pt.3:4).

The minister is renewed day by day when he draws near God for strength and growth, for relief and deliverance from trials, pressure, and trouble. But remember: it is the presence and power of God within his body that renews him. (See notes —2 Cor.4:7; 4:7-9 for more verses.)

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt.11:28).

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Lk.11:13).

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (Jn.14:1-2).

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Ro.8:28).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:17).

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor.12:9).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings” (1 Pt.4:12-13).

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev.2:10).

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev.21:4).

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all” (Ps.34:19).

“The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness” (Ps.41:3).

“And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Ps.50:15).

“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me” (Ps.138:7).

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Is.40:31).

“Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

“...Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is.43:1-2).

**8** (4:17-18) **Glory—Minister:** the hope of glory sustains the minister. Note two significant points.

1. The minister’s afflictions are light when compared to the glory he shall receive in heaven. Note the phrase “weight of glory.” This picture should always be kept in mind by every minister. The picture is that of a set of scales sitting before the minister. He balances his afflictions on one end and the eternal glory he is to receive on the other end. The afflictions may be heavy and severe, but when he places the eternal glory he is to receive on the scales, the afflictions become light. It is as though they weigh nothing. (See note, *Reward*—Lk.16:10-12 for a complete list of rewards.)

2. The minister’s eyes are not focused on the physical and temporal, but on the spiritual and eternal. The word “look” (scopeo) means to focus one’s eyes and attention on a set goal or end. The goal, of course, is spending eternity with God in the new heavens and earth. The minister does not look at the things which are seen (the physical and corruptible), but at things which are not seen (the spiritual and incorruptible).

The reason is strikingly clear: the things which are seen are temporal (brief, temporary, fading, passing, fleeting, transient); but the things which are not seen are eternal (lasting, endless, forever, permanent, immortal, glorious).

“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt.25:23).

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mt.13:43).

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Ro.8:17-18).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:17).

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us” (2 Tim.2:12).

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).

“[Moses] esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Heb.11:26).

“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev.22:5).

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| <p><b>1 Assurance 1: Personal conviction—the conviction that we have a hope, that we have a house in heaven</b></p> <p>a. We groan for our new house, for our new body</p> <p>b. We groan not to be naked (corruptible)</p> <p>c. We groan for release—for immortality</p> <p><b>2 Assurance 2: God—He</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 5</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>F. The Ministry: Its Hope &amp; the Assurance of An Eternal Home, 5:1-10</b></p> <p>For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.</p> <p>2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:</p> <p>3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.</p> <p>4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.</p> <p>5 Now he that hath wrought</p> | <p>us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.</p> <p>6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:</p> <p>7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)</p> <p>8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.</p> <p>9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.</p> <p>10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.</p> | <p><b>guarantees the hope by the Spirit</b></p> <p><b>3 Assurance 3: The Holy Spirit—He enhances the hope</b></p> <p>a. He gives great courage to face the present</p> <p>b. He stirs faith</p> <p>c. He stirs great courage, even creates a preference to be with the Lord</p> <p><b>4 Assurance 4: Judgment—it stirs the hope</b></p> <p>a. It stirs diligent labor</p> <p>b. The purpose: To please the Lord</p> <p>c. The reason: The judgment seat of Christ<sup>DS1</sup></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

**F. The Ministry: Its Hope and the Assurance of An Eternal Home, 5:1-10**

(5:1-10) **Hope—Heaven—Death—Reward—Body:** What is Paul talking about in this passage? Is he referring to a temporary body, or to the heavenly house or mansion which is to be given to the believer when he dies and goes to heaven?

One thing is sure: Paul is not talking about the resurrection body he is to receive when Christ returns. That body is not in heaven; it is to be created when Christ returns. The believer does not receive his resurrected body *until* he is raised from the dead at Christ's return (cp. 1 Cor.15:12; 1 Th.4:14f).

If Paul is talking about receiving a body when he passes from this life into heaven, then he is talking about receiving a temporary body, a body that will house his spirit up until the resurrection. However, Scripture has nothing to say about a temporary body, although God may actually give us a temporary body when we die and go to heaven. There is nothing to keep Him from doing it, but Scripture is silent about the matter. It is one of the subjects that is not necessary for our faith and salvation; it is one of the "exceeding riches" that God has *locked up* in Himself and that He is going to show and lavish upon us in the eternal ages to come (Eph.2:7). What Scripture teaches is what Paul is saying here: the believer goes immediately to be with the Lord at death. And, as already pointed out, the Scripture also teaches that the believer's earthly body is to be raised from the dead and perfected when Christ returns (cp. 1 Cor.15:1-58).

In light of this, curiosity naturally asks what happens to us when we die? How do we exist before God: with a temporary body or only as a disembodied or *bodyless* spirit? Note two facts.

1. Scripture is clear: when we die, we immediately go to heaven to be with the Lord.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" (Jn.8:51).

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die [but be present with the Lord]. Believest thou this?" (Jn.11:25-26).

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ [immediately]; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Ph.1:21-24).

"...I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mt.22:32).

"And as he [Christ] prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Lk.9:29-31).

"And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom [heaven]" (Lk.16:23).

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise [heaven]" (Lk.23:42-43. Cp. 2 Cor.12:2, 4 where paradise is revealed to be the third heaven.)

2. Scripture is not clear about how we exist between death and the resurrection. Shall we be disembodied spirits or be given temporary bodies? Any comments about the matter are pure speculation, for Scripture is silent. However, two things must always be kept in mind about God.

- a. God can cause us to exist as spirits without bodies. True, it is difficult for man to imagine a person without a body, but God can do it if that is the method He has chosen to use.
- b. God can also give us temporary bodies if He chooses. Man can more easily imagine this, for he lives within a temporary body now. God could even cause the temporary bodies to become a part of our eternal bodies that we are to receive at the resurrection.

Just as our present bodies are to be a part of our eternal bodies, the temporary bodies could be a part of our eternal bodies. This is not to say nor even to suggest that we shall receive temporary bodies when we die. Scripture is silent, saying nothing about the matter. The point is simply what the former point was: if God has chosen to give believers temporary bodies when they die, He can do it. God is God. In dealing with this subject we must keep in mind what has already been said:

⇒ How we exist before Christ at death is one of the subjects that is not necessary for our faith and salvation. It is one of the “exceeding riches” of His grace that He has *locked up* in Himself and that He is going to show and lavish upon us in the ages to come (Eph.2:7).

In light of the above facts, the present passage will be interpreted to mean two things: that we shall receive immortality and that we shall receive a house, an eternal mansion in heaven.

1. Assurance 1: personal conviction—the conviction that we have a house in heaven (v.1-4).
2. Assurance 2: God—He guarantees the hope by the Spirit (v.5).
3. Assurance 3: the Holy Spirit—He enhances the hope (v.5-8).
4. Assurance 4: judgment—it stirs the hope (v.9-10).

**1** (5:1-4) **Heaven:** the first assurance is *personal conviction*—the conviction that we have a hope, that we have a house in heaven. Note the word “know.” The conviction is firm and sure. It is not the kind of conviction that *hopes* something is true. It is the conviction of knowledge. Paul knew beyond question: he had a building, a house in heaven.

The earthly body is pictured as a tent that houses man’s spirit, his real self, during its earthly pilgrimage. But the tent (body) is ever so frail and temporary; it goes through the wears and tears of this life, and it deteriorates and eventually dissolves. The believer’s body dies (cp. 2 Pt.1:13-14). However, the Christian believer *never fears*, for he is to receive a building from God, a spiritual house made eternal in the heavens. The heavenly house lasts forever; it does not have to suffer wear and tear. It is not corruptible: it does not age, fade, deteriorate, or waste away; and he never has to leave it. This is the believer’s glorious hope. However, while in the world—while in his present tabernacle (body)—the believer has two significant experiences.

1. He groans for his house in heaven. Note how deeply Paul desired his heavenly home: he *groaned* and *earnestly desired*. He yearned, longed, and ached for his heavenly home.
2. He groans to be clothed with his heavenly home and fitted for it just as though he was being fitted and clothed with a suit. It means that he wanted to be sheltered, covered, and enclosed in his heavenly home.
3. He groans both for release and for immortality (v.2-3). Paul does not just groan to be naked, that is, to die and be released from the trials of this world; he is burdened (note that he says this) to be clothed with his heavenly home.

The minister suffers, and sometimes he suffers terrible trouble as discussed in the former passage and outline (1 Cor.4:7-18). The burden sometimes becomes so heavy that he just groans under the weight. But the groaning, as stated, is not to die in order to be released from the burden. The groaning is for his eternal home, that his mortal body might be swallowed up by eternal life.

If a person interprets this passage to be speaking of a heavenly body which the believer is to receive at death, then William Barclay’s comments are descriptive:

*“But with Paul there is a difference. He is not looking for a Nirvana with the peace of extinction; he is not looking for absorption in the divine; he is not looking for the freedom of a disembodied spirit; he is waiting for the day when God will give him a new body, a spiritual body, in which he will be able, even in the heavenly places, to serve and to adore God....He [Paul] saw eternity not as escape into nothingness, not as release into permanent inaction, but as the entry into life and into a body in which service could be complete” (William Barclay. The Letters to the Corinthians, p.228).*

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (Jn.14:2).

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life” (Ro.2:7).

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor.15:53).

“For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor.5:1).

“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building” (Heb.9:11).

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb.11:10).

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country” (Heb.11:13-14).

**“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb.13:14).**

**“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (Rev.21:10).**

**“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev.22:14).**

**2** (5:5) **God—Holy Spirit:** the second assurance is God—God guarantees that we shall receive immortality, shall receive our immortal house in heaven, guarantees it by the Holy Spirit. Paul had just said that he *knew* he had a house in heaven. He did not just hope that such existed nor was he just expressing a wishful thought. How could he be so certain? Because of God. God has done two things for us.

1. God has “wrought” us, that is, made us, worked us out, fitted us, fashioned us to undergo an immortal change. How? By entering our lives (see note—2 Cor.4:7 for more discussion). When we trust Christ as our Savior, God puts His presence and power into our bodies and we become immortal or eternal beings.

a. The believer partakes of the divine nature.

**“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).**

b. The believer becomes a new creature.

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

c. The believer becomes a new man.

**“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).**

**“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).**

2. God gives us the presence of His Spirit. This is separated from the above point because the above point deals more with God making the believer into a new creature or new man. This point deals more with the presence of God’s Spirit within the believer.

The point is this: the Holy Spirit Himself is the “earnest” or “guarantee” or “pledge” that God is going to give us immortality, that He is going to give us an immortal home in heaven. The Holy Spirit is the very “first installment” of heaven (William Barclay. *The Letters to the Corinthians*, p.229).

**“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor.1:21-22).**

**“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Eph.1:13-14).**

**“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (Jn.14:16-18).**

**“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn.14:26).**

**“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Ro.5:5).**

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).**

**“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor.3:16).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

**3** (5:5-8) **Holy Spirit—Assurance:** the third assurance is the Holy Spirit—He enhances the knowledge that we have a house in heaven. He does three significant things for us.

1. The Holy Spirit stirs confidence and courage to face the present life. The word “confidence” (tharroumen) means courage, or to be cheered up (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.229). In this world all believers face such things as:

- pressure
- trouble
- sorrow
- rejection
- loss
- disease
- accident
- death

But no matter what they face, the Holy Spirit stirs the courage to face it all. How? Again, note the word “knowing.” The Holy Spirit enhances our *knowledge*...

- that our present home is the body, but it is temporary and passing. Therefore all trials and problems will quickly pass away.
- that we are now absent from the Lord. The idea is that we are to be with Him. The Holy Spirit stirs a longing within us to be with Him. And that longing gives us courage to march on through this life.

2. The Holy Spirit stirs faith within us. Knowing that our present home (body) is only temporary—that we are soon to move to our heavenly home—stirs great faith in us. True, we do not yet see our heavenly home, but the Holy Spirit stirs faith within us—faith to walk through all the trials and problems of this life.

3. The Holy Spirit stirs great courage, even a preference to be with the Lord. This is a crucial point, extremely important for day to day living. The Holy Spirit not only gives courage to live day by day; He gives the courage to die. He even stirs within the faithful believer a preference to be “present with the Lord.” Some people may question this fact, and some may even scoff at the idea. It is certainly true that many do not understand it. Nevertheless, it is a fact that many believers often experience. They actually long to be with the Lord; to be clothed with immortality and perfection, and enabled to worship and serve Him without infirmity and failure.

It must be stressed that this desire and longing is not born of the believer himself:

- ⇒ It is not a creation of his own ideas and thoughts.
- ⇒ It is not worked up by his own desires and man-made hopes.
- ⇒ It is a conviction—the sure knowledge, a state of mind—that is created by the Holy Spirit who is within the believer.

**4** (5:9-10) **Judgment:** the fourth assurance is judgment—judgment stirs the longing to please God and to receive our heavenly home. Judgment stirs diligent “labor” (philotimoumetha) in order to please God. The word means to constantly aim, to be constantly ambitious, to strive earnestly. Paul says that he is to be judged; therefore, he works his fingers to the bone. Why? That he may be accepted (euaestoi) by God. The word means well pleasing in the sense of being accepted. But note the major point. There was a second reason why Paul labored so diligently: he was to face the judgment of Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Cor.5:10 for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(5:10) **Judgment Seat of Christ:** this is the judgment of believers, not of unbelievers. Note carefully the words, “We must all appear.” By “we...all” Paul means all those who have a nature like him, a new nature in Christ. That is, all those who believe in Christ are the ones who will stand at the judgment seat of Christ. Several important points are stressed.

1. The judgment of believers is a surety: it will happen and nothing can stop it from happening. “We *must* all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” Not a single believer will be excused from the judgment.

2. The believer will be judged by Christ Himself. *Every believer* will face the scrutiny and searching eyes of Christ and be judged.

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him” (Jn.5:22-23).

“And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10:42).

“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Ro.2:16).

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Ro.14:10).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10).

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim.4:1).

3. The believer will be judged for “*the things done through (dia) his body.*” What kind of things are done through the human body? Acts, behavior, works. Note three significant points.

a. The believer’s sins are forgiven once he has confessed and repented of them (Eph.1:7; 1 Jn.1:9; 2:1-2). He never has to worry about God charging him with sin, for Christ has already paid the penalty for his sins. His sins are forgiven once-for-all.

b. The believer will be conformed perfectly to the image of Christ. In fact, he is even predestined by God to eternal perfection just like God’s own dear Son (see notes—Ro.8:29; 1 Jn.3:2). He is destined to receive a perfect and an eternal body—a body just like Christ’s (1 Cor.15:50-58).

c. However, the believer is called and gifted for a special task and work while on earth (1 Cor.12:4-14:40; Eph.4:7-13). Just how well the believer accomplishes this task and work will determine his judgment (see notes—1 Cor.3:13-15; 6:2-3; 9:24-27, esp. 9:27; Mt.19:27-30; 25:20-23; Lk.16:10-12; 19:15-23; DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Jn.5:16).

4. The judgment of the believer will determine his reward and the degree of reward, whether good (gain) or bad (loss). Some believers will definitely be ashamed before Christ at His coming (1 Jn.2:28), and they will suffer loss (1 Cor.3:11-15). The believer who survives the fire of judgment will be greatly rewarded, so greatly that the rewards explode the human mind (see note, *Rewards*—1 Cor.3:13-15 for a complete list of the rewards).

5. When studying the judgment of believers, several passages need to be studied carefully (see outline and notes—1 Cor.3:13-15; 6:2-3; 9:24-27, esp. 9:27; Mt.19:27-30; 25:20-23; Lk.16:10-12; 19:15-23; DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Jn.5:16).

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| <p><b>1 The fear of the Lord compels the minister</b></p>             | <p><b>G. The Ministry: Its Compelling Motives, 5:11-16</b></p> <p>11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.</p> | <p>whether we be sober, it is for your cause.<br/>14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:<br/>15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.</p> | <p><b>the minister</b></p> <p><b>4 The love of Christ compels the minister</b><br/>a. Bc. Christ died that all might die in Him<br/>b. Bc. Christ died that all might live for Him</p> |
| <p><b>2 The testimony of a genuine heart compels the minister</b></p> | <p>12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that he may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.</p>                                     | <p>16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.</p>  | <p>c. Bc. Christ died to create a new man: A man that is Christ-centered &amp; not self-centered</p>   |
| <p><b>3 The glory of God &amp; the needs of people compel</b></p>     | <p>13 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or</p>   | <p></p>   | <p></p>  |

**DIVISION III**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

**G. The Ministry: Its Compelling Motives, 5:11-16**

(5:11-16) **Introduction:** What is it that drives and compels a person to minister? What is it that constrains a person to enter the ministry? When ministers are attacked and criticized and opposed so much, what is it that makes them continue on in the ministry? When ministers have to deal with so many problems and are so troubled and pressured, what is it that forces them to stay in the ministry? This passage discusses the compelling motives of the ministry or the minister.

1. The fear of the Lord compels the minister (v.11).
2. The testimony of a genuine heart compels the minister (v.12).
3. The glory of God and the needs of people compel the minister (v.13).
4. The love of Christ compels the minister (v.14-16).

**1** (5:11) **Fear—Reverence—Witness:** the fear of the Lord compels the minister. The word “terror” (phobon) means fear, reverence, standing in awe of the Lord. It does not mean the kind of terror or fear that trembles and shrinks back from God. Paul knows he is to face the judgment seat of Christ (v.10); therefore he fears the Lord: holds Him in the highest regard and respect, reverences Him, stands in awe of His high and exalted position.

The judgment of Christ compels Paul—compels him to *persuade men*:  
⇒ of the truth of the gospel.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks” (Acts 18:4).

“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening” (Acts 28:23).

⇒ of the judgment of God.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10).

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Ro.2:16).

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:1-2).

⇒ of the death of Christ for all men.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).

⇒ of the desperate need for reconciliation to God.

**“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:20).**

⇒ of his own sincerity and integrity in the ministry.

**“For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart” (2 Cor.5:12).**

Note a crucial point: Paul says that God knows what kind of person he is. The minister’s life is inspected by God; it is manifested, perfectly known to God. God knows his faithfulness...

- that he labors to be accepted, that is, to please God and God alone (1 Cor.5:9).
- that he “faints not” in the ministry (1 Cor.4:1).
- that he preaches not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord (1 Cor.5:5).
- that he always bears “the dying of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor.4:10).
- that he does all things for the sake of the ministry (1 Cor.4:15).

Paul hopes that the Corinthians are convinced of his faithfulness and have no question about it. Others may oppose, question, criticize, and defame him; but he trusted that they knew his sincerity and commitment to Christ and the ministry.

**Thought 1.** Every minister should *fear the judgment* of Christ—fear it to such a degree that he is stirred to walk faithfully before God: persuading men and living a life of integrity and commitment to the ministry.

**“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).**

**“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim.1:11-12).**

**“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).**

**“...be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” (Ro.11:20-22).**

**2** (5:12) **Minister—Testimony:** the testimony of a genuine heart compels the minister. Paul was under heavy attack; a barrage of charges were being launched against him by some in the church. (See note—2 Cor.1:12-22 for a complete list of the accusations.) Paul, just as every minister, had given his credentials and commended himself when he first began to minister at the church. Note two points.

1. Just about everything Paul has said to the Corinthians up to this point has concerned the ministry, in particular his own personal ministry. He has been explaining the ministry and showing how he had labored ever so diligently in carrying out the ministry. By talking about himself, there was a possibility that some would again jump on his case and charge him with boasting in himself. True, he had been sharing his part in the ministry, but his purpose was not to commend himself. As stated, he trusted his credentials were well known by now. His purpose had been to give the faithful believers more ammunition to answer his critics. The only way to solve the controversy surrounding him was to deal with it. They needed to confront and take the offensive in answering his critics. They needed to get the matter settled, for the church needed to get back to the ministry of reaching and growing people for Christ.

2. Those who opposed Paul (the minister) were those who gloried in their appearance and not in heart. They took pride in such things as...

- their novel ideas
- their interpretations of Scripture
- their gifts and abilities
- their positions of leadership
- their spiritual zeal and commitment
- their recognition and esteem
- their godly roots and traditions
- their church loyalty
- their possessions

But note: their hearts were not upon Christ. Their hearts were upon themselves. They were not glorying in Christ and what He had done for them, but in self and what they were doing. They felt as though they were above others: more privileged, more gifted, more acceptable, more intelligent, more blessed, more spiritual. Their profession was false, for it was not of the heart.

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all un-**

cleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Mt.23:27-28).

“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (Jn.7:24).

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).

**3** (5:13) **Minister:** the glory of God and the needs of people compel the minister. One of the charges against Paul was that he was beside himself (exestemen), that he was mad, insane, out of his mind. It means to act in the extreme, abnormally, unlike what others act. Paul was charged with being a “fool” for Christ. Note that he accepts the charge as true. But he says it is true for two reasons:

1. Paul was a fool for God’s glory.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (Jn.15:8).

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).

“That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th.1:12).

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever” (1 Pt.4:11).

2. Paul was a fool for the sake of people—to meet their needs.

“For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Ro.9:3).

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Ro.10:1).

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor.9:22).

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Cor.9:24).

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before” (Ph.3:13).

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Tim.1:6).

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jn.4:34).

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

**4** (5:14-16) **Christ, Love of; Death—Minister, Justification:** the love of Christ compels the minister. The word “constrain” (sunechei) means to press, to hold together, to hold fast. The love of Christ presses, compels, and stirs Paul to hold fast to the ministry. The love of Christ is the great thing that constrains Paul to minister. Note that Paul does not say that he is driven to minister because of...

- the great teaching of Christ
- the great example of Christ
- the great ministry of Christ
- the great life of Christ

All of these areas of the Lord’s life are important, critically so, but they are not the foundation of our salvation and ministry. The foundation of the believer’s life is the *love of Christ*. The love of Christ is seen in three acts.

1. Christ died that all persons might die *in Him*. In the Greek this verse says:

- ⇒ “One died for all” (heis huper panton apethanen).
- ⇒ “Therefore, all died” (ara hoi pantes apethanon).

Note the exact words: “One died for all; therefore, all died.” Paul is saying...

- that Jesus Christ died for all men; therefore all men died when He died
- that since Christ died for all, then it follows that all men died in Him
- that all men were represented in Christ when He died
- that all men are counted as having died when Christ died
- that Jesus Christ died the ideal death, the death that stands for all men

Of course, this is simply saying the same thing in different ways so that we can more easily grasp exactly what Paul is saying. But note: the word “all” is not teaching universal salvation, that is, that every human being is saved by the death

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of Christ. This passage has to be kept in context with the rest of Scripture; therefore “*all*” means all who are redeemed by faith in the death of Christ.

Very simply stated, when a person *believes* that Jesus Christ died for him, God takes that person’s faith and counts it as *his death* in Christ.

⇒ God counts him as having died in Christ.

⇒ God credits him as having *already died* in Christ.

God credits the death of Christ to him so that he never has to die.

Another way to say the same thing is this: God takes the person’s faith...

- and identifies the person with the death of Christ
- and accepts the death of Christ as the death of the person

Although these statements may help some to more clearly understand what Paul is saying, there is no clearer statement than the one stated in Scripture: “Christ died for all; therefore, all died [in Him].” The death of Jesus Christ was the representative death for all. His death stands as the death for all men. No person has to ever die. All he has to do is believe that Jesus Christ died for him, and God will take his belief and count it as his *having already died* in Christ. (See note, *Justification*—Ro.5:1; 1 Cor.6:11 for more discussion.)

The point is this: it is the glorious love of Christ that constrains Paul to stick to the ministry and to serve the Lord so faithfully.

2. Christ died that all men might live for Him. Two significant facts are stressed.

a. Christ died that men might not live for themselves. Most persons are self-centered, focusing most of their thoughts and efforts upon meeting their own needs, upon satisfying themselves through...

- |               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| • pleasure    | • money       | • recreation  |
| • acceptance  | • possessions | • family      |
| • recognition | • fame        | • benevolence |
| • position    | • power       | • service     |

A person must take care of himself, but he is not to live for himself. Christ died so that we would not live for ourselves.

b. Christ died that we might live for Him. This is made abundantly clear in Scripture.

⇒ Christ died to bring us *near to God*.

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

⇒ Christ died that we might *live unto righteousness*.

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

⇒ Christ died to purify us so that we would be *zealous to do good works*.

**“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).**

⇒ Christ died so that we would *serve Him as Lord*.

**“For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Ro.14:9).**

Note: Christ not only died, He also arose from the dead. The minister does not serve a dead Savior, but a risen Lord!

3. Christ died to create a new man: a man that no longer judges after the flesh. Combine v.17 with this verse and the point is clearly seen. Christ died so that we would no longer judge men after the flesh, no longer judge men to be only fleshly, human, earthly beings. Men are also spiritual beings who are to exist forever. Christ died so that all men could be made into new creatures and into new men. Note that Christ once lived in this world and was known to be in the flesh, but He is no longer known to be upon the earth. He has risen from the dead and is with the Father, and He shall be with Him eternally.

This is the very reason He died and rose again: that man’s spirit could be *created anew* and man could live forever. Therefore, men are no longer to be looked upon as being “in the flesh,” but as being *in the spirit*. They are to be brought to Christ so that they can be made into new creatures.

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

**“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).**

**“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).**

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| <p><b>1 A message of regeneration: Man can become a new creature, a new man</b></p> <p><b>2 A message of reconciliation: A world of men brought back to God</b></p> <p>a. The three persons involved:<br/>Of God—by Christ—thru men</p> <p>b. The way God wrought the ministry of reconciliation</p> <p>1) By being in Christ<br/>2) By not counting sin<br/>3) By committing the gospel to man</p> <p><b>3 A message committed to ambassadors: A world of</b></p> | <p><b>H. The Ministry: Its Message, 5:17-6:2</b></p> <p>17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.</p> <p>18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;</p> <p>19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.</p> <p>20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though</p> | <p>God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.</p> <p>21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 6</b></p> <p>We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.</p> <p>2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)</p> | <p><b>men made co-workers with God</b></p> <p><b>4 A message of redemption: A world reconciled by a substitution for sin</b></p> <p><b>5 A message that demands a decision</b></p> <p>a. Ministers are co-workers with God<br/>b. The appeal<br/>c. The decision: "Now is the time"</p> |
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### DIVISION III

#### THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16

#### H. The Ministry: Its Message, 5:17-6:2

(5:17-6:2) **Another Outline:** The Ministry—Its New World Order.

1. A world of regeneration: a world of new creatures (v.17).
2. A world of reconciliation: a world of men brought back to God (v.18-19).
3. A world of ambassadors: a world of men made co-workers with God (v.20; cp. 6:1).
4. A world of redemption: a world reconciled by a substitution for sin (v.21).
5. A world of decision for God: a salvation that can be accepted or rejected (Ch.6:1-2).

(5:17-6:2) **Introduction:** this is one of the great passages of Scripture. So much is covered, a lifetime could be spent in its depths. Two overall subjects leap out at the reader: the message of the ministry and the new world order of the ministry.

The outline chosen for this study is the Message of the Ministry. The Outline for the New World Order can be seen in footnote one. The message of the ministry is powerful, and it offers the only hope for a sinful person who is aging and moving ever so rapidly toward death.

1. A message of regeneration: man can become a new creature, a new man (v.17).
2. A message of reconciliation: a world of men brought back to God (v.18-19).
3. A message committed to ambassadors: a world of men made co-workers with God (v.20).
4. A message of redemption: a world reconciled by a substitution for sin (v.21).
5. A message that demands a decision (Ch.6:1-2).

**1** (5:17) **New Creature—New Man—Regeneration:** the message is one of regeneration, the making of a "new creature."

1. What does it mean for a man to become a "new creature"? Very simply, it means just what the Scripture says: the man actually becomes a *new creature*—his whole being, nature, life, and behavior changes:
  - ⇒ Whereas a man was dead to God, as a new creature he becomes alive to God.
  - ⇒ Whereas a man had no relationship with God, as a new creature he is given a relationship with God.
  - ⇒ Whereas a man was not sure about God, as a new creature he is absolutely certain about God.
  - ⇒ Whereas a man never fellowshiped and communed with God, as a new creature he fellowships and communes with God all the time.
  - ⇒ Whereas a man was living in sin and immorality, as a new creature he lives in righteousness and holiness.
  - ⇒ Whereas a man had to face death, as a new creature he never has to die.
  - ⇒ Whereas a man was doomed to judgment and eternal separation from God, as a new creature he is destined to live eternally in the presence of God.

2. How does a person become a new creature? Note the words of this Scripture: "If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature." It is being "in Christ" that makes a person a new creature. When a person *truly believes in Christ*, God places and positions him *in Christ*, in all that Christ is. Christ lived and died and arose, so to be in Christ means that a person lives, dies, and arises in Christ. The person who believes in Jesus Christ is identified with Christ: that is, he is counted and considered to be "in Christ," reckoned and credited as "in Christ."

Spelled out in a little more detail, when a person believes *in Christ*, God places and positions the believer "in" Christ. The believer's faith actually causes God to identify the believer *with Christ*...

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- to count the believer as having lived *in* Christ when Christ lived upon earth. Therefore, the believer is counted sinless and righteous because Christ was sinless and righteous.
- to count the believer as having died *in* Christ. Therefore, the believer never has to die (Jn.3:16). The penalty and condemnation of his sins are already paid for in the death of Christ.
- to count the believer as having been raised *in* Christ. Therefore, the believer has received the “*new life*” of Christ. Just as Christ had a new life after His resurrection, even so the believer receives the “*new life*” of Christ when he believes in Christ. (See outline and notes—Ro.6:3-5. Also see DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—Ro.4:22; 5:1; 6:14-15.)

To be *in Christ* means that a believer walks and lives in Christ day by day. It means that he does not “walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Ro.8:1, 4). It means that “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit.2:12). It means that he bears the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23). It means that he abides *in* Christ, that he becomes as connected and attached to Christ...

- as members of the body are connected and attached to each other (1 Cor.12:12-27).
- as the branch is connected and attached to the vine (Jn.15:4-7).

From this, it is clearly seen that a person who is “in Christ” is a new creature. This is what is meant by such Scriptural terms as being “born again” and becoming a “new man.” However, no better words describe the experience than the words of this verse: “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” This is the message of the Christian ministry: a man can start life all over, no matter how corrupt he has become or how far down he has fallen. God longs to make a new creature out of him.

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn.3:3).**

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

**“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:22-24).**

**“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:9-10).**

**“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn.5:1).**

**2** (5:18-19) **Reconciliation:** the message is one of reconciliation—a world of men can be brought back to God. Reconciliation means to change thoroughly, to change from enmity to friendship, to bring together, to restore. The idea is that two persons who should have been together all along are brought together; two persons who had allowed something to come between them are restored and reunited.

The thing that broke the relationship between God and man was sin. Men are said to be enemies of God (Ro.5:10), and the word “enemies” refers back to the fact that men had become sinners and ungodly (Ro.5:6, 8). The “enemies” of God are the sinners and ungodly of this world. This simply means that every man is an enemy of God, for every man is a sinner and ungodly. This may seem unkind and harsh, but it is exactly what Scripture is saying. The fact is clearly seen by thinking about the matter for a moment.

The sinner cannot be said to be a friend of God’s. He is antagonistic toward God, opposing what God stands for. The sinner is...

- rebelling against God
- rejecting God
- cursing God
- ignoring God
- disobeying God
- fighting against God
- denying God
- refusing to live for God

When any of us sin, we work against God and promote evil by word and example.

⇒ When the sinner lives for himself, he becomes an enemy of God. Why? Because God does not live for Himself. God gave Himself up in the most supreme way possible: He gave His only Son to die *for* us.

⇒ When the sinner lives for the world and worldly things, he becomes an enemy of God. Why? Because he chooses the temporal over God. He chooses that which passes away over God. He chooses it when God has provided eternal life for him through the death of His Son.

This is the point of God’s great love or reconciliation. He did not reconcile and save us when we were righteous and good. He reconciled and saved us when we were enemies, ignoring and rejecting Him. As stated above, it is because we are sinners and enemies that we need to be reconciled.

1. There are three persons involved in reconciliation.

a. God Himself is the first person involved in reconciliation. God is the One who reconciles us. Note the words, “All things are of God.” If the time ever comes when a person wishes to be reconciled to God and to change his life and become a new creature, he has to come to God. God alone has the power to change a man; God alone can give a man a new birth and make a new creature out of him. No man has the power to change enough to make himself acceptable to God. Men just do not reconcile themselves to God. They cannot do enough work or enough good to become perfectly acceptable to God. Reconciliation is the act of God and of God alone. God is the One who reaches out to man and reconciles him. Man does not earn reconciliation; he *receives* the reconciliation of God.

b. Jesus Christ is the second person involved in reconciliation. God reconciles us to Himself *by the death of Jesus Christ*. Very simply stated, when a man believes that Jesus Christ died for him...

- God accepts the death of Jesus Christ *for* the death of the man
- God accepts the sins borne by Christ as the sins committed by the man
- God accepts the condemnation borne by Christ as the condemnation due to the man

Therefore, the man is freed from his sins and the punishment due his sins. Christ bore both the sins and the punishment for the man. The man who truly believes that God loves that much—enough to give His only begotten Son—becomes acceptable to God, reconciled forever and ever.

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph.2:16).**

**“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).**

**“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb.2:17).**

- c. Ministers are the third persons involved in reconciliation. God reconciled us to Himself by committing the ministry of reconciliation to men. The only way the world can ever hear about the great ministry of reconciliation is through believers. Believers must proclaim the message of reconciliation or it will never be heard.

**“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Ro.10:14).**

**“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph.2:16).**

2. Note how God wrought or worked out reconciliation. God did three things to make reconciliation possible.

- a. First, God came to earth “in Christ,” that is, in the person of Christ. As this verse says, “God was in Christ.” This is a phenomenal statement. This means that...
- when Jesus Christ came to earth, God Himself came to earth
  - when Jesus Christ bore sin for man, God Himself was bearing sin for man
  - when Jesus Christ died for man, God Himself was dying for man

This means that God Himself was in the person of Jesus Christ reaching out to man—that God himself had come to earth to reconcile man. This means that God Himself loved man so much that He came to earth to seek and to save that which was lost. The truth is so glorious that Jesus Christ Himself pounded the truth home to the hearts of people.

**“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep” (Jn.10:15).**

**“I and my Father are one” (Jn.10:30).**

**“If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him” (Jn.10:37-38).**

**“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (Jn.14:10).**

- b. Second, God does not impute sin to men. The word “impute” (logizomenos) means to reckon, count, and credit. It means to charge or put to a person’s account. If God does not impute or charge sin against men, then it means that He forgives their sins. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, God was in Christ dying for the sins of men. God was making it possible for men to be freed from the guilt and condemnation of their sins.

Picture the scene: hanging there on the cross, God in Christ was not charging men with sin. He was dying for the sins of men. God was not there upon the cross to impute sin against men; He was there making it possible for men to be forgiven their sins.

**“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mt.26:28).**

**“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).**

**“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb.9:22).**

- c. Third, God has committed the word of reconciliation to ministers. God has not left the word of reconciliation up to men. God has taken the initiative. God calls and equips ministers of God to proclaim the word of reconciliation. He has done everything possible to reconcile men.

**“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God” (Col.1:25).**

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Lk.24:47).

“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust” (1 Tim.1:11).

“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:2-3).

**3** (5:20) **Ministers—Preaching—Message:** the message of reconciliation is committed to ambassadors. This is a great passage for ministers of the gospel. Note two striking points.

1. Ministers are given the highest of titles: they are “ambassadors for Christ.” The “ambassadors” (presbeuomen) are persons who are sent forth as official envoys to represent the Sender and to announce the message of the Sender. Four things are always true about the ambassador.

- ⇒ The ambassador belongs to the One who sent him out.
- ⇒ The ambassador is commissioned to be sent out. He exists only for the purpose for which he was sent.
- ⇒ The ambassador possesses all the authority and power of the One who sent him out.
- ⇒ The ambassador is sent forth with the message of the Sender.

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim.1:9-11).

2. Ministers are given the greatest of messages: “Be reconciled to God.” The message is so critical that ministers are to “beseech” (deometha) men: beg, intreat, cry, and plead with them to be reconciled to God.

Note that it is “for Christ’s sake” that we are to plead with men. Christ has paid the ultimate price to make reconciliation available to men: He has taken the sins of men upon Himself and borne the condemnation for them. Because He has done so much, every man owes his life to Christ—every man owes it to Christ to be reconciled to God. For Christ’s sake, a man should give himself to God.

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).

**4** (5:21) **Jesus Christ, Death:** the message is unbelievable—a message of redemption, that is, of a substitution for sin. This is one of the great verses proclaiming the unbelievable love of God. It is a verse that has so much compacted in it that even a lifetime of study could not fathom its depths. It is impossible for man to grasp how God could make Christ become sin for us. Yet, this is exactly what Scripture declares: “[God] hath made him to be sin for us.” How was it possible for Christ to be made sin for us? Note the three points that are declared.

1. Christ “knew no sin.” One of the very reasons Jesus Christ came to earth was to live a sinless and perfect life. As Man He never broke the law of God; He never went contrary to the will of God. He never sinned, not even once. He lived a perfect life. Therefore, He stood before God as the Perfect, Ideal Man. He was the Ideal, the Pattern of what a man should be. He had secured the ideal, perfect righteousness; therefore, His righteousness could stand as the ideal righteousness for man. His righteousness could embrace and cover man. As the Ideal Pattern, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ could be counted as righteousness for man.

“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?” (Jn.8:46).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Heb.1:9).

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb.4:15).

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:26).

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

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation [behavior] received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pt.2:22).

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 Jn.3:5).

2. God “made Christ to be sin for us.” This was absolutely *necessary*. Why? Because man needs more than just righteousness to stand perfect before God. To stand righteous before God is not enough, for man has already sinned. Man

already stands guilty of breaking God's law, and the judgment and condemnation of death has already taken effect upon man. Man is dying both spiritually and physically, and the fact is clearly witnessed by the dying of people throughout every community of the world. Therefore, the condemnation and judgment against sin had to be taken care of. This, too, God did. God did it by laying all the sins of man upon Christ—all the guilt and condemnation of sin. God placed all sin upon Christ and let Him bear it all Himself. Christ became sin for us. How was Christ able to do this for us?

He was the Ideal, Perfect Man. Therefore, He could become the Ideal, Perfect Sin-Bearer. He could die the Ideal death, the death that would satisfy the justice of God's eternal court and holy nature.

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us [the same as saying made sin for us]: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).**

**“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb.2:9).**

**“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb.9:28).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

**“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 Jn.3:5).**

**“For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me” (Ps.69:9).**

**“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Is.53:5).**

3. God's purpose was that we might be made the righteousness of God in Christ. What does this mean? Very simply, when a person believes in Jesus Christ—really believes—God takes that man's faith and counts it as righteousness. The man is not righteous, but God *considers and credits* the man's faith as righteousness. Why is God willing to do this?

a. God is willing to justify man because He loves man that much. God loves man so much that He sent His Son into the world and sacrificed Him in order to justify man (Jn.3:16; Ro.5:8).

b. God is willing to justify man because of what His Son Jesus Christ has done for man.

⇒ Jesus Christ has secured the *Ideal* righteousness for man. He came to earth to live a sinless and perfect life. As Man He never broke the law of God; He never went contrary to the will of God, not even once. Therefore, He stood before God and before the world as the Ideal Man, the Perfect Man, the Representative Man, the Perfect Righteousness that could stand for the righteousness of every man.

⇒ Jesus Christ came into the world to *die* for man. As the *Ideal Man* He could take all the sins of the world upon Himself and die for every man. His death *could stand* for every man. He exchanged places with man by becoming the sinner (2 Cor.5:19). He bore the wrath of God against sin, bearing the condemnation for every man. Again, He was able to do this because He was the Ideal Man, and as the *Ideal Man* His death could stand for the death of every man.

⇒ Jesus Christ came into the world to *arise from the dead* and thereby to conquer death for man. As the *Ideal Man* His resurrection and exaltation into the presence of God *could stand* for every man's desperate need to conquer death and to be acceptable to God. His resurrected life could stand for the resurrected life of the believer.

Now, as stated above, when a man believes in Jesus Christ—really believes—God takes that man's belief and...

- counts it as the righteousness (perfection) of Christ. The man is counted as *righteous in Christ*.
- counts it as the death of Christ. The man is counted as already having *died in Christ*.
- counts it as the resurrection of Christ. The man is counted as already having been *resurrected in Christ*.

Very simply, God loves His Son Jesus Christ so much that He honors any man who honors His Son by *believing in Him*. He honors the man by taking the man's faith and counting (crediting) it as righteousness and by giving him the glorious privilege of living with Christ forever in the presence of God. This is what is called justification. The word justify (diakioun) is a legal word taken from the courts. It pictures man on trial before God. Man is seen as having committed the most heinous of crimes; he has rebelled against God and broken his relationship with God. How can he restore that relationship? Within human courts if a man is acquitted, he is declared innocent, but this is not true within the Divine Court. When a man appears before God, he is anything but innocent; he is utterly guilty and condemned accordingly.

But when a man sincerely trusts Christ, then God takes that man's faith and counts it as righteousness. God counts the man—judges him, treats him—as if he was innocent. The man is not made innocent; he is guilty. He knows it and God knows it, but God treats him as innocent. “God justifies the ungodly”—an incredible mercy, a wondrous grace. (See notes—Ro.4:1-3; DEEPER STUDY # 1—4:1-25; DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—4:22.)

How do we know this? How can we know for sure that God is like this? Because Jesus said so. He said that God loves us. We are sinners, yes; but Christ said that we are very, very dear to God.

**“And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6).**

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:23-24).

“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ro.4:3).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:9).

“For he that is dead [counted dead, justified] is freed from sin” (Ro.6:7).

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Ro.8:33).

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).

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

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).

**Thought 1.** The message of God’s ministry is an unbelievable yet glorious message. It is the only message that can truly save a sinful, dying person—the message of redemption, of a substitution for sin.

**5** (6:1-2) **Decision:** the message demands a decision. Note three facts.

1. Ministers are co-workers with God. They actually have the great privilege of working together with God. What is the work that they do with God? The minister who works with God does exactly what Scripture says: he “beseeches,” that is, urges, begs, and pleads with men to receive the wonderful grace of God. What is that grace? It is the glorious truth...

- that God has provided salvation through Christ and proclaimed that salvation through Christ

2. The message of redemption is not to be received in vain. A person must not hear the message with empty, deaf ears. Redemption and salvation are available. God has made it possible—He even begs and pleads with men—to be saved; but a person can receive the message with empty ears and heart. He can either do nothing about the message or deliberately reject it. In either case he refuses...

- to let the grace of God take effect in his life
- to let God’s grace work in his heart through regeneration
- to let the death and righteousness of Christ be counted as his death and righteousness

A person must not receive the grace of God in vain. God’s grace is much too wonderful—it is the only hope and way of redemption and salvation.

3. The decision to be saved is to be made now. Now is the only reasonable time to be saved. There may be no tomorrow; in fact, there may not even be one hour left for any of us. Any person’s life can be snatched away any moment of any day by accident, disease, or heart attack. Verse two declares two significant facts (note that this is an Old Testament quotation and God Himself is the spokesman, Is.49:8):

- a. This is the acceptable time when God has heard the cries of men. This is the day of salvation when God has succoured men.
- b. Paul, the minister, cries out: “Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation.” Note the forceful implication: the day is coming when the day of salvation will no longer be present.

“See, I have set before thee this day life and good and death and evil” (Dt.30:15).

“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Dt.30:19).

“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me” (Mk.10:21).

“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?” (Jn.6:66-67).

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh.24:15).

“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him” (1 Ki.18:21).

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| <p><b>1 Paul's great concern was consistency—to offend in nothing</b></p> <p><b>2 In much endurance—the supreme quality of consistency</b></p> <p><b>3 In physical sufferings &amp; mental stress</b></p> <p><b>4 In moments of overwork, sleepiness, &amp; hunger</b></p> <p><b>5 In spiritual growth &amp; behavior</b></p> | <p><b>I. The Ministry: Its Call to Consistency &amp; Endurance, 6:3-10</b></p> <p>3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:</p> <p>4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,</p> <p>5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;</p> <p>6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost,</p> | <p>by love unfeigned,</p> <p>7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,</p> <p>8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;</p> <p>9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;</p> <p>10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.</p> | <p><b>6 In disregarding the world's reaction</b></p> <p><b>7 In social abuse &amp; persecution</b></p> <p><b>8 In being content—always</b></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

**I. The Ministry: Its Call to Consistency and Endurance, 6:3-10**

(6:3-10) **Introduction:** one of the greatest needs of the ministry is for consistency and endurance. Too often the daily activities and duties of the ministry are allowed to become routine and mundane. Purpose and zeal—the very reason for which God called the minister—are allowed to fade from memory. Lethargy, complacency, routineness, and professionalism are allowed to slip into the life of the minister and the spirit of fervency is dimmed. There is little zeal to help and reach people for Christ. The present passage speaks strongly to this problem: the call of God to the minister is to be consistent and enduring.

1. Paul's great concern was consistency—to offend in nothing (v.3).
2. In much endurance—the supreme quality of consistency (v.4).
3. In physical sufferings and mental stress (v.4-5).
4. In moments of overwork, sleepiness, and hunger (v.5).
5. In spiritual growth and behavior (v.6-7).
6. In disregarding the world's reaction (v.8).
7. In social abuse and persecution (v.9).
8. In being content—always (v.10).

**1** (6:3) **Ministry—Faithfulness:** Paul had one great concern—consistency, to offend in nothing. Paul wanted his life and ministry to be so consistent that he would never give any reason for anyone to reject or to turn sour on the Lord Jesus Christ. The word “offense” (proskope) means to stumble, to strike against. Paul was careful; he guarded his behavior and conduct lest he cause a person to stumble and fall and reject the gospel of Christ. Note the reason: he did not want to be a poor reflection upon the ministry. Paul knew the nature of man, that people looked for excuses to reject Christ and to avoid His church. He knew that some people were always searching for juicy gossip to use against the followers of Christ and especially against the ministers of the gospel. He also knew that God had called him to the ministry of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that no higher call could be issued. Therefore, Paul sought to bring only honor to the ministry and to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He struggled against the lusts of the flesh and eyes and against the pride of life. He struggled...

- to avoid all temptation
- to keep from giving any offense
- to keep from being a stumbling block to anyone
- to conquer all trials
- to see to it that the ministry was never blamed because of a weakness or failure on his part

**Thought 1.** Every minister of the gospel *must be aware* of the great call God has given him. The *ministry of Christ* demands consistency—consistency in behavior and work. The minister of the gospel must strive just as diligently as Paul did to be consistent. He must be trustworthy and blameless before the Lord Jesus Christ.

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Ph.2:15).

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight” (Col.1:21-22).

“That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th.2:12-13).

## 2 CORINTHIANS 6:3-10

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th.5:23).

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).

“A bishop [minister] then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach” (1 Tim.3:2).

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders [ministers] in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly” (Tit.1:5-6).

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:14).

**2** (6:4) **Endurance:** Paul was consistent in *endurance*. “Patience” (hupomone) means *stedfast endurance*. Endurance is the supreme quality, the very backbone of consistency. Unless a man endures, he will never be consistent, not in a corruptible and sinful world. A corruptible and sinful world presents obstacle after obstacle and sin after sin that have to be *endured and overcome* if a person is to live a consistent life. Stedfast endurance is the basic ingredient and force that a person must have to live a consistent life for the Lord Jesus. When trials, fatigue, temptations, or opposition confront the minister of God, he must do all he can to endure:

|                    |               |                  |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------|
| ⇒ to continue      | ⇒ to overcome | ⇒ to remain firm |
| ⇒ to stand fast    | ⇒ to triumph  | ⇒ to last        |
| ⇒ to be unyielding | ⇒ to bear     | ⇒ to conquer     |

Note four points.

1. The picture being painted is not that of a man who sits with folded hands and passively accepts whatever comes. It is the active struggle of the believer’s spirit to confront the obstacle or sin and to conquer it.
2. Also note the word *much*—*much endurance* is necessary if this world is to be overcome.
3. Paul again says that his primary purpose is to live a life that will *commend the ministry*. “In all things” he sought to build up, to commend, to approve the ministry.
4. Paul’s point is this: he has lived a life of endurance for the sake of the ministry. And he lists all the areas in which he has endured. They are covered in the rest of this passage. Note how the areas span all the areas of a minister’s life and ministry.

“In your patience possess ye your souls” (Lk.21:19).

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb.10:36).

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (Jas.1:3-4).

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (Jas.5:7-8).

**3** (6:4-5) **Ministry:** Paul was consistent and enduring in *physical and mental suffering and stress*. Six particular things are mentioned.

1. Paul endured “afflictions” (thlipseis): pressure, strain, tension that comes both from within and without. Things often press in upon a man, weigh upon and burden down his heart. Sometimes the pressure is so heavy and tight that a man feels like he is going to explode or be crushed. The pressure may come from some lustful temptation or from some strong trial, but no matter, he is to stedfastly endure all pressing afflictions.

2. Paul endured “necessities” (anagkai): inescapable hardship, difficulties, privation, and pain of life. William Barclay points out that the word literally means “the necessities of life” (*The Letters to the Corinthians*, p.238). A minister is called upon to face the necessities of life: he has to eat and drink, clothe and shelter himself and his family; and he has to face the sorrows and struggles and pains of life, including death itself—sometimes beyond what the average citizen has to face. Only one thing can carry the minister through the necessities and experiences of life: endurance. He must stedfastly endure for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ and His ministry.

3. Paul endured “distresses” (stenochorai): straits, calamities, tight places, inescapable situations. It is the picture of being cornered and being unable to escape; a picture of having no room or place to turn, of being forced to confront the situation or else being utterly devastated and defeated. When the minister is cornered by temptation or trial—when there seems to be no escape—his only resource is endurance. He must stedfastly endure lest he offend the gospel and become a stumbling block to others.

4. Paul endured “stripes”: scourgings, beatings, lashings, whippings. This was a savage, excruciating punishment. The whip (phagellow) was made of leather straps with two small balls attached to the end of each strap. The balls were made of rough lead or sharp bones or spikes, so that they would cut deeply into the flesh. Paul’s hands were tied to a post above his head and he was scourged. It was the custom for the prisoner to be lashed until he was judged near death by the presiding centurion (Jewish trials allowed only forty lashes.) The criminal’s back was, of course, nothing more than an unrecognizable mass of torn flesh.

Paul was scourged at least eight times—just imagine! Eight times—five times by the Jews and three times by the Gentiles (2 Cor.11:24-25). Tragically, believers all over the world are sometimes whipped and abused because of their testimony for the Lord Jesus. In such times, only one thing can give the believer a consistent life and testimony: stedfast endurance.

5. Paul endured “imprisonments.” Paul was arrested and imprisoned several times: in Philippi (Acts 16), Jerusalem, Cesarea, and Rome. The early church Christian, Clement of Rome (A.D. 96), says that Paul was imprisoned seven times throughout the whole span of his ministry. When the believer, minister or layman, faces imprisonment for Christ, the call of the hour is for consistency: he must endure despite the threat. He must not weaken lest he become an offense to the name of Christ and to the ministry.

6. Paul endured “tumults”: mob uprisings and attacks. Paul often faced angered mobs: at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:50); Lystra (Acts 14:19); Philippi (Acts 16:19); Ephesus (Acts 19:29); and at Jerusalem (Acts 21:30). Mob uprisings present one of the most difficult and frightening situations imaginable for a believer, for a mob cannot be controlled by reason. The believer is unable to be heard, so speech is useless. Believers often face the abuse and ridicule of crowds because of the righteous lives they live and because they refuse to join in the worldly pleasures and indulgences of life. At such times the believer must be consistent in his testimony—no matter the temptation to go along with the crowd. The true believer, layman and minister alike, must steadfastly endure.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).

“He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Mt.10:39).

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my names’ sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.19:29).

“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me....for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:15-16).

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).

“For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe” (1 Tim.4:10).

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).

“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience” (Jas.5:10).

**4** (6:5) **Ministry—Labor—Faithfulness:** Paul was consistent and enduring in moments of *overwork, sleepiness, and hunger*. Paul covers all three areas.

1. Paul endured “labors” (kopois): toil, laborous work to the point of exhaustion. As we study the life of Paul, one striking characteristic about Paul’s ministry becomes clear: he never stopped preaching, teaching, or ministering until he just had to have rest. He was not lazy, lethargic, slothful, or complacent. He got up in the mornings and put his hand to the plow: praying, studying, ministering, and witnessing—just as God had called him.

2. Paul endured “watchings,” that is, *sleepless nights*. As stated, the record of his life indicates that he arose early and rested only as he needed. He spent nights in prayer, and sometimes found the weight of the churches on his mind so much that he could sleep little if any. The point to see is Paul’s great concern for people and their needs: concern so great that it would keep him awake at nights praying and figuring out how to better reach and help people for Christ. Paul was steadfast in the ministry, even enduring sleepless nights for the cause of Christ.

3. Paul endured “fastings.” This means not only deliberate fastings, but being so involved in his work that he forgot to eat or else chose to keep working instead of eating.

**Thought 1.** How many ministers honestly...

- endure *overwork*—laboriously work to the point of exhaustion? And how often?
- endure *sleepless nights* for the sake of prayer and figuring out how to better help and reach people for Christ?
- endure *missed meals* in order to get more done for Christ?

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Tim.1:6).

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev.3:19).

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Eccl.9:10).

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Mt.9:37-38).

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jn.4:34).

“...lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (Jn.4:35-36).

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building” (1 Cor.3:9).

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas.4:17).

**5** (6:6-7) **Ministry:** Paul was consistent and enduring in *spiritual growth and behavior*. Nine areas in particular are covered.

1. Paul endured in “purity” (hagnotetic): innocence, cleanliness; free from the dirt, filth, and pollution of the world; free from immoral and unjust behavior and motive. Note that it involves both heart and acts, both motive and behavior. It means to be spotless and stainless, holy and righteous, godly and just. The minister of the Lord Jesus Christ is to live a pure life.

**“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Mt.5:8).**

**“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim.1:5).**

**“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure” (1 Tim.5:22).**

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).**

**“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jas.1:27).**

**“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:14).**

2. Paul endured in knowledge: the study and understanding of God’s revelation and Word. Paul did not neglect the meditation and study of God’s Word and revealed will. He learned all he could about how God wanted men to live, and he applied himself to living and teaching that way.

**“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn.8:31-32).**

**“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col.1:10).**

**“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).**

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).**

**“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge” (2 Pt.1:5).**

3. Paul endured in “longsuffering” (makrothumia): patience, bearing and suffering a long time with people, especially when they were wrong, unjust, abusive, slanderous, and injurious. The minister of God must always suffer and bear a long time with people, even when they are ever so wrong.

**“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col.1:11).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

**“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you” (2 Pt.3:15).**

**“For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off” (Is.48:9).**

4. Paul endured in “kindness” (chrestotes): goodness and benevolence of heart and behavior. It is being kind and good, gentle and sweet even when others are abusive and evil, severe and hurting, unappreciative and unthankful.

**“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Ro.12:10).**

**“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).**

**“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Col.3:12).**

**“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pt.1:5-7).**

5. Paul endured in the “Holy Spirit”: in the presence, power, and gifts of the Spirit. The great proof that he was a true minister of God was the fact that the Spirit of God worked in and through him. Paul was able to live for Christ and to build the ministry because he walked in the presence and power of the Spirit of God (see outline and notes, *Holy Spirit*—Ro.8:1-17; Jn.14:15-26; 16:7-15 for more discussion).

**“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor.2:4).**

**“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake” (1 Th.1:5).**

6. Paul endured in “unfeigned love”: love that is not counterfeited or faked; love that is sincere, genuine, and pure; love that is unlimited, selfless, and sacrificial. No matter what a person does, unfeigned love forgets self and sacrifices whatever is necessary to reach out and help the person. The minister of God must always be consistent and endure in unfeigned love.

**“...thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Mt.22:39).**

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).**

**“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn.15:12).**

**“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).**

**“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).**

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).**

7. Paul endured in the “word of truth”: the preaching and teaching of the truth, that is, of the gospel, of the Word of God. The minister must always preach the truth of God’s Word, not the thinking, philosophies, and ideas of men. The novel ideas of men are always coming upon the scene as the latest fashion of the day, but only the Word of God endures. God has called the minister to proclaim His Word; therefore, the minister must *endure* in proclaiming the word of truth.

**“Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him” (Acts 28:31).**

**“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.10:7).**

**“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops” (Mt.10:27).**

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).**

**“These things command and teach” (1 Tim.4:11).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

8. Paul endured in the “power of God”: the power of God was an absolute essential, for no human being could deliver men from sin, death, and judgment. Only God had the power to create men anew and give them eternal life. Therefore, Paul had to have the power of God upon his life and ministry if his labor was to be effective and bear genuine fruit.

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).**

**“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor.2:4-5).**

**“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph.3:16).**

**“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).**

9. Paul endured in “the armor of righteousness”: the righteousness or justification of Christ; the power to live a life of righteousness; the acts of righteousness to which Christ had called him. All of these meanings are probably meant here. No matter what the attacks were or against which hand they attacked, from the right hand or the left hand, Paul resorted to righteousness. He proclaimed...

- that he stood in the righteousness of Jesus Christ
- that he had committed his life totally to the Lord Jesus Christ, to live a life committed totally to the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ
- that he acted righteously for the sake of the ministry

**“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:20).**

**“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor.15:34).**

**“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness” (Eph.6:14).**

**“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Ph.1:11).**

**“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Tim.6:11).**

**6** (6:8) **Ministry:** Paul was consistent and enduring in *disregarding the world's reaction*. The world's reaction to Paul is covered in three sharp contrasts.

1. Paul was honored by some and dishonored by others. Some showed respect; others did not. Some gave him the honor due a *minister of God*; others did all they could to dishonor him. However, Paul stood and endured all dishonor done him.

2. Paul was talked about: some spread evil reports about him; others good reports. He was criticized and censored and had rumors spread far and wide by those who opposed him, but others loved and understood and stood by the good he was doing. Whatever the situation, Paul consistently endured and continued to minister for his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

3. Paul was treated as a deceiver, yet he was as true as a person could be. The word “deceiver” means to be an imposter, a false teacher, a quack. However, he stood fast: no matter the charge, he endured and continued right on preaching the truth and doing all he could to help and reach people for Christ.

**“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).**

**“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).**

**“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pt.5:10).**

**7** (6:9) **Ministry:** Paul was consistent and enduring in the face of *social abuse and persecution*.

1. Some treated Paul as unknown; others as well known. The word “unknown” means to dismiss, ignore, disregard. Some just wanted nothing to do with the minister of God. But others loved Paul because of what he had done for them and was doing for people throughout the church. No matter the treatment, Paul endured for the sake of the gospel and people.

**“To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out” (Jn.10:3).**

**“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine” (Jn.10:14).**

**“But if any man love God, the same is known of him” (1 Cor.8:3).**

**“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).**

2. Paul was treated as dying, yet he lived. Some looked upon Paul as reckless and unwise, as a man who courted the disfavor, anger, and rejection of men. They saw Paul as a “fool” who was doomed, who was rapidly walking the road to death. But others understood and knew the truth: he was a new creature in Christ, a man who had found eternal life, and he was compelled to share the glorious news with the world no matter the threat to his own safety. He knew the truth and he had to do all he could to awaken men to the truth—regardless of the consequences. Therefore, he endured the cross, dying to the world, in order to share the glorious news of eternal life.

**“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (Ro.8:36).**

**“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him” (2 Tim.2:11).**

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Lk.9:23-24).**

3. Paul was chastened, yet he was never killed. Being chastened means suffering. Paul was constantly suffering for the cause of Christ and he was willing to be chastened in order to help and reach people for Christ. No person and no thing could kill him until Christ was ready for him to depart for heaven. Until that time, he would endure any suffering, any chastening as long as he had breath to bear witness for Christ.

**“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (Jn.15:2).**

**“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that per-**

isheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt.1:6-7).

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pt.4:12-13).

**8** (6:10) **Ministry:** Paul was consistent and enduring in *being content*—always. Three contrasts are again made.

1. Paul was looked upon as sorrowful, yet he was always rejoicing. The worldly and carnal saw him as seldom if ever having fun. He never joined the crowd in their worldly pleasures and activities, nor did he seek the comforts and possessions of the world. He was viewed as an extremist in separation, a man who missed out on the pleasures and fun of living. However, Paul was filled with joy, true joy—the joy that comes from knowing where he had come from, why he was here, and where he was going. He was gripped with the utmost security, confidence, and assurance of life.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (Jn.15:11).

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (Jn.16:24).

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Ro.14:17).

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pt.1:8).

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pt.4:12-13).

2. Paul was considered poor, yet he made many rich. He was a travelling missionary, a man who in the eyes of the world was homeless and without worldly possessions. Yet, he possessed the true wealth, the only wealth that can really make a man secure—the wealth of God's presence and love and care. And Paul shared his wealth with others. He always shared how men could possess the eternal treasures of heaven.

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Mt.6:20).

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Mt.19:21).

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not" (Lk.12:33).

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Ph.3:8).

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim.6:19).

"[Moses] esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward" (Heb.11:26).

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (Jas.2:5).

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev.3:18).

3. Paul was looked upon as having nothing, yet he possessed all things. He had no worldly goods, but he did have the promise of God: he was to possess all things very shortly, as soon as Jesus returned. He was an heir of God, even a *joint-heir with Christ* (Ro.8:16-17. See note, *Reward*—1 Cor.3:13-15.)

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn.14:2-3).

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Ro.8:16-17).

"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit.3:7).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pt.1:3-4).

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| <p><b>1 Call 1: Open your heart</b><br/> a. Paul's heart was opened<br/> b. The church's heart was closed</p> <p><b>2 Call 2: Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers—you are different</b><br/> a. In fellowship: Are righteous, not unrighteous<br/> b. In communion: Are light, not darkness<sup>psi</sup><br/> c. In attachment: Are Christ's, not Satan's<br/> d. In faith: Are a believer, not an infidel<br/> e. In worship: Are God's</p> | <p><b>J. The Ministry: Its Call to Separation and Consecration, 6:11-7:1</b></p> <p>11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.<br/> 12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.<br/> 13 Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.<br/> 14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?<br/> 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?<br/> 16 And what agreement hath</p> | <p>the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.<br/> 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,<br/> 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 7</b></p> <p><b>H</b>aving therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.</p> | <p>temple, not the temple of some idol</p> <p><b>3 Call 3: Come out from among unbelievers &amp; be separate</b><br/> a. Separate: Do not touch<br/> b. This is God's command<br/> c. The results<br/> 1) God will receive<br/> 2) God will be a Father to you</p> <p><b>4 Call 4: Cleanse yourselves &amp; perfect holiness</b></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

**J. The Ministry: Its Call to Separation and Consecration, 6:11-7:1**

(6:11-7:1) **Introduction:** when the subject of separation is approached, it is often dreaded. People just misunderstand what separation really means. To most people, spiritual separation means that they have to give up this, quit going there, and stop doing that. They feel it means never again having fun and enjoying the pleasures of this world. This is all most people see and think when they hear of spiritual separation. However, the greatest call in all the world is the call to separation and consecration. A person can be saved from this world and given absolute assurance of living forever as a son or daughter of God. Just imagine the glory of being truly adopted as a son or daughter of God! This is the truth of separation and consecration.

1. Call 1: open your heart (v.11-13).
2. Call 2: do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers—you are different (v.14-16).
3. Call 3: come out from among unbelievers and be separate (v.17-18).
4. Call 4: cleanse yourselves and perfect holiness (Ch.7:1).

**1** (6:11-13) **Heart, Open:** the first call is for an open heart. An open heart is an absolute essential for separation and consecration. No person is going to separate himself from the world and consecrate his life to God unless he has an open heart and mind.

1. Note how Paul's heart is open and full of affection for the Corinthian church.
  - a. "O ye Corinthians": he speaks directly to the church as though face to face, which always shows strong feelings.
  - b. "Our mouth is open to you": he has spoken openly and honestly, without hesitation or equivocation.
  - c. "Our heart is enlarged": his heart is open to them, and his affection has grown as he has been sharing the truth with them.
  - d. "You are not straitened in us": the word "straitened" (stenochoreisthe) means to be restricted, to lack room, to be pressed or distressed, to be in anguish or straits. Paul says there was no lack of room in his heart for the church; no restriction against them. He held nothing against them. His heart was wide open to receive them.
2. Note how narrow and closed the church was to Paul. Their hearts were straitened (stenochoreisthe), restricted, closed, had little if any room for Paul.

Paul appeals to them: "recompense," that is, return to him the same enlarged and open heart that he has shown them. Note that Paul calls them his children; therefore, just as children open their hearts and receive their parents with affection, he begs them to receive him and his instructions with affection.

**Thought 1.** Two things are absolutely essential if the church is going to ever hear the call of God and His ministry.

- 1) A minister with an open, honest, and loving heart toward God and His people.
- 2) A church with an open, honest, and loving heart toward God and His chosen minister.

**"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn.13:35).**

**"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn.15:12).**

**"Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Ro.12:9).**

**“Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness” (2 Cor.9:10).**

**“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph.4:14-15).**

**“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).**

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).**

**2** (6:14-16) **Separation:** the second call is for believers not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. The reasons are clearly stated: believers are *different from unbelievers, ever so different*. Just how different is seen in the word “unequally yoked” (heterozugountes). It refers back to the Old Testament where God forbade the plowing of an ox with an ass (Dt.22:10), or the union of different kinds of animals (Lev.19:19). The point is...

- that the union of a genuine believer with an unbeliever would be as different as the union between two kinds of animals.
- that the plowing through life of a believer with an unbeliever would be as difficult as the plowing of a field with an ox and an ass yoked together.

Genuine believers are radically different from unbelievers. Five areas clearly reveal the fact. Note that each area is introduced with a question.

1. Believers differ from unbelievers in fellowship. “What fellowship does righteousness have with unrighteousness?” The word “unrighteousness” (anomia) means lawlessness. Unbelievers have not and do not obey God. They live and do as they wish, not as God says. They reject God and what God says and go about doing their own thing. They rebel against God and His commandments, living lawless and unrighteous lives.

- a. They have not believed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to save them.

**“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 Jn.3:23).**

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

- b. They do not seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

**“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:33).**

- c. They do not hunger and thirst after righteousness.

**“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Mt.5:6).**

Note the word “fellowship” (metoche) means sharing and participation. How can a believer who focuses his life upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ share and participate with unbelievers who care little if anything about Jesus Christ and His call to righteousness?

2. Believers differ from unbelievers in communion. “What communion does light have with darkness?” The word “communion” (koinonia) means to be in union, in partnership, in a bound fellowship, to be closely bound together. It means to be so closely bound together that there is open and mutual sharing: what one has belongs to the other. The point is clear: there is no such communion or union between light and darkness. On the contrary, light and darkness are mutually exclusive, of different natures entirely. They cannot co-exist.

- a. Light is the symbol or picture of believers.

- ⇒ Believers are said to become “children of light” through belief in the Light, Jesus Christ Himself (Jn.12:36).
- ⇒ Believers have been transferred from the dominion of darkness into the Kingdom of Christ, the inheritance of light (Col.1:13).
- ⇒ Before they come to Christ, believers are not only in darkness but are an embodiment of darkness. But when they come to Christ, believers are placed in the Light and become an embodiment of the Light itself (Eph.5:8).
- ⇒ Believers are the light of the world (Mt.5:14-16).
- ⇒ Believers are to set their light on a candlestick—to make their light conspicuous (Mt.5:15).
- ⇒ Evil-doers shun the light (Jn.3:20f).
- ⇒ The creation of light is a picture of the expulsion of spiritual darkness (Gen.1:2f).

- b. Darkness is the symbol or picture of unbelievers. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Darkness*—2 Cor.6:14 for discussion.)

The point is striking: the nature of believers and unbelievers differs as radically as light differs from darkness.

- ⇒ As children of light, believers know the light of God, *live* by the light of God, and are *blessed* by the light of God.
- ⇒ As children of darkness, unbelievers know the darkness of this world, live by the darkness of the world, and receive only the blessings of the world’s darkness (temporary pleasure and possessions, and the hopelessness of death and judgment).

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3. Believers differ in attachment and covenant. “What concord does Christ have with Belial?” Belial refers to Satan. The name “Belial” refers in particular to the worthlessness, wickedness, and impurity of Satan’s character. He is pictured as the head or leader of unbelievers; whereas Christ is pictured as the Head or Leader of believers. The picture is striking:
- ⇒ the forces of good and evil stand opposed to each other.
  - ⇒ Christ stands opposed to Belial.
  - ⇒ the Righteous One stands opposed to the wicked one.
  - ⇒ the Worthy One stands opposed to the worthless one.
  - ⇒ the righteousness and purity of Christ stand opposed to the wickedness and impurity of Belial.

If a person does not follow Christ, then Scripture says he is following Belial or Satan. Therefore, it is impossible for a genuine believer to live in concord or harmony with those who follow the lead of Belial instead of Christ. Believers cannot be attached to those who live wicked and impure lives—persons who follow the leader of all unworthiness, that is, the devil.

**“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils” (1 Cor.10:21).**

4. Believers differ in faith or belief. “What part does he who believes have with an infidel?” The word “infidel” (apistou) means a person who has chosen to disbelieve in Christ and has deliberately rejected Him. The word “part” (meris) means a person’s portion, lot, sphere, realm, or participation in life.

The believer’s faith is pictured as changing his whole life: his belief causes him to move in a whole new sphere or realm of life. He may live among unbelievers, living and working next to them, but he moves in a different realm. His purpose and behavior upon earth is different:

- ⇒ The believer believes that Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world; the infidel does not.
- ⇒ The believer lives as Christ dictates; the infidel lives as he wishes.
- ⇒ The believer seeks to honor Christ by putting Christ first and serving Him; the infidel lives for self and the world and its possessions.

The very meaning, purpose, and significance of life differ radically between the believer and infidel. The believer seeks Christ and the things of Christ, whereas the infidel focuses his life primarily upon this world and self.

5. Believers differ in worship. “What agreement does the temple of God have with idols?” The word “agreement” (sunkatathesis) means a close understanding, a close union and bond of mind and spirit. There can be no agreement, no union, and no bond whatsoever between the temple of God and idols. Idolatry, above all else, is despised by God, for an idol is the substitute god of a man. An idol replaces God in a man’s life. A man’s worship or idol may range from self or personal ideas all the way to graven images or possessions. A man may worship and make an idol out of anything, such as...

- money
- land
- position
- power
- fame
- recognition
- houses
- vehicles
- recreation
- family
- religion
- profession

An idol can be anything to which a man gives his primary allegiance—his time, energy, money. Wherever a man puts his primary time, energy, and money and allegiance is where his heart and worship are.

This is one of the most significant differences between the believer and the unbeliever: the believer is not an idolater. In fact, he himself is the very temple of God. His very body is said to be one of the special places where God’s presence dwells. The believer is able to know, sense, and feel God’s presence and power within him. Note that Paul quotes from the Old Testament to illustrate his point:

**“I will dwell in them; and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (v.16; cp. Lev.26:11-12; Ezk.37:27).**

The point is clear: the believer worships the living and true God, not idols. He cannot agree with the worship of unbelievers; he cannot live and walk with unbelievers in worship, for his worship differs radically from the worship of unbelievers.

**“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (Jn.14:20).**

**“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).**

**“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor.3:16).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor.6:19).**

**“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor.6:16).**

**“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph.2:22).**

**“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.2:5).**

**“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).**

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(6:14) **Darkness** (skotos, skotia): the word is used in Scripture to describe both the state and the works of man. Darkness is very real in Scripture.

1. The darkness refers to the world of the natural man who does not know Jesus Christ (Jn.8:12). The natural man walks in ignorance...
  - of Jesus Christ.
  - of God as revealed by Jesus Christ.
  - of the real purpose and destiny of life as shown by Jesus Christ.

The natural man stumbles and gropes about in this world. He knows nothing other than the things of this world as he sees them. His only hope is the hope of living a long life before death overtakes him. He walks in darkness, ignorant of real life now and hereafter (cp. Jn.12:35, 46).
2. The darkness symbolizes unpreparedness and unwatchfulness. It symbolizes the time when evil occurs (1 Th.5:4-8).
3. The darkness is loved by men. Sinful men do their evil deeds under the cover of darkness. Men therefore hate the light because the light uncovers their evil behavior (Jn.3:19-20).
4. The darkness is hostile to light (see DEEPER STUDY # 4—Jn.1:5).

**3** (6:17-18) **Separation—Adoption**—the third call is for believers to come out from unbelievers and be separate. These two verses are a quote from the Old Testament (Is.52:11-12). When God led Israel out of the Babylonian captivity, He told them to leave everything behind. They were to take nothing out of the defiled land, for they were to begin a totally new life under His leadership. Note three significant points.

1. First, believers are to come out from among unbelievers and be separate. What does this mean? Of course, it does *not* mean that believers are to leave the cities, communities, and work places of the world. Believers are not to isolate themselves from unbelievers. It does not mean that believers have nothing to do with unbelievers—never talking, sharing, or associating with them. Both believers and unbelievers are in the world, and they have to share the world together.

What God means is at least two things.

- a. God means what has just been discussed (v.14-16). Believers differ from unbelievers; they differ radically. Therefore...
  - believers are not to be “unequally yoked” with unbelievers. They are not to be *yoked*, be intimately involved in a relationship with unbelievers.
  - believers are not to be in “fellowship” with unbelievers. They are not to share and participate in the worldly life and functions and events of unbelievers.
  - believers are not to be in “communion” with unbelievers. They are not to be closely bound in partnership with unbelievers. They are not to be so united with unbelievers that there has to be open and mutual sharing of person and possessions.
  - believers are not to be attached nor in covenant with unbelievers. Believers must not follow the worthless leader, Belial (Satan), of the unbelievers.
  - believers are not to move about in the sphere, the realm, the life and position of the infidel, the person who has rejected Jesus Christ.
  - believers are not to worship with unbelievers.
- b. God means what He says in this verse: believers are not to touch the unclean thing. Believers are no longer to live as the sinners of the world. They are not to participate in the sins of unbelievers.

**“Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Ro.1:29-32).**

**“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor.6:9-10).**

**“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19-21).**

**Thought 1.** Very simply stated, believers are *in* the world, but they are not to be *of* the world. They live *in* the world, but they are not to take part in the sins of the world.

2. Second, note that separation is a command of God Himself. “Be ye separate, *saith the Lord.*” There is to be no questioning, rationalizing, twisting, or ignoring of the command. God demands separation. In fact, separation is so important to God, it is one of the essentials to be *received by God* (see next point, point 3).

3. Third, the results of separation are phenomenal.

- a. If we separate ourselves and consecrate our lives to God, He *receives* us. The word means to accept, approve, welcome. Imagine being accepted and approved by God Himself! God cannot receive a person who lives in sin and shame, in worldliness and immorality, in covetousness and idolatry. But if a person comes out from the world and separates himself, God receives that person.

**“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).**

- b. If we separate ourselves and consecrate our lives to God, God will become our Father and adopt us as sons and daughters of His. Note that it is the “Lord Almighty” who adopts us, the only Person who has the *might and power* to do such a glorious thing. God’s relationship to us is that of a father to his sons and daughters! God *favors and nurtures us* with...

- |               |              |               |                |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| • love        | • provision  | • deliverance | • growth       |
| • affection   | • glory      | • guidance    | • reproof      |
| • care        | • protection | • direction   | • discipline   |
| • instruction | • reward     | • life        | • chastisement |

**“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn.1:12).**

**“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:15-17).**

**“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).**

**“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:5-6).**

**4** (7:1) **Separation:** the fourth call is for believers to cleanse themselves and to perfect holiness. God gives two of the most wonderful promises imaginable: to receive us and to adopt us as His sons and daughters. Therefore, God expects two things from us.

1. God expects us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. All sin makes man dirty, but there are certain sins that especially pollute his flesh and other sins that especially pollute his spirit. A glance at the list of sins in the verses of the former note will clearly show this (Ro.1:29-32; 1 Cor.6:9-10; Gal.5:3-7). Sins of the flesh would be such sins as immorality and drunkenness, and sins of the spirit would be such sins as hatred and jealousy.

**“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).**

**“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor.7:1).**

**“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim.2:21).**

**“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded” (Jas.4:8).**

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).**

**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn.1:9).**

**“Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil” (Is.1:16).**

**“O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?” (Jer.4:14).**

2. God expects us to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Note that this is continuous action. The word “perfecting” (epitelountes) is an aggressive word demanding aggressive action. It means not only to practice but to finish and complete. The believer is, of course, to *practice holiness*. That is, he is to practice doing the things that will make him holy. But he is to do *much more*: he is to pursue holiness aggressively, seeking to perfect and complete holiness in his life. Of course, the believer can never become perfectly holy: he cannot become God. But he is to set his mind and heart upon becoming holy.

Note the motive for holiness: the fear of God. The word fear means not only fear, but also awe and reverence. When a man really sees and understands God and what God has done for him he ceases to fear men. Instead he fears God and stands in awe of God, seeking to please God by living a holy and pure life.

**“And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation” (Lk.1:50).**

**“But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).**

**“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).**

**“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb.12:14).**

**“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pt.1:15-16).**

**“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness” (2 Pt.3:11).**

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| <p><b>1 The revival had a solid foundation: A faithful minister</b></p> <p>a. Paul's great desire: Reconciliation</p> <p>b. Paul's great love</p><br><p>c. Paul's boldness in proclaiming the truth</p> <p>d. Paul's confidence that the church would respond</p><br><p>e. Paul's faithfulness despite great trouble within &amp; without</p><br><p>f. Paul's great sufficiency: God &amp; His comfort</p> | <p><b>K. The Ministry: Its End—A Transforming Revival, 7:2-16</b></p> <p>2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.</p> <p>3 I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.</p> <p>4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.</p> <p>5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.</p> <p>6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;</p> <p>7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.</p> <p>8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.</p> <p>9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might</p> | <p>receive damage by us in nothing.</p> <p>10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.</p> <p>11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.</p> <p>12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.</p> <p>13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.</p> <p>14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth.</p> <p>15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.</p> <p>16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.</p> | <p>d. The church experienced true sorrow: Godly sorrow vs. worldly sorrow<sup>DS1</sup></p><br><p>e. The church gave evidence of godly sorrow</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Earnestness</li> <li>2) Clearing themselves</li> <li>3) Indignation with sin</li> <li>4) Fear, alarm</li> <li>5) Desire for fellowship</li> <li>6) Zeal, loyalty</li> <li>7) Readiness to punish</li> <li>8) Innocence</li> </ol><br><p>f. The minister's purpose for reaching out to the church became clear to all: To make the church aware that it was genuine; it truly cared</p><br><p><b>3 The revival brought a renewed spirit to a young disciple</b></p> <p>a. The young disciple was one of God's instruments to bring revival</p> <p>b. The young disciple had been informed of the church's good qualities: The minister had boasted in the church</p><br><p>c. The young disciple joyed greatly over the church's submissive obedience to the proclamation of God's Word</p><br><p><b>4 Conclusion: The minister held great confidence in the church since its revival</b></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS DESCRIPTION, 2:12-7:16**

**K. The Ministry: Its End—A Transforming Revival, 7:2-16**

(7:2-16) **Introduction:** this is the passage that covers the great revival that took place in Corinth. All the hurt that Paul had suffered from the Corinthians and all the hours of prayer that he had offered up in their behalf bore fruit—great fruit. The church repented. And God sent His Spirit of revival upon them. This is a great passage on the factors involved in revival. It is a great passage on the end toward which the ministry aims: the end of a transforming revival.

1. The revival had a solid foundation: a faithful minister (v.2-6).
2. The revival was stirred by godly sorrow and repentance (v.7-12).
3. The revival brought a renewed spirit to a young disciple (v.13-15).
4. Conclusion: the minister held great confidence in the church since its revival (v.16).

**1** (7:2-6) **Revival—Minister—Faithfulness:** the revival had a solid foundation—a faithful minister. Faithfulness is an absolute essential if there is to be revival in the church. No church has ever experienced more problems than the Corinthian church.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 7:2-16

- ⇒ The Corinthian church was filled with division (1 Cor.3:3); pride (1 Cor.3:18; 4:18; 8:1; 14:37); immorality (1 Cor.5:1); fraud (1 Cor.6:8); questionable practices (1 Cor.8:1f); abusing the Lord's Supper (1 Cor.11:17f); abusing spiritual gifts (1 Cor.12-14); and denying the bodily resurrection of believers (1 Cor.15:12f).
- ⇒ The Corinthian church had some members who were levelling every charge imaginable against Paul, ranging from being a poor speaker and damaging the church's image over to stealing from the offerings and living an immoral life (see note, *Paul, Accusations Against*—2 Cor.1:12-22 for discussion).

If there has ever been a church where revival seemed impossible, it was probably Corinth. Yet, revival came in the force of God's Spirit. One of the primary reasons was the faithfulness of its minister, Paul the apostle. These four verses cover his faithfulness.

1. There was Paul's (the minister's) great desire to be received by the church and be reconciled with those who opposed him. Note how he wrote about securing reconciliation.
  - a. He tenderly and warmly appealed to the opposition: receive us. He let them know that he wanted reconciliation; he wanted to be received by them.
  - b. He declared that he was innocent of the charges levelled against him.
    - ⇒ He had wronged no man: treated no man unjustly.
    - ⇒ He had corrupted no man; he had not destroyed any person either morally or doctrinally. He had lived a moral life, always guarding himself; and he had preached and taught only the Word of God, not the ideas of other men nor of his own mind.
    - ⇒ He had defrauded no man; he had not taken advantage of anyone financially or morally. He had not stolen or confiscated money from the offerings nor taken advantage of families or friends who helped and supported his ministry.

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” (Mt.23:25).**

**“And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you” (Lk.3:13).**

**“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Ro.12:17).**

**“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Ro.13:8).**

2. There was Paul's (the minister's) great love for the church. Note how softly and tenderly Paul spoke to the church and to those who opposed him.
  - ⇒ “I do not speak this to condemn you”: that is, I do not mean to accuse or down you while defending myself.
  - ⇒ “You are in our hearts”: I love you—love you so much I would die with you and for you, even as I long to live with you.

The point to see is Paul's great love for his people—a love that reaches out to people *despite the terrible wrong* they had been doing to him. Great love—love that forgives wrongdoing—is an absolute essential for revival.

**“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn.15:13).**

**“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity” (Eph.6:24).**

**“So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us” (1 Th.2:8).**

**“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 Jn.3:14).**

**“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).**

**“And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another” (2 Jn.5).**

3. There was Paul's (the minister's) boldness in proclaiming the truth. Glance at the awful corruptions of the church listed above in this note and imagine the terrible accusations against Paul. Then take a moment and think through how boldly Paul has written in I and II Corinthians. His boldness is clearly seen! The faithful minister of God must always confront error and corruption with a clear and bold proclamation of God's Word. This is without question one of the essential requirements for revival.

**“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops” (Mt.10:27).**

**“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).**

**“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).**

**“These things command and teach” (1 Tim.4:11).**

**“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim.2:25).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

4. There was Paul's (the minister's) confidence that the people would respond. The word "glorying" means *boasting*. In the present passage the church has already repented and experienced revival, and Paul was actually experiencing the joy and rejoicing of the church's repentance. He was boasting in them, for *his confidence in them had proven to be well-founded*.

The point is this: Paul had always hoped. He never lacked confidence in the Corinthian church—that they would repent and be reconciled to God and to him, their minister. It was his confidence in them that kept him going after them. He knew they were not hopeless. If people are hopeless, then there is no need to continue trying to reach them. But no people are hopeless until God Himself determines they are and removes them from the earth.

**Thought 1.** Confidence, hope, and belief in the church are essential if the minister is to stay after a people. Revival can come only as a minister perseveres after his people, *ever believing* that they will repent of their sins and turn to God.

**"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (1 Th.2:19-20).**

5. There was Paul's (the minister's) faithfulness despite great trouble both within and without. Very simply, Paul is saying that he, his flesh, never had rest from trouble.

⇒ He was troubled on every side: in every conceivable way and place.

⇒ There were fightings without from those who opposed him. From people both inside and outside of the church there was criticism, censorship, ridicule, abuse, attacks, and persecution.

⇒ There were fears within: concern for the church and fellow believers, for the Lord's mission and the gospel, for the lost and the needy.

**"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Ph.1:29).**

**"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not" (2 Cor.4:1).**

**"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor.4:16-17).**

**"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim.1:12).**

**"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim.3:10-12).**

**"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt.1:6-7).**

**"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pt.4:12-13).**

6. There was Paul's (the minister's) great sufficiency: God and His comfort. When God's dear servants are under attack, God always meets the need of His servants. If a minister has ever needed God's presence and comfort, Paul did. Disliked, belittled, criticized, accused and slandered by others, and ever weighed down with a driving sense of duty and mission, Paul desperately needed God to sustain him as he worked with the Corinthians to correct the sin and errors within the church.

Remember: Paul had probably made a hurried visit to Corinth after writing I Corinthians. He had heard that many had not received his exhortation to correct matters and that things had deteriorated. Apparently when he arrived at the church he was rejected (2 Cor.2:1; 12:14; 13:1-2. See note—2 Cor.1:15-17 and Introduction, *Special Features*, pt.3, I Corinthians.) Paul had left Corinth, and after regaining his composure he had sat down and written a severe letter calling for repentance. This severe letter was sent by Titus. It was the return of Titus from Corinth that is referred to in this verse. Paul is anxiously awaiting word to see if the church has listened and finally returned to the Lord and holiness.

The word was positive: the church had repented. Their repentance is discussed in the next few verses. The present point is this: God met Paul's need by returning Titus safely with the answer to Paul's prayers: the church had repented. Note how descriptively Paul gives all the credit to God:

**"God, that comforts those that are cast down, comforts us by the coming of Titus" (v.6).**

**Thought 1.** God will always meet the need of His faithful servant. Sometimes it will be dramatic just as it was with Paul. Sometimes it will be in some natural and ordinary way. But note this: Paul had to endure heavy trials for a long time before God moved. Just like Christ, Paul had to learn obedience by the things which he suffered (Heb.5:8). God meets the need of His servant, but He *grows* His servant while He meets that need.

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt.28:19-20).**

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (Jn.14:18).

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2 Cor.1:3-4).

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pt.5:7).

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pt.5:10).

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

**2** (7:7-12) **Sorrow, Godly; Worldly—Repentance—Revival:** the revival was stirred by godly sorrow and repentance. These verses give clear insight into what brings about revival within a corrupt and divided church, a church that is attacking its minister.

1. The church had an earnest desire to correct its evil. They longed, yearned, and ached to be reconciled to their minister.
  - ⇒ They mourned: wept, wailed, lamented over the sin within their midst and over the mistreatment of their minister.
  - ⇒ They now had a “fervent mind,” a zeal to correct the sin and to defend Paul, their dear minister.
2. The church experienced sorrow. Paul had proclaimed the truth: the church needed to cleanse itself of sin and of false teachers. It needed to stop the attacks upon its minister. It needed to repent and get back to ministering for Christ instead of living in sin and being embroiled in controversy. The church would not let Paul stand in the pulpit, so he had proclaimed the truth in a letter to them. The letter had done its work: the church, at least a majority of its members, had been stricken with a spirit of sorrow.

Note Paul’s spirit: he regretted the necessity of having to take such a stern approach. But he was glad he had declared the truth, for the letter had led to the church’s conviction and sorrow.

3. The minister rejoiced, but note over what: Paul’s rejoicing was not over the church being made to feel guilty and sorrowful, but over the fact of their repentance. He says that he would not damage or harm them in any way whatsoever.

**Thought 1.** What a crucial lesson for so many believers who find joy in the guilt and sorrow of those who had opposed them.

4. The church’s experience of true sorrow: godly sorrow vs. worldly sorrow (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Cor.7:10 for discussion).
5. The church’s evidence of godly sorrow. There are eight results of godly sorrow, of true repentance and revival mentioned in this verse.
  - a. Carefulness or *earnestness and eagerness* to correct the sin, pollution, dirt, wrong, and hurt.
  - b. The cleansing of oneself: the church acknowledged its sin and repented. The church turned away from sin and turned back to God. It dealt with the leader of the opposition against Paul (v.12) and apparently dealt with and corrected all the wrongs in its midst.
  - c. Indignation with sin: there was anger at the fact that the sin was ever allowed to seep into the church. In fact, there was a renewed anger at sin itself—a renewed commitment to combat sin with all the resources available in the power of God’s Spirit.
  - d. Fear: there was fear of the wrath of God and fear that great damage had been done to the church and to one of God’s great servants, and to the name of Christ.
  - e. Vehement desire: there was a fervent desire to correct all the wrong done.
  - f. Zeal: there was a zealous commitment to tackle the task immediately because so much wrong had been done. A strenuous and long effort was needed to overcome for Christ. There was also a zeal to lead all sinners to repentance.
  - g. Revenge: this means vengeance, punishment, the avenging of wrong. There was a renewed sense of justice, of punishing and correcting wrong-doers. This was necessary if some persons persisted in their sin and in attacking the minister, and in disturbing the fellowship of the church. There was a renewed commitment to allow no more open sin or underhanded divisiveness.
  - h. Innocence: the church, by its godly sorrow and repentance, had cleared itself. Note the words “in all things.” What a glorious picture of true repentance and of God’s glorious grace. As corrupt and polluted as the church was, when they truly repented, God cleared them of *all things!*
6. The minister’s purpose for reaching out to the church became clear to all. This is a difficult verse to break down into clauses, even in the Greek. The point deals with Paul’s purpose for staying after the Corinthians. He straightened out the mess in their midst. Paul had not written and called them to repentance...
  - for the sake of the wrong-doer,
  - nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong (himself),
  - but for the sake of the church as a whole: that the church might learn its true character. It is a genuine church; the church does care for its minister and for righteousness and for the Lord’s cause.

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(7:10) **Godly Sorrow—Worldly Sorrow—Repentance:** sin and irresponsibility cause regret and disappointment, guilt, and remorse. In short, sin causes sorrow. But sorrow has no healing power by itself. Only repentance, a change of mind or a turn of life, can heal the heart of man (see note 7 and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 17:29-30).

There are two kinds of sorrow.

1. Worldly sorrow. This sorrow can be a sorrow over doing wrong or of coming up short from what one expects. It is a violation of one's values. It can also be a sorrow caused by being found out, or suffering consequences, or being punished. In either case "the sorrow of the world works death" (2 Cor.7:10). It works death in two ways:

- ⇒ It eats a man up with guilt and remorse, depression and despair, defeat and inactivity (cp. Judas, Mt.27:3-5).
- ⇒ It embitters a man in rebellion and resentment against the consequences and punishment of sin (cp. Esau, Heb.12:16-17).

2. Godly sorrow. This is the sorrow that is wrought in the heart of the believer by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. When the believer does wrong or falls short, the Holy Spirit is grieved (Eph.4:30). His work is quenched (1 Th.5:19). His ministry of making the believer like Jesus is hindered and hampered. So He begins His convicting work. Under the weight of conviction the believer's heart is thereby led to repent. The believer changes his mind and turns his behavior around to what it should be (cp. Peter, Mt.26:75). Godly sorrow *always* leads to repentance. A believer who refuses to repent wallows around and eventually dwells in the realm of worldly sorrow. He always bears the mark of indwelling and unconfessed sin and failure.

**"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Mt.5:4).**

**"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).**

**"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor.7:10).**

**"Therefore also now, saith the LORD turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12).**

**"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron.7:14).**

**"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Ps.34:18).**

**"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps.51:17).**

**"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Is.55:7).**

**"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Is.66:2).**

**3** (7:13-15) **Revival**—Titus: the revival brought a renewed spirit to a young disciple. The points of the outline for the most part cover this discussion. Revival always stirs a renewed spirit within young disciples. This was certainly true of Titus.

1. The young disciple, Titus, had the wonderful privilege of being one of God's instruments in bringing revival to the church. Being in the midst of a church-wide repentance (revival) had eased his concern for the church and given him a *refreshed and rested spirit*.

Note that Titus was so affected by the revival that his joy *greatly* affected Paul. The joy of the Corinthian revival not only stirred joy within Paul, but the excitement of Titus caused the joy of Paul to overflow.

2. The young disciple had been informed of the church's good qualities by Paul. Apparently, Titus had heard Paul boast in the qualities and strengths of the Corinthians many times. He had heard Paul share his expectation of God granting a revival of true repentance among the Corinthians. The young disciple had the privilege of witnessing the proof of a true church: the Corinthian church proved worthy of Paul's boasting.

3. The young disciple joyed greatly over the church's submissive obedience to the proclamation of God's Word. Titus, no doubt, not only delivered the letter written by Paul, but he also proclaimed the Word of God himself. Note how the church responded: with fear and trembling. They realized that they stood before a holy and righteous God who loved them, but they also realized that a loving God demanded repentance or else the facing of judgment. They feared lest they fail to do all that God's wonderful love demanded.

**4** (7:16) **Conclusion**: the minister held great confidence in the church since its revival and repentance. The church had experienced...

- a revival of unity: its problem of division was solved (1 Cor.3:3).
- a revival of humility: its problem of pride was solved (1 Cor.3:18; 4:18).
- a revival of morality: its problem of tolerating immorality in its midst was solved (1 Cor.5:1).
- a revival of honesty: its problem of tolerating the wrongdoing and cheating within its midst was corrected (1 Cor.6:8).
- a revival of love: its problem of allowing questionable social practices and stumbling blocks in its midst was corrected (1 Cor.8:1f).
- a revival of observing the Lord's Supper properly: its problem of allowing abuse of the Lord's Supper was corrected (1 Cor.11:17f).
- a revival of exercising the spiritual gifts properly: its problem of allowing the abuse of the gifts was corrected (1 Cor.12-14).
- a revival of doctrinal truth: the problem of allowing doctrinal error was handled and corrected (1 Cor.15:12f).

| CHAPTER 8  |  |  |
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| IV. THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL COLLECTIONS, 8:1-9:15   |  |  |
| A. The Challenge to Give, 8:1-15   |  |  |
| <p><b>1 Know the spirit of the Macedonians: They gave because of the grace &amp; favor of God</b></p> <p>a. They gave in spite of terrible trial &amp; deep poverty, &amp; they gave liberally</p> <p>b. They gave beyond their ability—willingly</p> <p>c. They gave insistently, begging for the privilege to share</p> <p>d. They gave themselves to the Lord first</p> <p><b>2 Excel in the same spirit of giving</b></p> <p>a. The grace of giving is to be completed in you</p> <p>b. The other graces abound in you; therefore, the grace of giving is to abound in you</p> | <p>Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;</p> <p>2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.</p> <p>3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;</p> <p>4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.</p> <p>5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.</p> <p>6 Inasmuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.</p> <p>7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.</p> | <p>8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.</p> <p>9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.</p> <p>10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.</p> <p>11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.</p> <p>12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.</p> <p>13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:</p> <p>14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:</p> <p>15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.</p> <p><b>3 Prove the sincerity of your love</b></p> <p><b>4 Know the example of Christ—He gave</b></p> <p><b>5 Remember your own past record</b></p> <p><b>6 Give readily &amp; willingly</b></p> <p>a. Give yourselves to the mission</p> <p>b. Finish the mission</p> <p>c. Give readily &amp; willingly</p> <p>d. The reason: God judges according to what a man has</p> <p><b>7 Meet the needs of one another—equally</b></p> <p>a. One is not to be eased &amp; another burdened</p> <p>b. Each need is to be equally met</p> <p>c. Scripture supports this instruction</p> |

**DIVISION IV**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL COLLECTIONS, 8:1-9:15**

**A. The Challenge to Give, 8:1-15**

(8:1-15) **Introduction:** the churches throughout Judea were suffering great poverty and needed help badly. This is what this passage is about: meeting the desperate need of fellow believers and human beings who were being threatened with starvation and death, many of whom were without Christ and doomed to an eternity apart from Christ.

The need of missions is an *unending call*, a *call that never ends*. The desperate needs of the world must always confront man. Why? Because the world is sinful and corrupt, full of greed and covetousness, banking and hoarding. People who *have* more than they need should be helping and giving, serving and ministering. Instead they are banking and hoarding. The result is a world reeling in desperate need. The challenge to the church is clear! *Give*—give all you are and have to reach and help the desperate of the world.

1. Know the spirit of the Macedonians: they gave because of the grace and favor of God (v.1-5).
2. Excel in the same spirit of giving (v.6-7).
3. Prove the sincerity of your love (v.8).
4. Know the example of Christ—He gave (v.9).
5. Remember your own past record (v.10).
6. Give readily and willingly (v.11-12).
7. Meet the needs of one another—equally (v.13-15).

**1** (8:1-5) **Stewardship—Giving—Offerings:** the first challenge is to know the spirit of the Macedonians. The Roman province of Macedonia included all of northern Greece. The known churches of the region were Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. The first two are well known by every generation of Christians because of the two letters addressed to them in the New Testament. At one time, the Macedonian province had been known for its natural resources. But down through the centuries the area had been ravaged by war, and Rome had stripped it of its wealth. Because of this the

churches of the area were somewhat poor in material wealth. But note a glorious fact: they were extremely wealthy in the grace of God. God had bestowed an *abundance of grace* upon the churches—so much grace that Paul is able to use them as a dynamic example of God’s grace. Remember that grace means the favor and blessings of God, all the good things of life which God gives us—the greatest of which is salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. God’s blessings were “bestowed on” the churches. The idea is that God just poured or laid blessing after blessing upon the churches. They knew the grace, the favor, and the blessings of God in a very, very special way. Note four dynamic facts about their testimony.

1. They gave to help others, and gave liberally. They gave despite terrible trial and deep poverty. There was great suffering among the believers and churches of Macedonia.

⇒ Believers suffered afflictions and persecutions, and the afflictions were a “great trial” for them to bear. When they accepted Christ and took their stand for Him, they were heavily persecuted.

**“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost” (1 Th.1:6).**

**“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews” (1 Th.2:14).**

**“So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure” (2 Th.1:4).**

⇒ Believers suffered “deep poverty,” which means utter poverty, poverty down to the depths. As mentioned, this was due to the ravages of war and the battles which were fought on their own soil, and to the heavy taxation and stripping of resources by the Roman government.

However, note that the believers were filled with an “abundance of joy.” They had come to know Christ: their sins had been forgiven and the Spirit of God was living in their hearts and lives, strengthening and guiding them through all. God was now looking after their lives and taking care of them. God was giving them the absolute assurance of His care and provision day by day and of eternal life when they departed this world. They joyed and rejoiced in all that God was doing for them and was going to do for them.

The point is this: they knew the Lord—really knew Him—and they were committed to living for the Lord. Therefore, when someone needed help, they were ready to help. They gave liberally. The word “liberality” (*haplotetos*) means singleness of mind, sincerely, with an open and free heart. The churches of Macedonia determined to give, to open their hearts and give all they could.

2. They gave beyond their ability. They willingly gave: no special appeal had to be made; no pressure had to be executed. They gave freely and readily. And note: they did not give according to their ability, but they *went beyond* what they were able to give.

3. They gave insistently, begging for the privilege to share. Apparently, they were giving so much that Paul felt it was just beyond their means. However they insisted, and note why: they wanted to share in the *fellowship of ministering to the saints*. Some fellow believers were in need, and they wanted the privilege of fellowshiping with them *by giving to them*. Note how *giving* is said to be a means of *fellowshipping with others*.

4. They gave themselves to the Lord first. This is a most striking verse and point. What it means is this: these dear believers gave all they were and had to the Lord. They used this occasion, the occasion of an offering—the occasion when they were asked to help others—to *rededicate* their lives and possessions to Christ. Note that this involved three steps:

⇒ the dedication of their lives to Christ: all they were.

⇒ the dedication of their possessions to Christ: all they had.

⇒ the dedication of themselves to the minister, Paul, in order to serve by his side and to allow them to serve Christ together.

Paul distinctly says that they gave “their own selves to the Lord, and *unto us* by the will of God.” This is essential if the needs of a world reeling in desperate needs are to ever be reached: believers must join hand in hand with the ministers of God.

**Thought 1.** The dynamic example of the Macedonian church needs to be studied by the churches of every generation. They clearly demonstrate the spirit that is absolutely essential for meeting the desperate needs of the world, a world that is lost and doomed unless it is reached with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Mt.25:35-36).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).**

**“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” (Heb.13:3).**

**“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jas.1:27).**

**“Is it [the fast that pleases God] not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” (Is.58:7).**

**2** (8:6-7) **Stewardship—Giving:** the second challenge is to excel in the same spirit of giving as the Macedonians. Sometime earlier the Corinthian church had begun to take up an offering for the poor churches of Judea, but something had happened that caused the church to stop the project. Just what is not actually known, but it was probably all the trouble and problems covered in the letters of I and II Corinthians. Since the church had experienced revival, it was now time for the offering project to be completed. Very simply, Paul says two things that apply to every church.

1. The grace of giving is to be completed in you. The Corinthians were to financially support the Lord’s work, the very ministry of God Himself. They were to support the ministry of meeting the needs of desperate people and of proclaiming the gospel to a lost and dying world. This glorious privilege is clearly seen when it is remembered that God has not given to angels the privilege of supporting His work; God has committed this grace, this privilege only to men.

2. The other graces abound in you; therefore, the grace of giving is to abound in you. The Corinthians had an abundance of spiritual resources, especially the gifts that involved...

- faith: the trust in God that enabled them to walk through life victoriously and to serve God faithfully.
- utterance: the ability to share the gospel and the doctrines of God’s Word.
- knowledge: the understanding of God’s Word.
- diligence: the energy and zeal to carry on the ministry of the Lord Jesus.
- love to us: the care for the minister of God who serves Christ so faithfully.

Because the church was so strong in these gifts, they needed to abound in the gift of giving as well. Giving and helping others in their desperate need was as much a duty as any other responsibility.

**“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim.6:18).**

**“But to do good and to communicate [give] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).**

**3** (8:8) **Stewardship—Giving:** the third exhortation is to prove the sincerity of your love. Note that Paul does not command the Corinthians to give. If giving is forced or coerced, it benefits nothing; it does not please God. God is pleased only with gifts that are willingly and cheerfully given. He blesses only those who willingly help others. Therefore, giving must be based upon two things.

1. Giving must be based upon love for those who are lost and needy. Giving must be based upon love for the Lord Jesus who has commanded us to go into all the world to reach and help the people of the world.

2. Giving must be based upon the example of those who give sacrificially. In the case of the Corinthians, they had the dynamic example of the Macedonians. The Corinthians should have been stirred to follow the example of such sacrificial giving. In our case, we should be stirred to follow the dynamic example of all those who give willingly and sacrificially.

Note how love is proven by action. Love cannot be known unless it is demonstrated by deeds of compassion and giving. Love demands sacrificial giving. In fact, there is no love unless there is sacrificial giving.

**“...Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mt.22:39).**

**“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:35).**

**“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn.15:12).**

**“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

**“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).**

**4** (8:9) **Stewardship—Giving—Jesus Christ, Humiliation; Condescension:** the fourth challenge is to know the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Above all others, Jesus Christ demonstrates not only that we are to give, but how we are to give.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ was rich. He was the Son of God, possessing the very nature and being and fullness of God (Jn.1:1-3; Ph.2:6).

⇒ He dwelt in the glory and majesty, dominion and power of the Godhead (Jude 24-25).

⇒ He dwelt in light which no man can approach, in all the splendor and brilliance of the Godhead (1 Tim.6:16).

⇒ He possessed every good and perfect thing that can be possessed (Jas.1:17).

⇒ He had all the worship and adoration of heavenly beings (Rev.4:6f; 5:11f).

2. The Lord Jesus Christ became poor. This refers to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, that is, to His condescension or humiliation. It refers to the great gulf He had to span in coming to earth. The Lord Jesus Christ, who was King of kings and Lord of lords, who was God of very God, left all the glory and worship of heaven to become a man. He who was...

- God became an humble man.
- the Lord took on flesh and blood.
- the Holy God took the place of the lowest.
- the Sovereign Lord became the subject.
- the Beloved became the rejected.

- the Perfect One became the Sacrifice for sin.
- the Life became the Substitute for death.

As Scripture declares so aptly, “He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.” Because He became poor, we can become rich. We can receive the adoption of sons, actually become sons and daughters of God and live with Him forever and ever in the new heavens and earth (2 Cor.6:17-18).

The point is this: since Christ willingly sacrificed so much to help us, we ought to sacrifice to help those in need. Just as Christ gave everything for us when we were in desperate need, so we are to give everything to meet the needs of those who are desperately lost in this world.

**“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Ph.2:5-8).**

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).**

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**5** (8:10) **Stewardship—Giving:** the fifth challenge is to remember your own past record. As mentioned above, the Corinthians had undertaken the mission project of meeting the needs of the poor churches in Judea, but they had backed off the project when divisiveness had reared its ugly head in the church (see note 2—2 Cor.8:6-7). Now that they had experienced revival, Paul gives his advice: pick up the mission project again. “This is expedient for you”: expedient and beneficial for you personally and for your ministry. Recommitting yourselves to missions will stir God to bless the church.

Note that the church had been forward, that is, *zealous* in undertaking the mission project about a year before. Since the revival of recommitment, they should be *even more zealous* to launch a ministry of missions for the Lord.

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Lk.10:36-37).**

**“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:16).**

**“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph.6:7).**

**6** (8:11-12) **Stewardship—Giving:** the sixth challenge is to give readily and willingly. Four quick points are made in these two verses, points that give clear directions on missions to any church that is willing to listen. Note: Paul is no longer giving advice; he is now charging the church to give itself to missions and to undertake this particular mission project.

1. Give yourselves to missions. This is implied, understood. Paul is dealing with one mission project, but underlying the whole discussion is the absolute necessity for a permanent commitment to missions. After a mission need has been met, there is always another need to meet—a need just as critical. The world reels under the weight of sin and disease, corruption and death, hunger and thirst, poverty and ignorance, homelessness and exposure to the elements. Literally thousands die prematurely and without Christ every day—die because no one cared enough to help them. The call of missions is the constant call of Christ:

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).**

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

2. Finish the mission. The Corinthian church had begun the project; they needed to finish it. The church is to reach out in mission projects all over the world, and it is to finish the projects. Remember that Jerusalem was a foreign field to the Corinthians.

3. Give readily and willingly—lay hold of “a willing mind.” Note that this is the first requirement when a person gives. Above all else, he is to give willingly.

4. The reason is simply stated: God is going to judge us for what we give. The idea is this: in the day of judgment God is going to look at what we gave and at what we kept back. If we have banked, hoarded, and lived extravagantly, He is going to reject us. But if we gave all that we had beyond our needs, then we will be “accepted,” that is, approved to live in the presence of Christ who sacrificed all He had for us. (See outline and notes—Mt.19:16-22; 19:23-26; 19:27-30 for more discussion.)

“But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and behold, all things are clean unto you” (Lk.11:41).

“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Lk.12:33).

“Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me” (Lk.18:22).

“Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea” (Act 11:29).

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor.16:2).

“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (2 Cor.8:12).

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor.9:7).

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee” (Dt.16:17).

**7** (8:13-15) **Stewardship—Giving:** the seventh challenge is to meet the needs of one another—equally. It is critical to note that these verses are not dealing with possessions or property, not with what a person has, but with *needs*.

1. One person’s need is not to be eased while another person is left burdened and without help.
2. Each need is to be equally met. This is an explosive principle, for it goes contrary to what society practices. It eliminates the hoarding and keeping of goods beyond our needs. God wants the needs of the starving and lost masses met. The only way they can be met is by giving all we are and have *beyond what is needed* to take care of our own families.
3. The Old Testament Scripture supports this principle (Ex.16:18). When God miraculously fed Israel with the manna from the sky, the people were to gather only what they needed. If they gathered too much and attempted to hoard and put it back, it spoiled overnight. If a person was unable to gather enough due to some illness or inability, his need was either met by the help of others or by God Himself.

The point is striking: every believer is to use all he has and give it to meet the needs of a desperate world. He is to particularly meet the needs of fellow believers. (Again, see outline and notes—Mt.19:16-22; 19:23-26; 19:27-30 for more discussion.)

“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Lk.12:33).

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim.6:17-19).

“But to do good and to communicate [give] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).

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| <p><b>1 They care for the church—earnestly care</b><br/>a. Stirred by God</p> <p>b. Stirred by personal concern</p> <p><b>2 They have a reputation for the gospel, a testimony for witnessing</b></p> <p><b>3 They are representatives chosen by the church in order to avoid charges of misconduct against the minister</b></p> | <p><b>B. The Men Who Handle the Collection, 8:16-24</b></p> <p>16 But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.</p> <p>17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.</p> <p>18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;</p> <p>19 And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind;</p> <p>20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this</p> | <p>abundance which is administered by us:</p> <p>21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.</p> <p>22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you.</p> <p>23 Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.</p> <p>24 Wherefore show ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.</p> | <p><b>4 They are diligent in many things, but especially in collections</b></p> <p><b>5 They are partners of the minister</b><br/>a. Fellow helpers<br/>b. Messengers of the church &amp; of Christ</p> <p><b>6 They are to be loved by the church</b></p> |
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## DIVISION IV

### THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL COLLECTIONS, 8:1-9:15

#### B. The Men Who Handle the Collection, 8:16-24

(8:16-24) **Introduction:** men who handle collections in the church have an important function, very important. They hold a position that is very visible. People are always aware of the persons who handle their money. Therefore, within the church it is important that such persons be trustworthy and moral; that they live a good and clean life, and that they have a strong Christian testimony.

In the present passage, a special mission project is being undertaken to help the poor churches in Judea. A large sum of money ("this abundance") is involved. Paul wants to make absolutely sure that everything is above board, that he leaves no door open for questioning what happened to the money. He wants to protect the name of Christ and his own name. Therefore, he chooses Titus to head up a delegation of men to handle the offerings. And note: the men are chosen by the church, not by Paul (v.19).

Again, the importance of the men who handle collections cannot be overstressed. For this reason, this passage discusses these men and their character. (See outline and notes—Acts 20:4-6; 1 Cor. 16:1-4 for more discussion.)

1. They care for the church—earnestly care (v.16-17).
2. They have a reputation for the gospel, a testimony for witnessing (v.18).
3. They are representatives chosen by the church in order to avoid charges of misconduct against the minister (v.19-21).
4. They are diligent in many things, but especially in collections (v.22).
5. They are partners of the minister (v.23).
6. They are to be loved by the church (v.24).

**I** (8:16-17) **Stewardship—Offerings:** men who handle collections (ushers) care for the church, earnestly care. Paul says that Titus had the "same earnest care" for the Corinthian church that he had. Imagine caring for the church as much as Paul cared! The word "earnest" means zeal. Men who handle collections must have a zealous concern for the church and its welfare. But note where the concern and zeal must come from.

1. The concern for the church must come from God. It was God that *put the care and concern* into the heart of Titus. Titus did not care for the church...

- because of tradition.
- because it was the church of his parents or forefathers.
- because he felt that it made him acceptable to God.
- because he sought to be seen and recognized by the people.

Titus had a *zealous care* for the church because God had *put the care* into his heart. Men who handle the collections must know God personally, know Him so intimately that God can move upon their hearts and put a spirit of caring within them.

2. The concern for the church must come from within the heart. This was true of Titus. Titus was not void of feelings; his heart was tender and warm toward the church. He had a natural care for the church and for the things of God.

The point is this: the men who handle the collections must have a zealous concern for the church, a concern that comes both from the Spirit of God and from a warm, tender heart for the things of God.

**2** (8:18) **Stewardship—Offerings:** men who handle collections (ushers) have a reputation for the gospel, that is, for believing the gospel and for bearing witness to it. The man mentioned in this verse is never named, and any attempt to identify him is futile and worthless conjecture. Three significant things are said about him.

1. He was a “brother” in the Lord, a Christian brother to Paul and to other believers. This is essential for those who handle collections:

⇒ They must be men who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior.

⇒ They must be acting like brothers, living in fellowship, harmony, and unity with other believers. There is no room for criticism, murmuring, or divisiveness.

**“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Mt.12:50).**

2. He had a strong testimony in the gospel. This means that he was a strong witness to the gospel. He not only lived for Christ, but he bore witness to the saving power of Christ—that Christ could and would change a person’s life: transforming him into a new creature, forgiving his sins and giving him eternal life.

3. His testimony was so strong that it was known throughout “all the churches.”

**Thought 1.** What a dynamic testimony for all those who handle collections! How important...

- that they be true brothers in the Lord.
- that they have strong testimonies in the gospel.
- that their testimonies be so strong that people know that they follow the Lord.

**“For by it [faith] the elders obtained a good report” (Heb.11:2).**

**“For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil” (Ro.16:19).**

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).**

**“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold” (Pr.22:1).**

**“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul” (Ps.66:16).**

**“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Is.43:10).**

**3** (8:19-21) **Stewardship—Offerings—Ushers:** men who handle collections (ushers) are representatives chosen by the church in order to avoid charges of misconduct against the minister. This is a very significant fact—a lesson that must be heeded by ministers and churches alike. If Paul had handled the offering himself, he could have left himself open to the charge of confiscating or stealing money. The only wise course was to have the church elect one of its own men to handle the offering.

Note that the offering was called “this grace.” As Charles Hodge points out, any free gift is a grace (*An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p.209). Therefore, the offering of a church is a grace; it is the heart of the church being poured out in a free gift to reach and help the desperate of the world. The church must pour its soul out in offerings for the lost and needy of the world. They reel under the weight of sin, hunger, thirst, disease, ignorance, loneliness, helplessness, purposelessness, and death. This alone stresses the *awesome importance* of the ushers and men who handle the collections.

Note another significant point: why the offering was being ministered. It was for the glory of the Lord. When people saw the offering and knew what it was to be used for, their hearts would glorify the Lord. The Lord would be praised more than He otherwise would be.

**“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:2).**

**“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Ph.2:15).**

**“And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after” (Heb.3:5).**

**“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless” (2 Pt.3:13-14).**

Note: Paul clearly states why he had taken such precautions. He wanted all men to know that he was honest, that he would never put his hand into the till and take money out of the offerings. He did not want anyone to have a question about his personal conduct. Appearance mattered—what people thought mattered—for he had dedicated his very life to reaching and helping people.

**4** (8:22) **Stewardship—Offerings—Ushers:** men who handle collections (ushers) are diligent in many things, but especially in collections. Who this unnamed brother was is not known. Three significant points are made about him, points that should speak to the heart of every usher and person who handles collections.

1. He was a brother, a true believer who was in fellowship with other believers and cooperated with the church in its mission endeavors.
2. He had often “proved diligent” when other ministries had been assigned to him. The word “diligent” (spoudaion) means earnest, zealous, devoted. He gave himself wholeheartedly to whatever task the church gave him.
3. He observed and was alert to the testimony of churches. When Paul told him about the Corinthian church—about the great revival of the church—he became excited and was more willing than ever to serve Christ in the midst of the church.

**“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Ro.12:11).**

**“And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end” (Heb.6:11).**

**“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Pt.1:10).**

**“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:14).**

- 5** (8:23) **Stewardship—Offerings—Ushers:** men who handle collections (ushers) are partners of the ministers. Note that Paul expected people to be asking who these men were. This is a natural inquiry, for the men handle the offerings for the church. Therefore, it was extremely important that the credentials of the men be of the highest quality.
1. Titus was the partner and fellow helper of Paul—especially in ministering to the Corinthian church. Most of the Corinthians would know this, for Titus had been God’s main instrument in bringing revival to the church.
  2. The other two men were messengers of the church, men especially chosen by the church to represent the church. Note also that they were the messengers of the glory of Christ. They were to reflect and share the glory of Christ as they served the church.

**Thought 1.** Both points are to be true of all ushers and men who handle collections in the church.

- 1) Ushers are to be the partners of the minister.
- 2) Ushers are to be messengers of both the church and of the glory of God.

**“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5).**

**“And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Cor.12:5-7).**

**“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ” (1 Cor.12:11-12).**

- 6** (8:24) **Stewardship—Offerings—Ushers:** men who handle collections (ushers) are to be loved by the church. This is essential: the church had to prove its love to the men who were handling the money if they were to effectively fulfill their ministry. The church was to prove its love in two ways:
- ⇒ First, by receiving the men, accepting both them and their ministry.
  - ⇒ Second, by helping the men fulfill their ministry. The church had to let the men present the mission project and then contribute to it.

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).**

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).**

**“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Ro.13:10).**

**“If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors” (Jas.2:8-9).**

| CHAPTER 9   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 They have a readiness, an eagerness to give</b></p> <p>a. They can be expected to give</p> <p>b. They are forward in giving</p> <p>c. They are ready to commit</p> <p>d. They are full of zeal</p><br><p><b>2 They are not caught unprepared to give</b></p><br><p>a. Being unprepared causes shame</p> | <p><b>C. The Givers Who Please God, 9:1-7</b></p> <p><b>F</b>or as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:</p> <p>2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.</p> <p>3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:</p> <p>4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me,</p> | <p>and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.</p> <p>5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.</p> <p>6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.</p> <p>7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.</p><br><p>b. Being prepared shows love, not covetousness</p><br><p><b>3 They give much &amp; reap much: Reap what they sow</b></p><br><p><b>4 They give deliberately, not grudgingly, not from compulsion</b></p> |

### DIVISION IV

#### THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL COLLECTIONS, 8:1-9:15

#### C. The Givers Who Please God, 9:1-7

(9:1-7) **Introduction:** giving pleases God, for giving is of the very nature of God. God is the very One who has given the *supreme gift*—the Lord Jesus Christ. The most loved passage of Scripture clearly proclaims the glorious truth.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

To repeat the truth, giving pleases God. However, not every giver pleases God. This is clearly seen in this passage. Who, then, are the givers who please God?

1. They have a readiness, an eagerness to give (v.1-2).
2. They are not caught unprepared to give (v.3-5).
3. They give much and reap much: reap what they sow (v.6).
4. They give deliberately, not grudgingly, not from compulsion (v.7).

**1** (9:1-2) **Stewardship—Giving:** givers who please God have a readiness, an eagerness to give. This is seen in four clear statements made by Paul.

1. He expected the Corinthians to give. Why? Because some dear “saints” of God needed help. The term “saints” (hagioi) means those who are set apart and devoted to God. It is a term referring to genuine believers. The point is striking. Some fellow believers were in desperate need. The churches in Judea were poor and desperately needed help; therefore the Corinthians were expected to help them. In fact, the expectation was so strong there was little need to even say anything about it.

**Thought 1.** Christian believers should be so devoted to God that people expect and know that they will give to meet the needs of the world. In fact, as long as a need exists, believers should be giving *all they are and have* to meet that need. (See outlines and notes—Mt.19:16-22; 19:23-26; 19:27-30 for more discussion.)

**“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Lk.12:33).**

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

2. Paul knew the forwardness, the readiness of their minds to give. How often can this be said of believers? Of a church? Are we honestly forward, reaching out, searching for needs to meet? Can others actually *know* that our minds are ready, set, and focused to give?

3. Paul boasted in the Corinthians, in their readiness to give. It had happened a year earlier. The spirit of the Corinthians had been so committed to ministry, to meeting the needs of their fellow believers, that they had immediately under-

written the mission project to help the churches of Judea. But soon afterward some problems had arisen, and the church backed off its commitment. Before the problem, Paul had boasted in the zeal of the Corinthians, how quickly they had committed themselves to the mission project.

**Thought 1.** The commitment to missions is always commendable and is a great testimony to be shared with others. Every church needs such commitment, but it needs to follow through on its commitment. It needs to live day by day for Christ, lay aside differences and get rid of divisiveness and sin in its midst, and get to the task at hand: ministering to the needs of those who are in desperate straits.

4. The zeal and commitment of the Corinthians stirred “many” to help in the mission project.

**Thought 1.** This is the spirit and testimony needed by the Lord’s churches: a zeal for missions so strong that it stirs “many” to make the same commitment.

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (Jn.4:34-35).

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).

“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21).

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Eccl.9:10).

**2** (9:3-5) **Stewardship—Giving:** givers who please God are not caught unprepared to give. As Paul travelled from place to place, he was always training young disciples in the ministry, and these disciples often travelled with him. In addition to these, Paul was sometimes escorted to the next city by men from the place where he had just completed his ministry. This was soon to be the case: some men from Macedonia were going to escort him to Corinth. This fact is the background for what Paul now says.

1. Being unprepared to give causes shame. Paul says that he was sending Titus and the two other men to reactivate the mission project among the Corinthians. He was doing this lest he be ashamed and embarrassed when he and the other Macedonians arrived. He had boasted in the Corinthians a year earlier, using their commitment to missions as a testimony to stir the Macedonians to underwrite the same project. If he and their representatives arrived and the Corinthians had slipped back and failed to follow through, the situation would be a reflection upon Christ, Paul, and the Corinthian church.

**Thought 1.** A Christian who is unprepared to give brings shame to the very name of Christian. The very purpose for Christ coming to earth was to give—to give sacrificially and to give all. He gave His very life to meet the needs of desperate humanity. Therefore, it is a shame, an embarrassment to the name of Christ for a professing Christian not to give; for Christ existed to give. The very name of Christ and of Christian means to give and to give sacrificially—to give all.

2. Being prepared shows love, not covetousness. Paul says that he was sending the men ahead of him so that the church could reactivate the mission project and offering. They needed to have the collection ready when he arrived. Note why Paul felt this was necessary: so that the Corinthians would demonstrate love and generosity, not covetousness. If the mission project was still being delayed when he and the Macedonians arrived, the church would seem to be covetous and worldly. They would be failing in their very purpose for being on earth: to minister to those in need.

**Thought 1.** *Honest* believers and churches have to confess to covetousness. Few really give all they *are and have* to meet the desperate plight of the human race, a human race of men and women, boys and girls dying without Christ; and so many are dying prematurely from hunger, cold, disease, loneliness, emptiness, worthlessness, sin, and evil.

How terrible covetousness is! Living extravagantly, spending beyond our needs, banking, hoarding, building up estates, constructing larger and larger homes, buying more and more—all to the deprivation and destruction of human life and to the doom of human souls. Covetousness has no place in the Christian’s heart nor in the church, much less upon earth. It’s results are too devastating. Believers must be prepared to give, demonstrating the very sacrificial love of Christ Himself who gave all to meet the needs of the desperate.

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).

“Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me” (Lk.18:22).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim.6:17-19).

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).

“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).

“Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away” (Mt.5:42).

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).

**3** (9:6) **Stewardship—Giving—Reaping—Reward:** givers who please God give much and reap much. In fact, when it comes to reaping, they reap exactly what they sow. Note that the picture is that of sowing seed: when a man plants the seed, the same is returned to him; in fact, much more is returned to him—a full harvest. This is one of the great principles of Scripture, but it must be carefully noted: it is not the man who *pretends to sacrificially give* who shall be greatly blessed by God. It shall be the man who *actually does sacrifice* all he is and has. This man will never go lacking; God will abundantly provide for him.

“Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine” (Pr.3:9-10).

“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself” (Pr.11:24-25).

“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again” (Pr.19:17).

“He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor” (Pr.22:9).

“He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse” (Pr.28:27).

“Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days” (Eccl.11:1).

“And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday” (Is.58:10).

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal.3:10).

“He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me” (Mt.10:41).

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Lk.6:38).

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal.6:7).

“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity” (Ph.4:10).

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).

**4** (9:7) **Stewardship—Giving:** the giver who pleases God gives deliberately, not grudgingly and not from compulsion. It is absolutely crucial to note one thing: God does not accept the gift of a person who does not want to give. God expects three things of the person who gives.

1. The giver must give as he *purposes* in his heart. This does not mean that people are not to be encouraged to give nor that they cannot be stirred to give. It means that a person is...

- to think about the need
- to think about what he should *give sacrificially*
- to make a *deliberate decision* about what he should sacrifice in order to give what he should
- to give exactly what he should give

2. The giver must not give grudgingly: not out of sorrow, not with reluctance or regret. If the giver is going to be mulling over his gift and regretting that he had given it, his gift is unacceptable to God. The person needs to straighten his heart out with God, for...

- he is failing to see the desperate needs of the world.
- he is failing to see what Jesus Christ has done for him.

3. The giver must not give out of necessity. A person's gift is not acceptable to God when he...

- is forced to give
- gives because he fears what others will think
- gives just to please others
- gives to keep others from pestering him
- gives out of a desire for personal honor and recognition

4. The giver must give cheerfully if he wishes God to accept his gift. The word "cheerful" (*hilaron*) means joyful. The giver is pleased and delighted to give to meet the needs of God's people and of the world. Note that God *loves* the cheerful giver, for the cheerful giver is just like His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ willingly and cheerfully gave all He was and had to meet the needs of the world.

**"But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you" (Lk.11:41).**

**"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor.13:3).**

**"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor.16:2).**

**"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor.8:12).**

**"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph.4:28).**

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| <p><b>1 To be enriched more and more by God</b></p> <p>a. God meets the need of the believer—with all sufficiency</p> <p>b. God expects the believer to abound to every good work</p> <p>1) To minister to the needs of the desperate</p> <p>2) The result: God takes care of the giver</p> <p>c. God enriches in all</p> | <p><b>D. The Motives for Giving Generously &amp; Sacrificially, 9:8-15</b></p> <p>8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:</p> <p>9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.</p> <p>10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)</p> <p>11 Being enriched in every</p> | <p>thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.</p> <p>12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;</p> <p>13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;</p> <p>14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.</p> <p>15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.</p> | <p>things—bountifully</p> <p><b>2 Motive 2: To meet needs &amp; bring praise to God</b></p> <p><b>3 Motive 3: To prove one's loyalty to Christ</b></p> <p><b>4 Motive 4: To enhance prayer, love, &amp; fellowship</b></p> <p><b>5 Motive 5: To praise God for His unspeakable gift</b></p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL COLLECTIONS, 8:1-9:15**

**D. The Motives for Giving Generously and Sacrificially, 9:8-15**

(9:8-15) **Introduction:** there are many reasons why believers should give to meet the desperate needs of the world. This passage covers the motives for giving generously and sacrificially.

1. Motive 1: to be enriched more and more by God (v.8-11).
2. Motive 2: to meet needs and bring praise to God (v.12).
3. Motive 3: to prove one's loyalty to Christ (v.13).
4. Motive 4: to enhance prayer, love, and fellowship (v.14).
5. Motive 5: to praise God for His unspeakable gift (v.15).

**1** (9:8-11) **Stewardship—Giving:** the first motive for giving is to be enriched more and more by God. The Christian is called upon to give sacrificially; in fact, he is to give all he is and has to meet the needs of a desperate world. This seems very risky and unwise to many, but it is the clear teaching of Scripture. How could God expect us to give sacrificially, to give all beyond what we need for our own families? The answer is simple, yet pointed. (See outlines and notes—Mt. 19:16-22; 19:23-26; 19:27-30 for a clear discussion of this truth.)

1. *God is able* to make all grace abound and overflow toward us. God is able to *pay us back* what we give. In fact note exactly what God says and note the fullness of God's gifts in the words "all" and "always":

**"God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things...." (v.8).**

In Scripture the word "grace" refers to the favor and blessings of God, both spiritual and material. In this particular passage the subject is primarily material blessings, although spiritual blessings are certainly included in the phrases "all grace" and "all things." Therefore, what God says is a great encouragement to the sacrificial giver. God will more than return what the giver gives. God will return...

- all grace
- all sufficiency
- all things

2. God expects the believer to give sacrificially so that the believer may abound to every *good work*. That is, God gives the believer more and more so that he can give more and more.

This is the point of the next verse: God gives to the believer so that...

- the believer can scatter God's blessings all abroad.
- the believer can give to the poor.
- the believer's righteousness (just deeds, goodness, kindness, gifts) may endure forever. Just think: whatever gifts the believer gives endure forever.

Note something else as well; note what God does for the sacrificial giver: God ministers seed to the sower. The oldest and best Greek texts make this a declaration of fact and not a prayer:

- ⇒ God will minister and give bread to the sacrificial giver.
- ⇒ God will multiply the gift given by the sacrificial giver.
- ⇒ God will increase the fruits of the believer's just and good deeds or righteousness.
- ⇒ God will enrich everything in all ways so that the believer can continue to give liberally and bountifully.

**Thought 1.** This is a striking truth: the believer receives so that he can give. This means that no believer has an excuse for hoarding and *keeping back* more than he needs. God did not give it to him to *keep back*. God gave it to the believer to meet the desperate needs of the world. This is an earth-shaking truth, for it means that all the believer has *is to be given*. It is not to be kept. He is only a channel through which God sends His blessings to the world. To keep back more than what one needs is stealing—not only stealing from the desperate of the world, but stealing from God.

**“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn.10:10).**

**“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor.9:8).**

**“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).**

**Thought 2.** Giving sacrificially depends upon one thing: believing, truly believing, that God is able to take care of us—that God will provide the necessities of life and bless abundantly.

**“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:33).**

**“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).**

**“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Ph.4:10-13).**

**“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pt.5:7).**

**2** (9:12) **Stewardship—Giving:** the second motive for giving is to meet the needs of the world and to bring praise to God.

1. When there are so many needs in the world, every single person who has anything beyond the necessities of life will be held accountable—severely accountable. Since there is a God in heaven who oversees all, it could be no other way. How could God look down upon a child who is dying, and see a person standing off to the side with more than enough to save the child, and just bypass it? Man—be he Christian or unbeliever—is a fool to think God will overlook such selfishness and extravagance, indulgence and hoarding. God could not be God if He did not judge such irresponsible and corrupt behavior with the severest punishment. Just think of the desperate needs...

- starvation
- disease
- ignorance
- loneliness
- homelessness
- inadequate clothing
- sin
- emptiness

...and the most terrible fate of all: dying without ever knowing the love and salvation of God in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest motives for giving is to meet the desperate needs of the world.

**“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Mt.19:21).**

**“But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you” (Lk.11:41).**

**“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Lk.12:33).**

**“Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me” (Lk.18:22).**

**“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold” (Lk.19:8).**

2. There is another motive that is just as important (this fact could be stated as a result if preferred): the praise of God. When needs are truly met...

- the recipient gives thanks and praises God.
- the witnesses or observers give thanks and praise God.
- the giver gives thanks and praises God.

Note that “many thanksgivings” are offered up to God.

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).**

**“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (Jn.15:8).**

**“When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee” (Dt.8:10).**

**“And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his words with rejoicing” (Ps.107:22).**

**3** (9:13) **Stewardship—Giving:** the third motive for giving is to prove one's loyalty to the gospel of Christ. The gospel is the proclamation of the greatest love and gift ever made known—that of God's love and of God's very own Son. Any person who claims to follow the gospel of God's love must be loyal in carrying the gospel of love forth. He must live a sacrificial life just as Jesus did, a life that gives all it is and has to meet the needs of the desperate.

Note that the mission project undertaken by the Corinthians is called an "experiment" or a test. Every ministry undertaken is a test of the believer's loyalty to the gospel. Believers prove their loyalty to Christ by ministering the gospel and meeting the needs of people. In fact, how else can we prove that we belong to the gospel? The answer is obvious: there is no other way. If we are loyal to Christ and His gospel, then we give and give and keep on giving to share the gospel and to meet the needs of the world.

Note something else as well. The glory of God which is stirred by our giving is mentioned again—a third time (v.11, 12, 13). The fact that it is mentioned three times shows how important a reason it is. We are to give because it stirs people to glorify God.

**Thought 1.** Loyalty to Christ and His gospel includes stewardship, the giving of tithes and offerings. In fact, it involves giving all we are and have, for Christ will not accept just part of a person. A person either surrenders himself totally to Christ or he does not truly surrender himself.

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Mt.19:21).

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mt.19:23-24).

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor.16:2).

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal.6:10).

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim.6:17-19).

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee" (Dt.16:17).

"Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase" (Pr.3:9).

**4** (9:14) **Stewardship—Giving:** the fourth motive for giving is to enhance prayer, love, and fellowship. Very simply, when believers give to people in their desperate needs, the people give thanks for them and their fellowship in the Lord. Giving stirs great prayer, love, and fellowship among God's people. This is a fact that is often overlooked, yet it is so important that it alone merits sacrificial giving. What greater results could we ask than for prayer, love, and fellowship among God's people?

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (Eph.1:15-16).

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy" (Ph.1:3-4).

"We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints" (Col.1:3-4).

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Th.1:2-3).

**5** (9:15) **Stewardship—Giving:** the fifth motive for giving is to praise God for His unspeakable gift. The greatest gift ever given was God's gift to the world: the gift of His own Son. No greater gift could ever be given. God has given the supreme gift (see note—2 Cor.8:9 for discussion).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).

"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (Jn.4:10).

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Ro.6:23).

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Ro.8:32).

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor.9:15).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph.2:8-9).

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| <p><b>1 Paul accused of walking after the flesh</b><br/> a. Being a coward<br/><br/> b. Being carnal, lacking godly power &amp; boldness</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 10</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>V. THE MINISTER'S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A. The Minister: His Warfare &amp; Weapons, 10:1-6</b></p> <p>Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:<br/> 2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of</p> | <p>us as if we walked according to the flesh.<br/> 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:<br/> 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)<br/> 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;<br/> 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.</p> | <p><b>2 The minister wars &amp; fights, but not in a fleshly way</b><br/> a. He is in a spiritual war<br/> b. His weapons are not physical but spiritual<br/><br/> c. His method of conquering evil is threefold<br/> 1) Casts down imaginations<br/> 2) Casts down every thing<br/> 3) He captivates every thought</p> <p><b>3 The minister stands ready to deal with rebels—but only after genuine believers are clearly seen</b></p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE MINISTER'S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14**

**A. The Minister: His Warfare & Weapons, 10:1-6**

(10:1-6) **Introduction:** this section begins a sharp break from what Paul has been saying and teaching. He disassociates himself from Timothy. He no longer says “we,” but “now I Paul myself beseech you.” The phrase is forceful. Paul is now going to deal primarily with his critics, both with the false teachers who had crept into the church and with any of their followers who had not shared in the revival of repentance that had taken place (2 Cor.7:2-6).

This was necessary, for the church needed to make sure that the false teachers did not *regain* a foothold in the church. They needed to know that Paul intended to personally confront any who had not repented. He was going to deal with those who were attacking him and teaching false doctrine.

The present passage deals with the minister: his warfare and weapons.

1. Paul accused of walking after the flesh (v.1-2).
2. The minister wars and fights, but not in a fleshly way (v.3-5).
3. The minister stands ready to deal with rebels—but only after genuine believers are clearly seen (v.6).

**1** (10:1-2) **Paul, Accusations Against:** Paul was accused of walking after the flesh. (See note, *Paul, Accusations Against*—2 Cor.1:12-22 for a full discussion.) This charge can be seen behind the words of Paul in these two verses. He was answering “some” who thought of him as walking after the flesh (v.2). They were saying two things about Paul.

1. Some were saying that Paul was a coward (v.1). This is what is meant by the word “base” (tapeinos). They were saying that Paul was bold in his instructions; that is, he rebuked the church when he was writing to them, but he was a coward when it came to speaking face to face with them.

Note Paul’s answer to the church and to his critics; it was that of tenderness in the midst of warning: “I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.” Christ was meek and gentle in handling the insults, attacks, rumors, lies, wrong, and evil done to Him. Paul was saying that Jesus Christ was his example in dealing with people; that is the reason he was meek and gentle when preaching and confronting people face to face. He was not base and lowly because he was a coward, but because Jesus Christ demonstrated how people are to be handled, even people who are evil and in error. Jesus Christ confronted people in meekness and gentleness; therefore, he, Paul, was meek and gentle.

2. Some were saying that Paul was carnal—that he walked after the flesh. This means several things:
  - ⇒ that Paul was unregenerate, that is, not really saved.
  - ⇒ that Paul was preaching and ministering in the flesh; he was not really called of God.
  - ⇒ that Paul was living in the flesh; he was an ungodly and immoral man seeking only to please and live for himself.
  - ⇒ that Paul was only ministering in the flesh; he was only after a personal following—only seeking to sell his own ideas and position—only interested in lining his own pockets and in securing personal recognition and honor.

Very simply, Paul says that he will confront these critics when he arrives in Corinth. He has the confidence, that is, the inner strength and boldness, to confront them; and he will. But note a crucial point: even in this declaration of spiritual strength and boldness, Paul was meek and gentle. He *beseech* them twice in these two verses; that is, he begged and pleaded with them to turn to God—to repent of their attacks and false teaching—so that he might not have to confront them. Paul longed for everyone in the church to make sure that they had trusted Christ as Savior and that they held to the truth of the gospel: that they “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).

**Thought 1.** Every minister needs to pay close attention to the meekness and gentleness of Christ and of Paul when dealing with people. They approached everyone with meekness and gentleness, giving everyone a chance to repent. And they continued to demonstrate meekness and gentleness for the longest time. True, there was to be a day of confrontation: Paul says so in these verses, and Christ certainly confronted false teachers and their followers who opposed Him. But the first approach was that of meekness and gentleness.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Is.53:7).

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Mt.11:29).

“And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him” (Acts 9:29).

“And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8).

“For consider him that endured such contradiction [hostility] of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Heb.12:3).

“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pt.2:23).

“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children” (1 Th.2:7).

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim.2:24).

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (Jas.3:17).

**2** (10:3-5) **Minister—Spiritual Warfare—Mind—Thoughts:** the minister wars and fights, but not in a fleshly way. This is a great passage of Scripture. It deals with the believer’s spiritual warfare, a passage that every believer should memorize and chew upon often. It often stirs the believer to discipline and gain control over his mind and thoughts. Note three significant points. (See outlines and notes—Ro.8:5-8; 12:2 for more discussion.)

1. The believer is in a spiritual warfare. Scripture is perfectly clear about this:

**“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph.6:12).**

The war is not waged against flesh and blood, against physical and material beings, but against spiritual forces. Spiritual forces lie behind man’s evil and lustful behavior, unbelief and arguments against God. These spiritual forces attack and prey upon the imaginations and thoughts of men. They inject selfish and devilish ideas against God and against other men. And from the energy of these ideas come the evil acts of men. Note two things:

- ⇒ Selfish, evil, and lustful thoughts are mental and immaterial. Ideas and thoughts are not physical and material substances. They are invisible and mental substances.
- ⇒ Selfish, evil, and lustful ideas are by nature not of God. God is not evil, selfish, or lustful; therefore, such evil thoughts and reasonings are often injected into the mind of men by spiritual forces that stand opposed to God.

Paul’s point is this: he and other believers “walk in the flesh”; that is, they live in a body just like all other people. But they do not war in the flesh. They do not fight the struggles of life using only their own strength. Why? Because believers know that there is a spiritual warfare going on for the minds and lives of people. Believers know that the evil forces of the spiritual world lie behind...

- sin and evil
- disorder and devastation
- corruption and deterioration
- death and hell

Believers know that they cannot “war after the flesh”; that no man nor any combination of men can conquer the spiritual forces that tear and eat away at man until they destroy him. No matter how strong, educated, or scientific man may become, he cannot deliver himself from the spiritual forces that cause sin and death.

2. The believer’s weapons are not physical but spiritual. Physical or carnal weapons would be human weapons of the mind and body such as...

- |                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • discipline and control     | • resolutions and rules            |
| • strength and ability       | • health and esteem                |
| • knowledge and intelligence | • education and social development |
| • science and technology     | • wealth and welfare               |
| • ideas and thoughts         | • eloquence and personality        |
| • beliefs and doctrines      | • appearance and attractiveness    |
| • laws and principles        |                                    |

Naturally, every human power and weapon available should be developed and used to the fullest extent possible. The human body and the world are said to be the temple of the Lord, two of the places where He dwells. But the believer

knows that there is nothing in the world that can conquer the spiritual forces that lie behind the evil and death of this world. Therefore, he fights the spiritual battles of this life with *spiritual weapons*, weapons that are of God and are made mighty and powerful by God.

Note that the believer uses spiritual weapons to “pull down strongholds.” The evils of this world are deeply entrenched and fortified. This is clearly seen in the daily newscasts and behavior of people day by day. Evil and its inevitable consequence of destruction and death can never be permanently overcome by carnal weapons. Only the spiritual weapons of God can permanently conquer evil.

3. The believer’s method of conquering the forces of evil are clearly described.

- a. The believer *casts down imaginations* (logismous): thoughts and imaginations that are uncontrolled, wild, evil, lustful, immoral, unjust, wrong, untrue, devilish, and set against God.

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened....And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Ro.1:20-21, 28-32).

The believer wars, fights, and struggles to “cast down” evil imaginations. He fights to bring his imaginations under control.

- b. The believer *casts down* “every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God”: false ideas about God, false doctrine, false teaching, false reasonings; the human pride and arrogance, self-sufficiency and self-righteousness that set themselves up against God.
- c. The believer *seeks to captivate every thought* to the obedience of Christ. *A phenomenal statement*—every thought controlled and subjected to Christ! This is the spiritual objective of the true Christian believer. God created man for fellowship and communion, and the believer knows it; therefore, the believer wars—struggles and fights—to captivate every thought and focus it upon God and His righteousness. He seeks to walk in an unbroken fellowship and communion with God. How is the control of every thought possible? By the Spirit of God and by Him alone. Note what Scripture says.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind [work to keep their minds upon] the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Ro.8:5).

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor.2:16).

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Ph.4:8).

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:23-24).

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Is.26:3).

**3** (10:6) **Minister—Church Discipline:** the minister stands ready to deal with false teachers and rebels, but only after genuine believers have stepped forward. Paul had just shared how he struggled and fought to live for Christ every day—struggled and fought to conquer every imagination and thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God. Therefore, he would not hesitate to punish all disobedience. But note: he would discipline only after giving everyone a chance to be obedient. The Corinthians who were willing to submit to the truth had to come forward first. Then Paul would act swiftly. He would never resort to severity until he knew for sure who stood for the truth and who stood against the truth. He would make no mistake in discipline. Therefore, the church had to step forward for God first. Every means of repentance and correction had to be exhausted; the disobedient had to have every conceivable chance to repent through the appeal of this letter and the corrective action of the church. (See outlines and notes—1 Cor.5:1-5; 5:6-13; Mt.18:15-20 for more discussion.)

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Mt.18:15-17).

“Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Lk.17:1-3).

“And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem” (Acts 16:4).

“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim.5:20).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

“This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Tit.1:13).

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).

“A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject” (Tit.3:10).

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb.13:17).

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| <p><b>1 He is to be accepted bc. he belongs to Christ</b><br/>a. Charge: Paul ranked less than other ministers<br/>b. Claim: All ministers are equal</p> <p><b>2 He is to be accepted bc. he is set for edification, not for destruction</b><br/>a. Charge: Paul destroys people<br/>b. Claim: He edifies, not destroys people</p> <p><b>3 He is to be accepted bc. of the authority God has given, not because of appearance</b><br/>a. Charge: Paul—weak appearance, poor preacher—could not possibly have authority of God<br/>b. Claim<br/>1) If needed, he would exercise his authority<br/><br/>2) Human commendations &amp; judgments are unwise</p> | <p><b>B. The Minister: His Right to Be Accepted, 10:7-18</b></p> <p>7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.</p> <p>8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:</p> <p>9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.</p> <p>10 For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.</p> <p>11 Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present.</p> <p>12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves:</p> | <p>but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.</p> <p>13 But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.</p> <p>14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ:</p> <p>15 Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,</p> <p>16 To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.</p> <p>17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.</p> <p>18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.</p> | <p>3) A minister is to exercise authority only in the area and within the limits God has given him</p> <p><b>4 He is to be accepted bc. he ministers &amp; preaches the gospel</b><br/>a. He preaches the gospel to the church<br/><br/>b. His area of concern<br/>1) Their faith &amp; its growth<br/><br/>2) Their sending the gospel to regions beyond themselves</p> <p><b>5 He is to be accepted bc. he glories in the Lord and not in men</b></p> |
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## DIVISION V

### THE MINISTER'S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14

#### B. The Minister: His Right to Be Accepted, 10:7-18

(10:7-18) **Introduction:** the minister has many rights, but the one right that means as much to him as any other is the right to be accepted. Every church, no matter the situation or circumstances, should open its arms and accept the minister. If he needs help, then the church should help him—no matter the problem.

1. The minister is to be accepted because he belongs to Christ (v.7).
2. The minister is to be accepted because he is set for edification, not for destruction (v.8).
3. The minister is to be accepted because of the authority God has given, not because of appearance (v.9-13).
4. The minister is to be accepted because he ministers and preaches the gospel (v.14-16).
5. The minister is to be accepted because he glories in the Lord and not in men (v.17-18).

**1** (10:7) **Minister—Paul, Accusations Against:** the minister is to be accepted because he belongs to Christ as much as any other minister. The troublemakers and critics of Paul felt that Paul ranked less than other ministers. They said that Paul did not measure up as a minister, that he was not as called or gifted as other ministers of God; therefore, he did not belong in the pulpit at Corinth, nor should his authority be accepted at Corinth.

Paul's claim is that all ministers are equal. Note how Paul exposes the shameful emphasis upon "outward appearance" and upon the ranking of ministers. Apparently some were judging Paul...

- because of his past sinful life as the persecutor and murderer of early believers (see notes—Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-2 for discussion).
- because other ministers and teachers appeared to have stronger and more appealing gifts.
- because other ministers and teachers had more charisma and were stronger speakers (cp. v.10).

Paul is forceful in his rebuke: "Why do you look upon and judge by outward appearance? If any man claims that he belongs to Christ and that Christ has called him, I, too make the same claim. Think about it, and think it over again. A claim is a personal conviction, and a personal conviction is subjective. One man's personal conviction and claim is as good as another man's. Therefore, if a man says that he belongs to Christ, I, too belong to Christ. I belong to Christ as much as he does. My claim is as valid as his."

The point is explicitly clear: personal conviction is a factor in the ministry, and a man's conviction that he has been called by Christ must be listened to and heeded. But much more is needed to prove whether or not a man is a true minister of Christ.

**"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you: or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor.1:11-13).**

**"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Mt.23:27).**

**"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (Jn.7:24).**

**"For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart" (2 Cor.5:12).**

**"Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's" (2 Cor.10:7).**

- 2** (10:8) **Minister—Paul, Accusations Against:** the minister is to be accepted because he is set for edification and not for destruction. The charge against Paul was that he destroyed people...
- by claiming to be a minister of Christ when in fact he was not
  - by preaching his own ideas and philosophy
  - by seeking to secure a personal following

Paul forcefully claimed that Christ had called him for edification, not for destruction. He was called to build up people, not to destroy them. In no way had he ever damaged or destroyed the church. Note: Paul says that he could boast in his ministry and in his faithfulness. He could even boast more than most other ministers; and if he chose to do this, it would not shame him, for he had every right to boast. He had served Christ faithfully and well in the ministry of building up the church.

**"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Ro.14:19).**

**"But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor.14:3).**

**"Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying" (2 Cor.12:19).**

**"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph.4:11-12).**

**"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph.4:29).**

- 3** (10:9-13) **Minister—Paul, Accusations Against:** the minister is to be accepted because of the authority and rule God has given him, not because of appearance. The charge against Paul was that he was weak in appearance and a poor preacher; therefore, he could not possibly be called of God nor possess the authority of God. William Barclay says:

*"A description of Paul's personal appearance has come down to us from a very early book called The Acts of Paul and Thecla. It dates back to about A.D. 200. It is so unflattering that it may well be true. It describes Paul as 'a man of little stature, thin-haired upon the head, crooked in the legs, of good state of body, with eyebrows meeting, and with nose somewhat hooked, full of grace, for sometimes he appeared like a man and sometimes he had the face of an angel.' A little, balding bandy-legged man, with a hooked nose and shaggy eyebrows—it is not a very impressive picture, and it may well be that the Corinthians made great play with it. We might do well to remember sometimes that not seldom a great spirit has been lodged in a very humble body" (William Barclay. The Letters to the Corinthians, p.271).*

In addition to his personal appearance, Paul was apparently what most people would call a *poor preacher*. He was not eloquent; some people even went to sleep during his preaching (Acts 20:9). His critics in Corinth called his preaching contemptible, that is, of no account, unimpressive, a waste of time, unauthoritative. Note that his preaching was being compared to his writings, which were said to be weighty and powerful (impressive and strong, stirring and vigorous).

**Thought 1.** This criticism hurt Paul. The fact can be seen as one reads and looks behind the words of this passage and others (cp. 1 Cor. 1:17; 2:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:6). Paul could do nothing about body features, the way he looked, and his gift to preach had been given by God. He could and did work at improving, as any true preacher does; nevertheless, he was who he was, and he could not change the gift of God. So the criticism was bound to hurt. Lay believers should always build the minister up, not tear him down.

Note Paul's answer to the criticisms.

1. There is a definite time for authority and discipline within the church. And if authority and discipline are needed, Paul will exercise it when he visits the church with the same bold authority that is evident in his writings (v.11). (See note—2 Cor.10:1-2 for more discussion.)

2. Human commendations and judgments are unwise. Paul would never do what his critics and some others did: seek the praise and testimonials of men. Apparently, some were seeking letters of commendation in order to secure more recognition, honor, and position.

With clear insight, Paul says that such self-seeking only pits one minister against another; it compares one to another. And such measuring of ministers is not wise.

3. A minister is to exercise authority only in the area and within the limits God has given him. The minister has no other legitimate authority, but he *does have that* authority. And it is that authority that is recognized and acknowledged.

**“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Cor.3:5-6).**

**“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:1-2).**

**“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:18-20).**

**“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Eph.3:7).**

**“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).**

**“But [God’s grace] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim.1:10-11).**

**4** (10:14-16) **Minister, Authority—Paul, Accusations Against:** the minister is to be accepted because he ministers and preaches the gospel of Christ. This is the authority of the minister, the only authority that he has: the authority to minister and preach the gospel. Paul forcefully declares that he *did not stretch himself beyond this limit*. The false teachers in Corinth were the ones who were stretching beyond their limits, not Paul. Paul had been called and gifted by God to minister and preach at Corinth, not they. The implication is this: the false teachers needed to *repent and become one* with the other believers of the church and work and strive together with the believers for the sake of the gospel.

Note: Paul used another term to spell out exactly what his concern and area of ministry was: *their faith and its growth*. He wanted their faith to grow, and note why: so that they could help send him and the gospel to other parts of the world—to regions beyond.

**Thought 1.** What a lesson! There is no room for division and competitiveness in the church; no room for tearing down the minister of God. The minister has his area of concern and authority:

- ⇒ that of ministering and preaching the gospel.
- ⇒ that of building up the faith of the people.
- ⇒ that of leading people to send the gospel to other regions of the world.

No one should hamper or stop this work of the minister. He is the minister of God to do the work of God among God’s people.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).**

**“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor.4:5).**

**“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim.2:25).**

**“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation” (Heb.13:7).**

**5** (10:17-18) **Minister:** the minister is to be accepted because he glories in the Lord and not in men. Paul has had much to say about boasting and self-glorying throughout this passage (v.7, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16). Now he forcefully drives the point

## 2 CORINTHIANS 10:7-18

home: he that glories must glory in the Lord, or he is not approved or accepted by God. A minister is not a true minister, no matter what he thinks, preaches, or claims if he...

- exalts himself
- seeks praise
- loves position
- craves recognition
- seeks his own things
- is puffed up

A true minister of God does not commend himself; he seeks only the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed” (Ro.15:17-18).**

**“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Cor.1:27-29).**

**“My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad” (Ps.34:2).**

**“In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever” (Ps.44:8).**

**“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jer.9:23-24).**

| CHAPTER 11   |   |  |
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|  | <b>C. The Minister: His Warning Against Seduction, 11:1-15</b>  |  |
| <p><b>1 He has a godly jealousy for the church</b></p> <p>a. Illustration: As in marriage<br/>b. He led them to Christ<br/>c. He wants them chaste</p> <p><b>2 Fear seduction—corrupted minds</b></p> <p>a. Illustration: Eve's seduction<br/>b. Led away from Christ</p> <p><b>3 Fear the preaching of another Jesus</b></p> <p>a. Receiving another spirit<br/>b. Receiving another gospel</p> <p><b>4 Fear comparing ministers with one another</b></p> <p>a. He is not inferior even to the chief apostle<br/>b. God's gift is not preaching ability, but the gift of knowledge</p> <p><b>5 Fear those who criticize honest money policy</b></p> | <p>Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me.</p> <p>2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.</p> <p>3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.</p> <p>4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.</p> <p>5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.</p> <p>6 But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.</p> <p>7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that</p> | <p>ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?</p> <p>8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.</p> <p>9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.</p> <p>10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.</p> <p>11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.</p> <p>12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire glory, they may be found even as we.</p> <p>13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.</p> <p>14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.</p> <p>15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.</p> |
|  |   | <p><b>(Paul's story)</b></p> <p>a. He served Corinth freely</p> <p>b. He received support from other churches</p> <p>c. He wished not to be a burden</p> <p>d. He was being criticized for his policy</p> <p>e. He followed this policy because he loved them</p> <p>f. He would continue to follow the best policy—for the church's sake</p> <p><b>6 Fear false apostles, deceitful workers</b></p> <p>a. Are disguised as apostles—as ministers of light</p> <p>b. Are disguised just like Satan—as messengers of light</p> <p>c. Are ministers of Satan—disguised as ministers of righteousness</p> <p>d. Are to be judged according to their works</p>   |

## DIVISION V

### THE MINISTER'S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14

#### C. The Minister: His Warning Against Seduction, 11:1-15

(11:1-15) **Introduction:** some false teachers and critics in the church were attacking Paul and his ministry with every conceivable accusation (see note, *Paul, Accusations Against*—2 Cor.1:12-22 for more discussion). They wanted to destroy Paul's influence and ministry at Corinth and to gain control of the church themselves. The way they went about gaining control was to use the same methods that every power seeking person uses: *seduction and deception and lies*. They seduced the people with false teaching and at the same time lied about Paul in order to destroy his credibility.

Paul had to save the church, at least do all he could to save it. In the present passage he warns the church against seduction and deception.

1. He has a godly jealousy for the church (v.1-2).
2. Fear seduction—corrupted minds (v.3).
3. Fear the preaching of another Jesus (v.4).
4. Fear comparing ministers with one another (v.5-6).
5. Fear those who criticize honest money policy (v.7-12).
6. Fear false apostles, deceitful workers (v.13-15).

**1** (11:1-2) **Minister—Church:** the minister has a godly jealousy for the church. The church was dear, very dear to Paul; he just would not offend the church in any way. He had to expose the error of the false teachers and of his critics, and to do so he had to defend himself. This bothered Paul; he did not want to talk about himself. He would much rather talk about Jesus Christ. But he had no choice, he had to defend himself. Note the soft, loving, positive approach he took:

**“Bear with me a little in my folly [foolishness]: and indeed I know you bear with me.” (Note how Paul builds up the church in this last clause: he knows they will come through the trial and stand with him in the truth against the false teachers and the critics.)**

Paul had a godly jealousy for them because he had led so many of them to Christ. He loved them and loved them dearly.

**“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Cor.4:15).  
“...are not ye my work in the Lord?” (1 Cor.9:1).**

Note that Paul’s one aim was to present the church to Christ as a chaste virgin, that is, pure, holy, and without blemish or error. In Paul’s day the bridegroom had what was called a *friend* of the bridegroom. This friend took care of the wedding arrangements, especially the particular function of guaranteeing the chastity of the bride. In modern society it is usually the father of the bride who handles the arrangements. He is also the one responsible for guaranteeing the chastity of his daughter, the bride. Paul is here claiming to be the friend, the father of the Corinthians, who loved and cared so much for them that he must guarantee their chastity to the Lord. Therefore, they must listen to him.

**“...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph.5:25-27).**

**“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Ro.7:4).**

**“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Rev.19:7).**

**“And while they [the virgins, the church] went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Mt.25:10-13; cp. Mt.25:1-13).**

**2** (11:3) **Seduction—Church:** the church must fear seduction, fear having their minds corrupted. Note that their minds were not yet corrupted, but the danger was there. There were false teachers within the church, and wherever false teachers are, there is the likelihood that some minds will be corrupted.

The danger was that the believers would be led away from the simplicity (aplotetos) that is in Christ. The word means devotion, loyalty, and commitment to Christ. Believers are to have their minds and lives focused upon Christ and upon Him alone. There was great danger that the false teachers would break the loyalty and focus of some believers in Christ and lead them to focus upon...

- some false belief or doctrine
- some new idea or position
- some ritual or ceremony
- some emphasis or program
- some person or preacher

The result of such focuses is devastating: the mind becomes corrupted. It turns away from Christ, away from the truth of God and His saving grace which is in Christ Jesus and in Him alone. Too many are following false beliefs and doctrines, ideas and positions, rituals and ceremonies, persons and preachers—expecting God to accept them because of their loyalty to such religious practices or persons.

But loyalty to Christ alone—devotion to God’s own dear Son—is the only thing that stirs God to accept men. This was the danger facing the Corinthian church and it is the danger that faces church after church today: minds that are corrupted and led away from loyalty to Christ by false teachers.

Note the illustration that Paul uses: the seduction of Eve by the serpent. Eve illustrates how *easily* a believer can be corrupted and led away from Christ. Remember these facts about Eve: she was...

- created perfectly, without a sinful nature
- placed in a perfect environment
- given a personal relationship and fellowship with God
- given every conceivable blessing imaginable

Yet, despite all these advantages, Eve was seduced by Satan. She was seduced...

- to disbelieve God and what He had said.
- to believe another person and what he said.

Eve gave in to the seduction: she was disloyal to God and His Word. Therefore she lost her devotion and commitment to God. In comparison to Eve and to what Eve had, believers stand in a precarious (very dangerous) position. Therefore, they must be protected from false teachers. They must be warned against seduction, against having their minds corrupted. When false teachers are present in a church, they must be dealt with or some believers will be corrupted and misled.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Mt.22:29).

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor.2:11).

“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ” (2 Cor.2:17).

“But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:2).

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph.2:2).

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph.6:11).

“As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Pt.3:16).

**3** (11:4) **Preaching—False Teachers:** the church must fear the preaching of another Jesus. This is always the danger of false teachers. Note: it is not another Christ (Messiah) that they were preaching, but another Jesus. That is, they were mixed up about who Jesus the carpenter was and who Jesus the Son of God was. They were confused about the humanity of Jesus. They were teaching that...

- Jesus was only a good man who lived as men should live.
- Jesus was only a great teacher who taught man how to live.
- Jesus was only a wonderful martyr who showed men how they should die.

They stressed the humanness of Jesus and ignored or denied His deity.

Note what Paul says: he says men can receive another spirit other than the Spirit of God, and that they can receive another gospel other than the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are other spirits and gospels who seek after the loyalty of men; therefore, the church and its believers must be on guard against the preaching of another Jesus.

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal.1:6-9).

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:19).

“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mt.15:9).

“Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (1 Tim.1:7).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim.4:1-2).

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim.6:3).

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim.4:3-4).

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision [legalists]: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s [personal gain] sake” (Tit.1:10-11).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).

**4** (11:5-6) **Ministers:** the church should fear comparing ministers with one another. The false teachers were saying that Paul was not a true apostle, that he had not been called by God to be a minister. His appearance and speaking ability were too weak; he did not speak forcefully enough to be gifted and called by God (1 Cor.9:1; 2 Cor.1:21; 10:7, 10; 12:11).

Very simply, the essential gift of God is not the ability to speak, but knowledge—the knowledge of God and of Christ and of the truth. Note: Paul says that he had fully revealed and proclaimed the truth in all things (salvation and redemption). (A dynamic example for every one of us! See note—1 Cor.4:1-2 for more discussion.)

**5** (11:7-12) **Finances—Minister:** the church should fear those who criticize honest money policy.

- ⇒ Paul had ministered at Corinth free of charge, not accepting any gifts or financial support (v.7).
- ⇒ However, he did receive support from other churches (v.8).
- ⇒ This he did because he had need when he was in Corinth, but he did not want to be a burden to the Corinthians nor did he want to be obligated to them. He wanted no restraints upon the preaching of the truth and its gospel. He did not want any man to have the right to influence his ministry, nor did he want to be threatened because of financial obligations.  
Paul's policy was to secure support from churches in other areas so that he could keep the gospel free where he was ministering. This, he declared, would continue to be his policy (v.9).
- ⇒ Paul was criticized for this policy. There were apparently two criticisms: first, he refused to take anything because he knew his teaching was inferior. He was thereby ashamed. Second, he was too proud to allow himself to be ministered to by others. Such criticisms clearly show that these men were only looking for opportunity to criticize Paul (v.12).
- ⇒ Paul followed this policy because he loved the church. The truth was not what the critics and false teachers were saying: that he did not care enough for the church to allow them to be a part of his ministry. Contrariwise, he practiced the policy of self-support because he did love them. If he took money from them, his critics would charge him with ministering for the sake of money. Such criticism would only disturb the church. Therefore, his policy was the proof that he loved the church (v.11-12).

**Thought 1.** The minister must always guard against giving people a chance to criticize his financial policies. But he must *not tone down* the gospel because he fears loss of livelihood or fears that he will upset the people.

**6** (11:13-15) **Satan—False Teachers:** the church should fear false ministers and deceitful workers. False ministers are clearly exposed and identified in these three verses.

1. False ministers are disguised as the ministers of Christ, but they are deceitful workers.
  - a. They are religious workers, workers who serve in religion.
  - b. They are false ministers: they claim to be ministers of Christ, but they are not.
  - c. They transform themselves (metashematizomenoi) into ministers of Christ. The word means to fashion, to change one's outward appearance. They pose as "gentlemen of the cloth," but they are nothing but cloth. (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.259). They are false ministers.
  - d. They are religious workers who deceive and mislead people away from Christ:
    - ⇒ into false beliefs and doctrine
    - ⇒ into new ideas and positions
    - ⇒ into ritual and ceremony
    - ⇒ into organizations and programs
    - ⇒ into focusing upon some person or minister instead of Christ
2. False ministers are disguised just like Satan—as ministers of light. Satan often appears as an angel or messenger of light, especially in industrialized societies. His position is always presented as the truth, as the path of intelligence and knowledge and enlightenment. His way is always presented as the way to go, as the way that...
 

|              |             |               |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| • progresses | • satisfies | • looks good  |
| • develops   | • fulfills  | • tastes good |
| • assures    | • educates  | • feels good  |

Satan never presents himself as Satan; neither does he present sin as sin (Tasker. *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. "Tyndale Bible Commentaries," p.153). Satan always presents himself as the supreme intelligence who knows what is best for man and who will provide real pleasure, enjoyment, and fulfillment for man. When Satan presents his way to men, it attracts, appeals, and pulls man to want, desire, and lust. His way always seems to be the way of light, that is, of intelligence or pleasure.

3. False ministers are of Satan: disguised as ministers of righteousness. Since Satan disguises himself into an angel or messenger of light, so do his ministers. They appear to be ministers of righteousness, and they preach and teach that a man is saved by righteousness, a righteousness of...

- |            |               |           |
|------------|---------------|-----------|
| • morality | • education   | • giving  |
| • goodness | • development | • serving |
| • justice  | • ministry    | • helping |

They stress the life and teachings of Jesus, all the good qualities of life—all the traits that should characterize people. They tell people to copy the life of Jesus and to focus their hearts upon these good qualities of life, and if they do, God will accept them. However, they make one fatal mistake: they ignore and deny...

- the righteousness of Jesus Christ which He had to secure for man by living the ideal, perfect, sinless life.
- the death of Jesus Christ which He had to die in order to bear the judgment, condemnation, and punishment of sin for man.
- the resurrection of Jesus Christ which He had to experience in order to conquer death and to provide a new life for man. (See notes—2 Cor.5:17; 5:21 for more discussion.)

Scripture unmistakably teaches that God accepts no person apart from Jesus Christ—no matter how moral or good. Because Jesus Christ paid such a great price—the supreme price of dying for our sins—God loves Jesus Christ with a su-

preme love. Therefore, God will accept only the person who honors His Son. There is no other way to be acceptable to God. Not even the preaching of morality and goodness will stir God to accept a person. God wants men to live moral and good lives, but the first thing He wants is the love and worship of His Son, Jesus Christ. And to be acceptable to God, we must do first things first: we must love His Son Jesus Christ. Then we must go forth giving all we are and have to meet the needs of a desperate world that is dying without any relationship with God.

The point is this: the strategy of Satan is to turn men away from the truth, away from Christ. He leads ministers to preach what is true righteousness, but he has them to ignore the truth of *God's supreme love*, the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of men, and the absolute demand of God: that men must follow the example of Jesus Christ, give all they *are and have* to meet the desperate needs of men.

The ministers of Satan are ministers of righteousness, but they are not ministers of *the righteousness of God which is Jesus Christ Himself*. They are in the pulpits throughout the world, but they are the ministers of the world's way of righteousness. They are not the ministers of God's righteousness, which is the righteousness and death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another [serve, give all we are and have as Christ did], as he gave us commandment” (1 Jn.3:23).**

4. False ministers are to be judged according to their works.

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:20).

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:22-23).

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Mt.16:27).

“[God] will render to every man according to his deeds....for there is no respect of persons with God” (Ro.2:6, 11).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10).

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal.1:8-9).

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction....The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:1, 9).

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to the works” (Rev.20:12).

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev.22:12).

|  |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
|  | <b>D. The Minister: His Boast and Costly Labors, 11:16-33</b>   | one.   | suffering for Christ  |  |
| <p><b>1 The minister appeals to be received &amp; heard</b></p> <p>a. He needs to boast a little</p> <p>b. His boasting is not the way the Lord talked</p> <p>c. His critics &amp; the false teachers are "talking big"</p> <p>d. The church is receiving them</p> <p>e. The church is being deceived</p> <p>f. The need now is for the minister, Paul, to be strong in boasting</p> | <p>16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.</p> <p>17 That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.</p> <p>18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.</p> <p>19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.</p> <p>20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.</p> <p>21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit where-insoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.</p> | <p>25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;</p> <p>26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;</p> <p>27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.</p> <p>28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.</p> <p>29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?</p> |   |  |
|  | <p><b>2 The minister stands equal in heritage</b></p>   | <p>22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.</p>  | <p>30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.</p> <p>31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.</p>                         | <p>c. The minister must boast only in his infirmities</p> <p>d. The minister must not exaggerate or lie about his sufferings</p> |
|  | <p><b>3 The minister must be more than a minister</b></p> <p>a. The minister labors &amp; suffers more than most</p> <p>b. The minister must remain faithful while</p>  | <p>23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.</p> <p>24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save</p>   | <p>32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:</p> <p>33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.</p> | <p><b>4 The minister was not guilty of cowardice; he was only escaping death</b></p>   |

**DIVISION V**

**THE MINISTER'S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14**

**D. The Minister: His Boast and Costly Labors, 11:16-33**

(11:16-33) **Introduction:** should a minister or any other believer ever boast of who he is or what he has done? This passage discusses the subject.

1. The minister appeals to be received and heard (v.16-21).
2. The minister stands equal in heritage (v.22).
3. The minister must be more than a minister (v.23-29).
4. The minister is not guilty of cowardice; he was only escaping death (v.32-33).

**[1]** (11:16-21) **Boasting—Minister, Defense:** the minister appeals to be received and heard. The minister, Paul, was being attacked by some false teachers and critics in the Corinthian church. They were claiming that Paul and his gospel had no place in the church, that his authority and ministry should be rejected. They were either claiming or thinking...

- that they were the true ministers and he was the false minister.
- that their ideas were right and his ideas were wrong.
- that they had the true authority of God, and he was acting in his own authority.
- that their charisma and speaking ability and his poor appearance and lack of oratory were proof that they were the ones to be followed (cp. 2 Cor.10:10; 11:6; 1 Cor.2:1. See note—2 Cor.1:12 for more discussion.)

Paul was forced to defend his ministry and authority as a minister of God. If he failed to defend himself, his critics would interpret his silence as weakness. They would begin to spread the rumor that his silence was proof that he was not called of God, for he did not consider his ministry worth defending.

However, there was another reason for Paul defending his ministry: to save the Corinthian church from the false leaders and teachers. The outline of these six verses shows how Paul appealed to the Corinthians to *receive him and to hear him*.

1. He needed to boast a little. Only a “fool” boasts in himself, and Paul hesitated to defend himself by boasting in his call and ministry. But it was the only way to defend himself against these critics. Therefore, he appealed to the church to receive him as a fool and allow him to do a foolish thing: to boast in his ministry for a few moments (v.16).

2. However, his boasting was not the way the Lord talked. The Lord did not go about boasting in His ministry. But he, Paul, was confident that his boasting was the thing that had to be done in order to defend himself against his critics and to save the church from the false teachers (v.17).

3. This is the crucial point: Paul will boast in his ministry because the critics and false teachers are *boasting and talking big* about who they are and what they have done (v.18).

4. The church was receiving such “fools gladly,” and in receiving them the church felt it was wiser than others. Therefore, the church ought to receive Paul and let him play the fool (v.19).

5. The church was receiving people...

- who enslaved believers.
- who devoured and took money from believers.
- who preyed upon believers.
- who exalted and lorded themselves over believers.
- who slapped, that is, humiliated believers.

Therefore, the church ought to bear with Paul who planned no harm whatsoever to the believers of the church (v.20).

6. The need *now* was for the minister to be strong in boasting. Paul was ashamed that he had appeared to be weak in the past. But now, he would be bold and speak as foolishly and boastfully as the critics and false teachers (v.21). He would defend his ministry and be bold in his defense.

**2** (11:22) **Paul—Minister:** the minister is to stand equal in having a godly heritage. It is interesting that the false teachers and critics in Corinth were apparently Jewish converts.

1. The false teachers claimed to be Hebrews; that is, they were so loyal to God that they had kept up the Hebrew language. Their primary purpose for doing this was so they could study the Holy Scripture in its original language (Hebrew). This was a most unusual feat, for the Jews had been scattered all over the world by the nations that had conquered them. The depth of a Jew’s commitment to God was measured by his being a Hebrew, his having kept up with the language of the ancient people of God, and his studying the Scripture in its original language. Note: Paul said that he, too, was a Hebrew. He could make the very same claim as the false teachers.

2. The false teachers claimed to be Israelites; that is, they were citizens of God’s chosen race, Israel. All Israelites were considered the descendants of the great patriarch Jacob. The history of Jacob shows that he had always been a *supplanter*, a man who was always deceiving or mistreating others. However, in facing a particular crisis, he began to seek the Lord. Despite his seeking, peace and assurance would not come, but he did not give up. He struggled and struggled with God hour after hour throughout the night, confessing and repenting of his sinful life. His perseverance paid off. God met him, forgave his sin, and reaffirmed the covenant of His love with Jacob. As a symbol of His covenant and of Jacob’s changed life, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, the name that was to become the covenant name of God’s people throughout the Old Testament.

As stated above, by claiming to be Israelites the false teachers were claiming to be citizens of God’s chosen people, to be the covenant people of God, the people who had been adopted by God as His very special people. Note that Paul claimed to be an Israelite.

3. The false teachers claimed to be “the seed of Abraham”; that is, they were to receive all the promises made to Abraham (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—*Abraham*—Jn.4:22; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.4:1-25 for more discussion):

- ⇒ that he would be the father of a great nation.
- ⇒ that his nation of people would be a blessing to all the other nations of the earth.
- ⇒ that his line of people would be the roots or lineage of the Messiah or Savior of the world.

Again, Paul claimed to be of “the seed of Abraham.” The false teachers and critics were not superior to him in their godly heritage. He was as committed as they were...

- to the study of the Scripture (a Hebrew).
- to being a true follower of God’s covenant (an Israelite).
- to trusting and hoping in the promises made to Abraham (a seed of Abraham).

**Thought 1.** Every minister of the gospel must have a godly heritage. He must live and move and have his being in God, never failing to walk in the Lord. He must develop...

- the godly heritage of faithfully studying the Scripture.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: is so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Pt.2:2-3).

- the godly heritage of faithfully following the covenant, that is, the will and commandments of God.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Mt.7:24-25).

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn.14:21).

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love....Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (Jn.15:10, 14).

“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 Jn.3:23).

- the godly heritage of faithfully trusting and hoping in the promises of God.

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead” (Ro.4:20-24).

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).

“And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life” (1 Jn.2:25).

**3** (11:23-31) **Paul—Minister:** the minister must be more than a minister. He must go well beyond ministering and laboring and suffering. The minister must do far more than most people. Paul says that he was more of a minister than the false leaders and teachers. He was able to make such a claim because he went well beyond in laboring and sacrificing for Christ.

**Thought 1.** Every minister of Christ should go well beyond most in laboring and sacrificing for Christ.

- 1) Diligent labor and sacrifice are the strongest answers to critics.
- 2) Diligent labor and sacrifice are the only conceivable ways the world and its desperate needs will be reached and met for Christ. We must heed the commission of the Lord—all of us who have been called to be His ministers.

1. The minister must be more than a minister in that he labors and suffers more than most men do for Christ. Note the general sacrifices and sufferings of Paul.

- a. He labored more than those who were claiming to be ministers of Christ. He worked longer hours and more diligently than they. He focused upon ministering for Christ throughout the day and did not allow his attention to become diverted and waste time here and there with non-essentials as so many of them did. He just labored more diligently than they did.
- b. He suffered beatings and stripes beyond measure, that is, a countless number of times.
- c. He suffered being imprisoned far more than those who claimed to be ministers of Christ. Clement of Rome says that Paul was in prison seven times (Tasker, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. “Tyndale Bible Commentaries,” p.161).
- d. He often suffered the threat of death. He was almost constantly facing death for Christ. Imagine living under such pressure! What an unbelievable love this great minister had for our Lord!

2. The minister must be more than a minister in that he remains faithful while suffering for Christ. Note the specific sufferings of Paul.

So little is really known about Paul. This passage points out just how little. He was writing the Corinthian church from Ephesus. His stay in Ephesus is found in Acts 19. Naturally, this list of sufferings only records what had happened to Paul before that time. Only the annals of eternity will record what sufferings were borne after Ephesus. Paul said in Acts 20:23, “The Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.” (See outline and notes—2 Cor.6:4-10 for more discussion.)

- a. “Five times...stripes”: none of these events are recorded (v.25).
- b. “Thrice...rods”: only one event is recorded (v.25. Cp. Acts 16:22.)
- c. “Once stoned” (v.25. Cp. Acts 16:19.)
- d. “Shipwrecked three times”: none of these is recorded. The shipwreck recorded in Acts 27 happened after this writing (v.25). This means he was shipwrecked at least four times. Just imagine the terror!
- e. “Journeys often”: perilous and fatiguing, dangerous, and uncomfortable (v.26).
- f. “Perils of waters”: literally, rivers, swollen streams, flash floods. There were few bridges in that day (v.26).
- g. “Perils of robbers”: compare the Good Samaritan (v.26. Cp. Lk.10:25-37.)
- h. Perils of his own countrymen, the Jews (v.26. Cp. Acts 9:23, 29; 13:50; 14:5; 17:5, 13; 18:12; 23:12; 24:27.) This was due to the fact that Paul preached:
  - ⇒ a crucified Messiah to all men instead of a Messiah of glory who was to come to free Israel and set the nation up as the leading nation of the world.
  - ⇒ a salvation of grace instead of law, of faith instead of works.
- i. Perils from the heathen: for example, in Philippi (Acts 16:20f) and in Ephesus (Acts 19:23f) (v.26).
- j. Perils in the city: for example at Damascus (Acts 9:23f) and at Ephesus (Acts 19:23f) (v.26).

- k. Perils in the wilderness: for example, exposure to the heat, cold, storms, wild animals, and robbers (v.26).
- l. Perils of the sea: for example, pirates and unexpected storms (v.26).
- m. Perils among false brothers: those who professed to be Christians, yet were only making false professions and stood as a constant threat in opposing the mission of the church and the true minister of Christ (v.26).
- n. "In weariness and painfulness": severe work and labor, toil, fatigue, exhaustion, travail to the point that the body ached and hurt (v.27).
- o. "In watchings often": being unable to sleep because of being burdened, anxious, weary, or because of praying for the needs of God's people (v.27).
- p. "In hunger and thirst": going without food and water because of sacrificing all he was and had to preach and minister to the desperate needs of others (v.27).
- q. "In fastings often": going without in order to seek God's face for others or to give to meet the needs of others (v.27).
- r. "In cold and nakedness": being exposed to the elements of nature and giving all that he had to help the needy, even to the point of giving his clothes and suffering the cold of winters and the dampness and cold of dungeons and prisons (v.27).
- s. "That which comes upon me daily": means to press upon. The force of the Greek cannot be adequately expressed. It is like being smothered in a blanket; crushed by a great animal; bearing one down. It is an intolerable load—a heavy, heavy burden. Paul held a daily pressure of anxiety for the churches, a daily burden for their moral and doctrinal purity (v.28).
- t. He suffered and sympathized and felt the sufferings of others: when others were weak, he counted himself as weak in order to drive himself to teach them more. When others were offended, that is, led astray and caused to stumble into sin, he became indignant and inflamed against those who set the evil example or taught the false doctrine (v.29).

The point to note is Paul's faithfulness through all his sufferings. Nothing turned him away from Christ or his ministry. Christ had called him to preach and minister, and he would not be stopped except by death.

**"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Mt.5:11).**

**"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Mt.10:22).**

**"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Mt.10:39).**

**"For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16).**

**"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Ro.8:17).**

**"[Moses] choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb.11:25).**

3. The minister must boast only in his infirmities. Remember: Paul had started out to boast in who he was and in what he had accomplished. But note what he has ended up doing: sharing those things about which most men would be ashamed and never mention: the *rejections and humiliating experiences* he has suffered at the hands of men and nature. *Men and society were constantly rejecting him*, and nature was always posing a threat to his safety and livelihood.

The point is this: Paul had laid down the principle that *a minister must boast only in his infirmities and sufferings for Christ*, not in his position, achievements, accomplishments, or results. Men do not applaud rejections, weaknesses, sufferings, and shameful experiences. But when a minister suffers for Christ, he has something to boast about—something that is *acceptable to God*: the minister's faithful witness to Christ.

4. The minister must not exaggerate or lie about his sufferings. Paul calls God to witness that he has not exaggerated or lied about his sufferings. Of course, no minister should ever boast of anything he has ever done or borne for Christ—unless he is forced to defend himself. And, if he is ever called upon to boast...

- he is to boast only of his infirmities.
- he is not to exaggerate or lie.

**Thought 1.** What an indictment against so many of us! May God stir out hearts to totally commit our lives to Christ. And may He teach us...

- to quit boasting in our numbers.
- to quit seeking recognition and praise.
- to boast only in our wonderful Lord and His glorious grace—the Lord Jesus Christ.

**4** (11:32-33) **Paul—Minister:** the false teachers and critics were probably saying that Paul had acted like a coward in his earlier flight from Damascus. A coward is unworthy to be followed and obeyed. Paul answered by showing that a powerful ruler was after him, but God's purposes could not be stopped. He was delivered and sent on his way to further the gospel. (Cp. Acts 9:23f.)

**Thought 1.** No matter the opposition, *God will deliver* his dear servant to continue on in the ministry and to preach Christ. The minister may be led by God to move on elsewhere, but God will continue to use him to share the gospel of Christ and to minister to the needs of people. God will strengthen him to overcome all disappointment and discouragement.

| CHAPTER 12   |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>1 His boasting is unprofitable, but he must defend himself</b></p> <p><b>2 He had experienced unspeakable spiritual experiences—visions &amp; revelations</b></p> <p>a. Fourteen years ago</p> <p>b. Caught up into heaven<sup>ps1</sup></p> <p>c. Had an indescribable experience</p> <p>1) How it was experienced is unknown</p> <p>2) Was caught up into paradise<sup>ps2</sup></p> <p>3) Heard inexpressible words</p> <p>d. A man with such spiritual experiences has the right to boast, but Paul will boast only in his infirmities</p> | <p><b>E. The Minister: His Spiritual Experiences, 12:1-10</b></p> <p>It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.</p> <p>2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.</p> <p>3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)</p> <p>4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.</p> <p>5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.</p> <p>6 For though I would desire</p> | <p>to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.</p> <p>7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.</p> <p>8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.</p> <p>9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.</p> <p>10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.</p> <p>e. Paul desired to be judged not by such superior experiences, but by what people saw &amp; heard him preach &amp; teach</p> <p><b>3 He had experienced the spiritual power of Christ</b></p> <p>a. The need: To prevent pride &amp; super-spirituality by suffering a thorn in the flesh</p> <p>b. The desire: Relief—deliverance</p> <p>c. The reasons why God refused to remove the thorn</p> <p>1) To guard against being puffed up, v.7</p> <p>2) To reveal the power of Christ</p> <p>3) To teach him to live “for Christ’s sake”</p> |

**DIVISION V**

**THE MINISTER’S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14**

**E. The Minister: His Spiritual Experiences, 12:1-10**

(12:1-10) **Introduction:** Paul seldom if ever talked about himself from the pulpit. He certainly did not boast in himself or in his achievements (cp. 2 Cor.11.1, 16-17). This is clear from what he often said.

**“I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (1 Cor.14:18-19).**

**“What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor.14:36-37).**

**“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal.6:14).**

Because of his hesitancy to speak about himself, the false teachers and critics of Paul were saying that he lacked in spiritual experiences, that his salvation and ministry were suspect because he had not had the kind of experiences they were privileged to have. They thought to themselves and questioned others: “How could Paul be called of God if he has not had spiritual visions and revelations from the Lord? We have had them. If he has really been called of God, why has he not had them?”

Paul had to defend himself against his critics, and he had to save the Corinthian church from the false teachers. He was left with no choice. This is the reason he shares this spiritual experience. However, even in sharing this experience, He does not share anything about it. He wants no attention upon himself, but rather all attention upon Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. His boasting is unprofitable, but he must defend himself (v.1).
2. He had experienced unspeakable spiritual experiences—visions and revelations (v.2-6).
3. He had experienced the spiritual power of Christ (v.7-10).

**1** (12:1) **Minister—Boasting:** the minister’s boasting is unprofitable, but he must defend himself. As stated, Paul had no choice; he had to defend himself against the false accusations. His salvation and call from God were real. God had saved him and called him into the ministry; therefore, he had to do all he could to substantiate his salvation and call.

Paul says that boasting is unprofitable, but it was necessary in order to defend himself. Therefore, he would share the visions and revelations which the Lord had given him.

**Thought 1.** Note how cautiously Paul moved in boasting or in sharing any of his spiritual experiences. This is a much needed lesson: we must always lift up Jesus and not ourselves. The gospel of Christ alone can reach and grow people, not our personal spiritual experiences. Paul knew this, and we must learn it.

**2** (12:2-6) **Paul—Minister:** Paul had experienced unbelievable spiritual experiences, that is, visions and revelations. Note that Paul called himself “a man in Christ”; he did not share this experience in the first person. He was reluctant to speak about himself and his spiritual experiences. (Cp. v.7, which shows that Paul was referring to himself.)

1. The experience happened fourteen years ago. This experience is not referring to his conversion experience on the Damascus road, for his conversion had occurred earlier, about twenty years before the writing of II Corinthians. Apparently, God had given Paul this wonderful experience one or two years before the launch of his missionary journeys. In a most wonderful way God was beginning to prepare His dear servant for the strenuous ministry upon which he was soon to embark.

2. Paul was caught up into the third heaven. The third heaven is God’s dwelling place (cp. Lk.24:43), the very special place where the presence and the glory of the Lord are fully manifested and experienced. Paul called it “paradise” (v.4. See DEEPER STUDY # 1,2-2 Cor.12:2; 12:4.)

3. Paul had an indescribable experience. Note the depth of the experience.

- a. How it took place is not known, whether in the body or out of the body; only God knows. The transference from earth to heaven was entirely of God and not of self, nor of any other person; therefore, God is to be glorified, not self or man.
- b. Paul was caught up into paradise (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Paradise*—2 Cor.12:4 for discussion).
- c. Paul heard unspeakable words which were unlawful for him to utter. Note this: it means that the deep, intimate experience was for Paul and for Paul alone. God forbade him to reveal and share it. Paul needed a very special experience and strengthening from the Lord; therefore, the Lord met Paul in a very special way. The intimacy was not to be shared.

**Thought 1.** What a lesson for us! Our intimate experiences with the Lord are to be as personal as our intimate experiences with our spouses! We are not to be boasting of experiences with the Lord. Such boasting...

- makes us appear super-spiritual
- tends to make others feel inferior
- tends to make others seek and focus on experiences instead of the Lord

4. A man with such spiritual experiences has the right to boast, but Paul says that he will boast only in his infirmities. Very simply, if Paul knew a man who had had such a spiritual experience, he would personally boast in that man, but he will not boast in himself.

5. Paul desired but one thing: not to be judged by such spiritual experiences, but by what is really essential—what they saw in his life and what they heard him preach and teach.

Paul could have proclaimed the truth of his experience describing it in detail, but he would not, lest people begin to think too highly of him. Exalting the person who has had some unusual experience is always dangerous; therefore, Paul kept his experiences to himself. He wanted men to know *only* the absolute essential in life: the testimony of his pure life and witness for the Lord.

“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation [behavior] in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (2 Cor.1:12).

“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Ph.1:9-10).

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim.1:5).

“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pt.3:16).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(12:2) **Heaven:** the third heaven is God’s dwelling place (cp. Lk.23:43). The clouds are the first heaven; the stars are the second heaven.

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(12:4) **Paradise** (paradeison): the other world, the unseen world, the spiritual world, the spiritual dimension of being. Jesus Himself revealed that paradise is a place which is divided into two huge areas, sections, compartments, worlds, or dimensions of being. The two areas or worlds are separated by a great gulf that is impassable. One area or world is the place of sorrow, a place called hell. Hell is where unbelievers go. The other area or world is the place of paradise where believers go. Paradise is the picture of heaven, the place where God’s presence and glory are fully manifested and experienced. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Paradise*—Lk.16:23 for more discussion.)

“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Lk.23:43).

**“How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Cor.12:4).**

**“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev.2:7).**

**3** (12:7-10) **Paul—Minister:** Paul had experienced the spiritual power of Christ. God had given Paul deep and intimate spiritual experiences. There was the danger that he might begin to think too highly of himself; therefore, God gave Paul a “thorn in the flesh.”

1. Paul needed a “thorn” to keep him ever mindful that he was no better than other men. He was totally dependent upon God despite the indescribable spiritual experiences. What was his “thorn in the flesh?” The word “thorn” (*skolops*) means either thorn or stake. It is generally taken to mean *thorn* in this verse.

There are many guesses as to what the “thorn” was:

- ⇒ some spiritual suffering such as constant attacks by Satan or opposition by men, or occasional evangelistic failure in order to keep Paul humble and on his face before God seeking supernatural strength.
- ⇒ some physical suffering such as a recurring fever (for example, malaria), or epilepsy, or poor eyesight.

Just what the thorn was is not known. The best guess seems to be some physical ailment, for suffering is what this passage is all about (cp. 2 Cor.11:16-12:10). The words flesh, strength, weakness, and infirmities are used; and, although these same words could be used to describe spiritual sufferings, the context does not weigh toward spiritual suffering (cp. also 2 Cor.10:10).

The clearest description of the thorn is probably eye trouble (cp. 2 Cor.10:10; Gal.4:13-15; 6:11). Paul had been stricken blind for three days at his conversion, and he had been badly beaten and stoned several times (2 Cor.11:24-27). A serious injury to his eyes, or for that matter to any other part of his body, could have occurred at any of these tragedies.

2. Paul wanted deliverance and relief; he wanted God to remove the thorn. Why? Because...

- it pricked and bothered him
- it distracted him from his labor
- it made him appear personally weak and sickly

Note that Paul prayed three times for God to remove the thorn. Jesus Christ had also prayed three times for the suffering of the cross to be removed (cp. Mt.26:36-46).

3. There were three reasons why God refused to remove the thorn from Paul’s flesh.

a. First, God wanted to guard against Paul’s being puffed up (see pt.1 of this note).

b. Second, God wanted to reveal His power in Paul. The weaker the vessel, the more God is glorified when the vessel really serves Christ. Note God’s answer to Paul:

⇒ “My grace is sufficient for thee”: the presence, love, favor, and blessings of God are sufficient to help the believer walk through any suffering. The word “sufficient” (*arkei*) means the power or strength to withstand any danger. God’s grace within the believer can carry the believer through anything. In Paul’s case, it was physical suffering. In our case it may be either physical or spiritual attacks; but no matter: God’s grace is sufficient to see us through whatever the thorn is.

⇒ “My strength is made perfect in weakness”: the weaker the believer, the more God can demonstrate His strength. If a man is self-sufficient, he does not need God; but if he is weak, he needs God: the help, provision, and sufficiency of God.

⇒ “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” Note the point of this statement: infirmities or weaknesses are purposeful. The believer suffers for a reason: that the power of Christ may be demonstrated and clearly seen in his life. The word “rest” (*episkenosei*) means to fix a tent upon. The idea is that the power of Christ rests upon the suffering believer just as the Shekinah glory dwelt in the holy place of the tabernacle. What a glorious thought! The strength of Christ fixes itself upon and dwells within the believer—filling him with the Shekinah glory of God—when he suffers.

c. Third, God wanted to teach Paul to live “for Christ’s sake.” When Paul suffered some infirmity or weakness, it gave Christ the chance to infuse power into Paul and to overcome the weakness for Paul. Paul’s infirmity gave Christ an opportunity to prove Himself. Therefore, Paul says that he took pleasure...

- “in infirmities”: a general term meaning all kinds of sufferings and weaknesses, whether moral or physical. The power of Christ can overcome any weakness or temptation for the believer.
- “in reproaches”: whether ridicule, insult, slander, rumor, or whatever.
- “in necessities”: hardships, needs, deprivations, hunger, thirst, lack of shelter or clothing, or any other necessity.
- “in persecutions”: verbal or physical attack, abuse, or injury.
- “in distresses”: tight situations, perplexities, disturbances, anxious moments, inescapable problems and difficulties.

When the believer is weak, he is strongest. How? By the power of Christ. And the power of Christ is much stronger than all the combined forces of mankind.

**Thought 1.** The great need of the believer is to acknowledge his weakness before the Lord. When he does, the Lord pours His strength into the believer’s mind and heart. The Lord empowers the believer to overcome and conquer all infirmities and weaknesses.

“But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Mt.19:26).

“For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Lk.1:37).

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (1 Cor.1:27).

“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph.3:16).

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).

“[Believers] who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens” (Heb.11:33-34).

“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger” (Ps.8:2).

“God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God” (Ps.62:11).

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Is.40:31).

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).

|   |  |  |   |
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| <p><b>1 The minister seeks only to prove his ministry &amp; call</b></p> <p>a. The charge: He is an inferior minister</p> <p>b. The answer: He is equal to any minister, &amp; his ministry proves it</p> <p><b>2 The minister seeks only people, nothing else</b></p> <p>a. The first charge: Paul damaged the church's image</p> <p>b. The answer</p> <p>1) He sought their forgiveness, v.13</p> <p>2) He sought them, not their money</p> <p>3) He stated his intense love</p> <p>c. The second charge:</p> | <p><b>F. The Minister: His Behavior Before the Church, 12:11-21</b></p> <p>11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.</p> <p>12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.</p> <p>13 For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.</p> <p>14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.</p> <p>15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you: though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.</p> <p>16 But be it so, I did not</p> | <p>burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.</p> <p>17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?</p> <p>18 I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?</p> <p>19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.</p> <p>20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:</p> <p>21 And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.</p> | <p>Paul took money through middle-men</p> <p>d. The answer: The church knew better</p> <p><b>3 The minister seeks only repentance from wrong-doers, from the carnal</b></p> <p>a. His awareness: He stood before God, duty bound to edify the church</p> <p>b. His fear</p> <p>1) A carnal church</p> <p>2) Unrepentant wrong-doers</p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE MINISTER'S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14**

**F. The Minister: His Behavior Before the Church, 12:11-21**

(12:11-21) **Introduction:** how the minister behaves before the church is critical. Few subjects are as important as the minister's behavior before people, especially before those whom he serves. Why? Because many lives are at stake—their present welfare and their eternal destiny.

1. The minister seeks only to prove his ministry and call (v.11-12).
2. The minister seeks only people, nothing else (v.13-18).
3. The minister seeks only repentance from wrong-doers, from the carnal (v.19-21).

**1** (12:11-12) **Minister—Call:** the minister seeks only to demonstrate and prove his ministry and call. Some false teachers and critics in the Corinthian church had attacked Paul, his call and ministry. They had spread rumor after rumor about him in order to tear down his ministry. The rumors and attacks had caused a severe division in the church. (See note, *Paul, Accusations Against*—2 Cor.1:12-22 for more discussion.) In the former chapters Paul has been forced to defend himself by talking about his call and ministry and about his own personal commitment to the Lord and His kingdom. Talking about himself had embarrassed Paul and it had hurt him. He said that such was glorying in oneself, and such glorying was foolishness, but the church had forced him to do it. How?

The church had forced Paul to boast in himself by not coming to his aid. The church should have defended Paul, but it had failed to silence the critics when they first arose. Now the situation had gotten out of hand. Therefore, Paul had no choice: for the sake of his ministry and for the protection of the church he had to defend himself and handle the critics and false teachers.

Note the specific charge against Paul: he was either an inferior apostle or minister or not an apostle or minister at all.

Paul answered in no uncertain terms: he was equal to any apostle or minister, and his ministry among the church proved it. The signs of an apostle had been wrought among the church. And note: they had been wrought under the most *severe circumstances* requiring great patience (endurance, perseverance, constancy). What were the signs? They were...

- “signs” (semeia): miracles.
- “wonders” (terata): the effect of miracles upon the observers.
- “mighty deeds” (dunameis): great works; powerful deeds.

**Thought 1.** Every church should come to the aid of its minister when critics arise to attack him. The leaders especially should come to his aid. No church should ever allow false teachers or critics to arise or to seep into its fellowship. If it does, the inevitable result is division.

**Thought 2.** Every minister should ask himself:

- ⇒ Could I *defend* my ministry if it became necessary to defend it?
- ⇒ Is my ministry *proven* by the signs of the ministry?
- ⇒ Is the presence and power of God *upon* my life and work?
- ⇒ Is my commitment to the ministry *equal to the commitment* of faithful ministers?

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).

“But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (Jn.5:36).

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:1-2).

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Eph.3:7).

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).

“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim.1:11-12).

“Having your conversation [behavior, conduct] honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pt.2:12).

**2** (12:13-18) **Minister—Stewardship:** the minister seeks only people, nothing else. Two charges dealing with finances are made against Paul in these verses.

1. There was the charge that he had damaged the church’s image by not accepting financial support from the church. By not allowing the church to support him, he had made the church appear inferior to other churches who supported Paul. By failing to adequately support Paul, the church appeared to be...

- |                |                      |                 |
|----------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| • inferior     | • miserly            | • unconcerned   |
| • neglectful   | • self-centered      | • selfish       |
| • carnal       | • worldly            | • non-visionary |
| • lacking love | • non-mission minded |                 |

Paul’s answer to the charges and criticism was threefold.

- a. Paul asked the church to forgive him this wrong. He did not mean for his action to reflect so negatively upon them. He loved them too much to deliberately make them appear inferior to anyone.
- b. Paul sought them for Christ, not their money. Paul was soon to visit the Corinthian church for a third time. Note that he planned to continue his policy: he would not be able to personally accept money from them. (See note—2 Cor.11:7-12 for more discussion.) His primary reason is clearly stated: he sought them for Christ, not their money. He must reach them and grow them in Christ. They were what he was after, not their money and possessions. The implication is that if he accepted their money his critics would say that he was mercenary and taking advantage of the church. Note that Paul drew support for his policy from the illustration of a father and his children. He says that he was the spiritual father of the church, and the father was the one who laid up for the children, not the children for the father.
- c. Paul loved the church with an intense love. He, as the minister of God, was the father and they were his dear children. He loved them deeply; therefore, he would gladly spend all he had and was for them:
  - ⇒ all his money and possessions
  - ⇒ all his time and effort
  - ⇒ all his energy and strength
  - ⇒ all his health and life

However, it seemed that the more he loved them, the less they loved him. They were just not showing and expressing their love nor defending him when critics spoke up against him.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn.15:12).

“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).

**“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Ro.13:8).**

**“Beloved, let us love one other: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1 Jn.4:7).**

2. There was the charge that Paul took money through middle men (v.17-18). This shows just how mean and unprincipled the critics of Paul were—how they strained to find things with which to criticize and charge Paul. They said that his policy in not accepting money was a ploy, a crafty scheme; that he wanted to appear sacrificial and disinterested in money in order to keep from arousing suspicion about what he was really doing. What did they think he was doing? Using middle men to take advantage of the church financially. They said that when Titus and others were sent to challenge the church to underwrite special mission projects, Paul was confiscating some of the money. The charge was that Paul had “sticky fingers,” that some of the money given to the poor at Jerusalem was taken by Paul (cp. 2 Cor.8:20-22).

Paul dramatically declared that the Corinthians knew the truth. He fired question after question at the church:

- ⇒ Did I take advantage or steal money from you by the messengers which I sent to you? The implied answer is forceful: You know better!
- ⇒ Did Titus take advantage or steal money from you? The implied answer is forceful: You know better!
- ⇒ Did not Titus and I have the same spirit of Christ? The implied answer is forceful: We have the same spirit of Christ! We belong totally to Christ.
- ⇒ Did not Titus and I walk in the same steps? The implied answer is forceful: We walk in the steps of Christ, living righteously and godly lives, not the lives of two crafty cheats and thieves.

**Thought 1.** The church is to adequately take care of its minister.

**“Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat” (Mt.10:9-10).**

**“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Cor.9:14).**

**“Let him that is taught in the word communicate [give, share, support] unto him that teacheth in all good things” (Gal.6:6).**

**“Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate [give, share, support] with my affliction” (Ph.4:14).**

**“For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward” (1 Tim.5:18).**

**Thought 2.** The minister must always guard against greed and worldliness, against giving any impression that he is a cheat or thief.

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation” (Mt.23:14).**

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” (Mt.23:25).**

**“And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you” (Lk.3:13).**

**“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).**

**“But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep” (Jn.10:12).**

**“His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant” (Is.56:10-12).**

**“For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely” (Jer.6:13).**

**“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock” (Ezk.34:2-3).**

**3** (12:19-21) **Minister:** the minister seeks only repentance from wrong-doers, from the carnal within the church. Note two points.

1. Paul had a deep awareness that he stood accountable to God and not to men. For what? To edify (build up) the church. He had not been defending himself before the church in order to have them pass judgment upon him. He was called of God, no matter what some of them thought. They were not his judge; God was his judge. Therefore, he had been speaking and defending himself before God. Why? Because God had called him to edify and build up the church. He had

to defend himself before the church because God expected him to keep his ministry clean and clear so that he could minister freely and build up the believers in the church.

**“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Ro.14:19).**

**“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me” (Ro.15:2-3).**

**“For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed” (2 Cor.10:8).**

**“...we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying” (2 Cor.12:19).**

**“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:11-12).**

**“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph.4:29).**

2. Paul was stricken with fear, fear lest the church fail to be what it should be and reject him and his ministry. Paul feared that the church would fail to deal with the carnal critics and continue putting up with their evil attacks against him. He lists eight evils that were and still are characteristic of divisive critics in the church.

⇒ “Debates” (ereis): strife, contention, rivalry, competitiveness, quarrelling.

⇒ “Envyings” (zeloi): jealousy, begrudging what others have, whether position, abilities, recognition, acceptance, loyalty, wealth, or anything else.

⇒ “Wraths” (thumoi): fiery anger, outbursts of anger, fits of anger.

⇒ “Strifes” (eirtheiai): factions, a party-like spirit or clique that stands as a rival to others, a factious spirit caused by selfishness or self-seeking.

⇒ “Backbiting” (katalaliai): open slander, insult, vilification, attacks.

⇒ “Whisperings” (psithurismoi): gossip, behind-the-back talk, spicy rumor, secret and wild imaginations that are passed on to a close friend who has a close friend who has a close friend, and on and on.

⇒ “Swellings” (phusioseis): pride, insolence, conceit, arrogance, haughtiness.

⇒ “Tumults” (akatastasiai): disorder, anarchy, confusion.

The point is forceful: the church is allowing such flagrant sins in its midst—all being caused by false teachers and critics. Paul says in no uncertain terms that unless the church and the carnal repent of their sins, he will deal with both when he arrives.

Remember: many in the church had already repented and experienced revival, but there were some who still persisted in their false teaching and in their critical and divisive spirit. And the church was still reluctant to deal with them. The church desperately needed to correct the situation.

Paul closes by adding three more sins from which some must repent:

⇒ “Uncleanness” (akatharsia): the impure, unclean, indulgent, and extravagant things people do out in the world.

⇒ “Fornication” (porneia): immorality, sexual vice, premarital sex, adultery.

⇒ “Lasciviousness” (aselgeia): sensuality and indecency; uncontrolled, undisciplined, and unrestrained lust and passion.

Again, the point is forceful: those living in sin had to repent or else be dealt with and disciplined when Paul arrived. Paul had poured his heart out declaring his deep love for them (v.15) and doing all he could to lead them to repentance. The decision was now up to them.

**“...repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.3:2).**

**“And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son” (Lk.15:21).**

**“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Lk.18:10-14).**

**“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).**

**“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).**

**“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron.7:14).**

**“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).**

**“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die” (Ezk.18:21).**

CHAPTER 13

**G. The Minister: His Final Warning, Prayer, Challenge, & Blessing, 13:1-14**

**1 The minister's warning**

- a. Warning 1: He will demand proof of the charges
- b. Warning 2: He will not spare, but will exercise his spiritual authority
  - 1) Because there are those who have sinned
  - 2) Because they seek proof of his authority
  - 3) Because he lives by the power of God

- c. Warning 3: He demands immediate self-examination
  - 1) To see if one is genuine

This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

2 I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare:

3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you,

except ye be reprobates?

6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

9 For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong; and this also we wish, even your perfection.

10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

12 Greet one another with an holy kiss.

13 All the saints salute you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

- 2) To see if one is reprobate
- 3) To prove he is not reprobate

**2 The minister's prayer for a carnal church**

- a. His prayer
  - 1) That they do no evil, but only that which is good & righteous
  - 2) That they all stand for the truth
  - 3) That they be strong & perfected

- b. His reason
  - 1) To prevent sharpness—harshness
  - 2) To edify, not to tear down

**3 The minister's challenge**

**4 The minister's blessing**

**DIVISION V**

**THE MINISTER'S ANSWER TO HIS CRITICS, 10:1-13:14**

**G. The Minister: His Final Warning, Prayer, Challenge, & Blessing, 13:1-14**

(13:1-14) **Introduction:** this is the concluding passage of Paul's letter to the Corinthian church. He has done all he can to lead the false teachers, the critics, and those who are in sin to repent and turn back to the Lord. His final words include a warning, a prayer, a challenge, and a blessing.

- 1. The minister's warning (v.1-6).
- 2. The minister's prayer for a carnal church (v.7-10).
- 3. The minister's challenge (v.11-13).
- 4. The minister's blessing (v.14).

**1** (13:1-6) **Minister, Authority—Reprobate—Self-Examination:** there was the minister's warning. There were some in the Corinthian church who were teaching false doctrine, criticizing and making false accusations against Paul. Paul was soon to visit the church, so he issued three warnings to the church.

1. The first warning was that he would demand proof of the charges against him. He had put up with the criticisms, rumors, accusations, and divisiveness long enough—for over a year. Now it had to stop. It was time to deal with the problem face to face. It could not be allowed to go on, for many in the church had already repented of their sins and experienced revival (see outline note—2 Cor.7:2-16). If the false teachers and critics who refused to repent were allowed to go on, they would again affect the whole church. Paul just could not allow that to happen again. He could not allow the renewed spirit of the majority within the church to be destroyed. He had to confront the false teachers and critics: it was now time for them to either repent or be disciplined by him and the church. Therefore, when he arrived, he would do exactly what Christ and Scripture say: he would demand that two or three witnesses be presented to prove his guilt or innocence (Dt.19:15). The critics and false teachers had to repent or else leave the church before he arrived. If they refused, they would have to face him and prove their criticisms and rumors.

**“But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established” (Mt.18:16).**

**“It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true” (Jn.8:17).**

**“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established” (Dt.19:15).**

2. The second warning was that he would not spare; he would exercise his spiritual authority and discipline all offenders when he arrived. There were three reasons why he would take this action.

a. First, there were some in the church who *had sinned and others who were thinking about sinning*, thinking about giving in to the sinful ways of the world. This warning was given to those who were guilty of the sins just mentioned (cp. 2 Cor.12:20-21). They were those who were guilty of...

- arguments & contention
- envy & jealousy
- wrath & fiery anger
- a swelled head & pride
- uncleanness & indulgent living
- lasciviousness & uncontrolled lust and passion
- strife & a factious spirit
- backbiting & open slander
- whispering & gossip
- disorder & confusion
- fornication & immoral sexual vice

Paul had warned these before; now, he warned them again. Such sins did not belong in the church. Therefore, when he arrived, he would deal with all those who were guilty of divisiveness and immorality.

b. Second, Paul said that he would not spare the false teachers and critics, those who demanded proof that he was a true apostle and minister of God. They wanted proof that Christ was in him and spoke in him. His ministry and appeals to them were not enough to convince them; therefore, when he came to the church, he would give them proof of his ministerial call and authority.

c. Third, Paul would deal with those who lived in sin because he lived by the power of God. Note that Paul used Christ as his example. When Christ was on earth, He appealed to men time and again, doing all He could to reach and save them. By so doing, He appeared weak in that He allowed men to abuse and crucify Him; but today Christ lives by the power of God. So it is with the minister of God. He does all he can to appeal to men, and by so doing the minister appears to be weak in that he accepts rejection and abuse time after time. But this is not the whole truth. The minister not only lives in the weakness and forbearance of God; he lives by the power of God, and that power is to be exercised under certain circumstances. In the case of the Corinthian church, it was now time for a demonstration of God's power, time for the disciplining hand of God to fall upon the false teachers, critics, and sinners in the church.

**“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim.5:20).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

**“This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Tit.1:13).**

**“A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject” (Tit.3:10).**

3. The third warning was that the believers must examine themselves to make sure they were in the faith.
- ⇒ They needed to make sure they were genuine. Living in sin makes a person's faith suspect. Some were living in sin: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”
  - ⇒ They needed to make sure that *Jesus Christ was in them* and that they were *not reprobate* (adokimoi). The word means to be tested and disqualified and rejected; to be found unfit and disapproved; to be doomed and condemned to perdition (see note, *Castaway*—1 Cor.9:27 for more discussion).
  - ⇒ They needed to know that he was not reprobate.

The only way the Corinthians could know these things was to examine themselves.

**“Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD” (Lam.3:40).**

**“Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye” (Mt.7:5).**

**“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” (1 Cor.11:28).**

**“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor.13:5).**

**2** (13:7-10) **Minister—Prayer:** there was the minister's prayer for a carnal church. He made three very specific requests.

1. He prayed that they do no evil. He wanted them to stop their sinning, their attacks against him, their divisiveness, and their immorality. Note a significant point: his reason was not selfish. He was not seeking to be approved by them, but that they might do the honest thing (tokalon). The word means right, noble, good, pleasing. Paul was under attack, and suffered the tension and pressure of the attack, but that was not the reason he wanted his critics to repent. His purpose was not selfish or self-centered: he wanted his critics to repent for the sake of righteousness, that the good and right thing might be done. He wanted this despite the fact that they treated him as a reprobate. They might not love him, but he loved them and wanted only the best for them. He did not want to discipline them; he wanted them to repent before he arrived.

**“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).**

**“Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Th.5:22).**

**“Let him eschew [turn away from] evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it” (1 Pt.3:11).**

2. He prayed that they might all stand for the truth. Most commentators understand this verse to be referring to Paul, but it is probably best to see it as part of Paul's prayer, that is, as applying to everyone involved, to both Paul and the Corinthian church. The verse is certainly applicable to every believer and should be a part of our daily prayer:

**“For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (v.8).**

The truth would refer to the gospel in its broadest meaning—the fulness of truth. The truth is to be lived and proclaimed under any and all circumstances.

**Thought 1.** No minister and no people should ever act against the truth...

- in the way they treat each other
- in the way they speak about others
- in their morals
- in their behavior
- in their church

**“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Eph.4:25).**

**“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph.6:14).**

**“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” (Zech.8:16).**

**“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Mal.2:6).**

3. He prayed that they might be strong and perfected. Paul was glad when the believers were strong in the Lord and he was able to appear weak, that is, when he did not have to be exercising authority and discipline. At such times, the believers and the church were growing toward perfection (katartisis). The word means to repair what is broken and to restore it to a more perfect condition. What the Corinthian church needed was to become strong and perfected, that is, repaired and restored, to have its fellowship cleansed of critics and false teachers.

**“Be ye therefore perfect [growing, maturing], even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Mt.5:48).**

**“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor.13:11).**

**“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:13).**

**“[Christ] whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col.1:28).**

**“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Heb.6:1).**

Note Paul's reasons for praying and writing these things:

- ⇒ to prevent his having to confront those who were sinning and having to use sharp, severe discipline.
- ⇒ to have the opportunity to edify and build up the sinners and not to be forced to destroy them. He did not want to be forced to tear them and their lives down in order to save the church and its ministry.

**“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Ro.14:19).**

**“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Ro.15:2).**

**“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying” (1 Cor.14:26).**

**“Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying” (2 Cor.12:19).**

**“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph.4:29).**

**3** (13:11-13) **Minister—Challenge:** there was the minister's challenge. The challenge was encouraging.

1. “Be perfect”: restore, reform, correct, mend yourselves and your ways. Stop your sinning: criticism, divisiveness, immorality.
2. “Be of good comfort”: be assured, consoled, and helped by repenting and turning back to God. The word comfort (parakaleisthe) could also mean “be exhorted”; that is, listen and heed what I have said.
3. “Be of one mind”: in faith, belief, purpose, mission, and ministry.
4. “Live in peace”: love, care, forbear, be longsuffering and concerned for each other. Have nothing to do with criticism, divisiveness, snobbishness, pride, or feeling superior.

If the believers of the church would do these four things then the God of love and peace would be with them. Note that God is the author, the Giver of love and peace. Therefore, if a man wishes to know true love and true peace, he must accept the challenge and live accordingly.

Note: Paul expected the church to follow through. He challenged them, "Greet one another with an holy kiss." It was the practice of early believers to show their love and communion by greeting each other with a kiss.

Note also that Paul attempted to stir the Corinthian believers by sending greetings from "all the saints." Just the mention of the word "saints" would be meaningful to the Corinthians, for it means *those who are set apart from the world to God*.

**4** (13:14) **Minister—Blessing:** there was the minister's blessing. This is one of the most used blessings in the Bible. Note how clearly the Trinity is seen in this verse. The blessing includes three parts.

1. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ: Paul wished them to experience all the favor and blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ. He wanted them to know the saving power of the Lord's death and His day by day deliverance which is to be consummated in the glorious day of eternal redemption.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor.8:9).

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor.12:9).

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim.2:1).

2. The love of God: Paul wished them to experience all the love of God, ranging from the gift of Christ to save the world over to the day by day provision of necessities.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro.5:8).

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro.8:38-39).

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" (Eph.2:4-5).

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (1 Jn.3:1).

3. The Communion of the Holy Spirit: Paul wished them to experience the presence and power of God's Spirit as they walk in fellowship with the Father and the Son and with other believers.

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again of fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Ro.8:15-16).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor.6:19-20).

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal.4:6).

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn.1:3).



**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE**

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**GALATIANS**



# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS

## INTRODUCTION

**AUTHOR:** Paul, the Apostle.

There is little if any question of Paul's authorship.

**DATE:** Uncertain. Somewhere between A.D. 48-60. Some scholars hold an early date of A.D. 48-50 and some a later date of A.D. 51-60.

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** "To the churches of Galatia" (Gal.1:2).

Some believe the letter was written to churches in southern Galatia, others to churches in northern Galatia. Acts 13 and 14 are a record of the southern mission. There is no account in Acts of a northern venture.

**PURPOSE:** To vindicate Paul's call by God and the gospel of grace.

Paul and the gospel of Christ were both under attack. Some false teachers, who were professing Jewish Christians (called Judaizers), were teaching a double error. They taught (1) that a person was saved partly by faith and partly by works, and (2) that a person grew in Christ partly by faith and partly by his own effort. A person had to believe in Christ, yes, but he also...

- had to undergo the main ritual of religion which was circumcision (compare baptism, church membership, and other requirements today).
- had to observe all the ceremonies and rituals of religion.

(See notes—Gal.1:6-7; 2:3-5; 2:4; 2:11-13 for more discussion.)

Of course, Paul did not teach this. He taught something different—that a man is saved by Christ and by Christ alone. His message was the message of God's grace, of pure grace. A person does not win, earn, or merit salvation. A person is saved by the grace of God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, the Judaizers charged Paul with deceit: his apostleship was a false claim of his own making, created in his own imagination. They said that he was not a true minister of God—not a true apostle as he claimed, for he minimized the law of God and no true minister would ever minimize the law of God.

Paul thus sits down and pens Galatians to combat these charges. Writing with great force and stern insistence, he lays down the wonder of God, the wonder of God's glorious grace.

### SPECIAL FEATURES:

1. The Area of Galatia. Galatia was a district that stretched across the middle of Asia Minor. The Galatian district sat in the highlands, several thousand feet above sea level. It was formerly settled by the Gauls. The cities visited by Paul stretched across southern Galatia. They were Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Pisidion, and Antioch of Pisidia. There is no record of Paul ever visiting northern Galatia.

The native Galatians were themselves an emotional, impulsive, and changeable people. They were an impetuous, fickle, arguing, loud, boastful, and immoral people. They had a love for the strange, the curious, the unknown. They were attached to a religion that was mainly the worship of nature. The area was also heavily populated by Jews who clung to their staunch Judaistic religion. Greeks were also numerous and gave the area a strong Hellenistic influence. The nature and strange mixture of people in southern Galatia can be seen in their treatment of Paul. They could both worship and stone him (Acts 14:13-19).

2. The churches in Galatia. Paul visited Galatia on his first and third missionary journeys (Acts 13:14; 18:23f). He was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Galatia on his second mission (Acts 16:6).

The church was spiritually immature. The very reason for Paul writing the Epistle was to deal with the basic doctrine of Christianity: salvation by grace. As one would expect, there were Gentile converts in the churches. In Acts 20:4 Paul lists the delegates who were going to Jerusalem with him. There is at least one Gentile delegate, perhaps two, from Galatia. This would point to a large group of Gentiles within the churches. There was also a large number of Jewish converts. The problem of mixing the law with grace is evidence of an influential body of Jewish members.

3. Galatians is "The Heart of the Gospel." Man must receive the gospel by faith. He does not work for it by keeping the law. The law does not produce faith. It only works a curse. Therefore, Christ Himself has to redeem man. But man must go beyond receiving the gospel; he must live it out in his life. This is done by the power of the cross and by the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:1-6:18).

The one point Paul makes is that man cannot earn or win or do anything for salvation. Human effort is nothing more than a fleshly sign, a sign that is born within man himself, of his own thought and energy. It is earthly, and the earthly and corruptible perishes. The works of men and of the law do not last. Human effort is not of a spiritual or eternal nature. It has nothing to do with spirit. Salvation is a free gift of God. It is eternal and lasting. It is spiritual. Therefore, salvation is by the grace of God and by the grace of God alone.

4. Galatians is "The Message of Liberty, yet Subjection; of Unity, yet Diversity; of Oneness, yet Difference."

- a. There is a recognition that Gentiles do not have to live as Jews, and Jews do not have to live as Gentiles (Gal.2:11f). Paul never says it is wrong for Jews to be circumcised. He never says it is wrong for them to keep the law or to observe special festivals. What he says is that these have nothing to do with salvation. Customs and practices differ, but salvation never differs. There is only one way to be saved: by the grace of God.

- b. There is also a recognition that ministers are not all alike (Gal.2:1f). They are not all called to serve the same kinds of people, nor are ministers themselves called to observe the same customs and life-styles. Paul was called to the Gentiles; Peter to the Jews. The customs and life-styles of Gentiles and Jews differed radically. Yet both Paul and Peter were still ministers of the same Lord.
  - c. There is also a recognition that all Christians are to fellowship and share with one another, and they are to cooperate. Paul just could not see how two different groups of Christians could be in the same place and refuse to eat with one another because of some theological difference (Gal.2:11f). This was the very point that brought about the crises. And Paul came down hard upon it—fighting tooth and nail for a gospel of grace and a life to match that grace.
5. Galatians has been called “The Magna Charta of the Church.” God has used its message to stir world revivals in former generations. The great spiritual awakening of Martin Luther and of the Reformation was stirred as Luther studied its message. John Wesley received peace of heart—peace for which he had so long searched—when he heard a sermon preached from Galatians.
- The message of Galatians will pierce the heart of any generation and stir it to action—if that generation will just hear and heed its message.

# OUTLINE OF GALATIANS

**THE PREACHER'S OUTLINE & SERMON BIBLE™** is *unique*. It differs from all other Study Bibles & Sermon Resource Materials in that every Passage and Subject is outlined right beside the Scripture. When you choose any *Subject* below and turn to the reference, you have not only the Scripture, but you discover the Scripture and Subject *already outlined for you—verse by verse*.

*For a quick example*, choose one of the subjects below and turn over to the Scripture, and you will find this marvelous help for faster, easier, and more accurate use.

*In addition, every point* of the Scripture and Subject is *fully developed in a Commentary with supporting Scripture* at the bottom of the page. Again, this arrangement makes sermon preparation much easier and faster.

*Note something else*: The Subjects of Galatians have titles that are both Biblical and *practical*. The practical titles sometimes have more appeal to people. This *benefit* is clearly seen for use on billboards, bulletins, church newsletters, etc.

*A suggestion*: For the quickest overview of Galatians, first read *all the major titles* (I, II, III, etc.), then come back and read the subtitles.

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## OUTLINE OF GALATIANS

### I. GREETING, 1:1-9

- A. God's Minister and His Authority—Paul, 1:1-5
- B. God's Only Message—the Gospel of Christ, 1:6-9

### II. THE PROOF OF GOD'S MESSENGER AND MESSAGE, 1:10-2:21

- A. The Minister's Life Was Completely Changed, 1:10-15
- B. The Minister Followed God First in His Life, 1:16-24
- C. The Minister Defended the Gospel, 2:1-20
- D. The Minister Proclaimed the Gospel to Those Who Had Drifted Away, 2:11-21

### III. THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS, 3:1-4:7

- A. The Proof of a Believer's Experience, 3:1-5
- B. The Proof of Scripture, 3:6-14
- C. The Proof of God's Covenant and Promise, 3:15-18
- D. The Proof of the Law's Powerlessness, 3:19-22
- E. The Proof of What Faith Does for Us, 3:23-29
- F. The Proof of Christ and the Fulness of Time, 4:1-7

### IV. THE FIVEFOLD APPEAL TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE, 4:8-5:12

- A. Appeal One: Do Not Turn Back, 4:8-11
- B. Appeal Two: Restir Affection for the Minister of God, 4:12-20
- C. Appeal Three: Listen to What the Law Really Says, 4:21-31
- D. Appeal Four: Stand Fast in the Liberty of Christ, 5:1-6
- E. Appeal Five: Obey the Truth, 5:7-12

### V. THE BELIEVER'S LIFE AND WALK: FREE AND SPIRITUAL, 5:13-6:18

- A. The Believer's Great Law of Life: Love, 5:13-15
- B. A Walk Combating the Great Enemy in Life: Lusts of the Flesh, 5:16-21
- C. A Walk Bearing God's Nature: The Fruit of the Spirit, 5:22-26
- D. A Walk Restoring the Man Who Slips, 6:1-5
- E. A Walk Doing Good to One's Teacher, Sowing and Reaping, 6:6-10
- F. A Walk Boasting in the Cross of Christ, 6:11-18



GALATIANS

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|--|--|--|---|
|  | <b>CHAPTER 1</b>   | are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:   | <b>man by Christian believers</b>   |
|  | <b>I. GREETING, 1:1-9</b>  | 3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,   | <b>3 He wishes the very best for other believers</b>  |
| <b>1 He is commissioned by God alone</b> | <b>A. God's Minister &amp; His Authority—Paul, 1:1-5</b>   | 4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: | <b>4 He proclaims the work of Christ</b>  |
|  | Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) | 5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.  | a. The message: Christ gave Himself<br>b. Purpose: To deliver us<br>c. Reason: God so willed<br>d. Result: God is praised |
| <b>2 He is recognized as God's</b>       | 2 And all the brethren which   |  |   |

DIVISION I

GREETING, 1:1-9

**A. God's Minister and His Authority—Paul, 1:1-5**

(1:1-5) **Introduction:** Paul's greeting to the Galatians is different from his greetings to other churches. He was writing under heavy stress and strain. False teachers and critics had arisen in the church who were criticizing and attacking him. They were questioning his call to the ministry and his authority as God's messenger. Some were even questioning the very gospel itself. Therefore, the usual affection expressed toward churches and individuals is missing. From the very first sentence his writing is abrupt. He assails the Galatian churches with words straight to the point: he is a true minister of God, a true apostle and messenger of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. He is commissioned by God alone (v.1).
2. He is recognized as God's man by Christian believers (v.2).
3. He wishes the very best for other believers (v.3).
4. He proclaims the work of Christ (v.4-5).

**1** (1:1) **Minister—Call—Apostle:** the minister of God is called and commissioned by God alone. There were those in the church who questioned Paul's call and ministry, questioned if he had really been called by God to be a minister. They were set on destroying Paul's ministry. Why?

- ⇒ Because he had lived such a terrible life before his conversion: he had been the savage persecutor of believers (cp. Gal.1:13; see notes—Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-2 for more discussion).
- ⇒ Because he was not one of the select officials of the church; that is, he had not been taught by the Lord Himself when the Lord was on earth. This was one of the basic qualifications for being recognized as an apostle (cp. Gal.1:17-18; see DEEPER STUDY # 5, *Apostle*—Mt.10:2 for more discussion).
- ⇒ Because he had not been appointed by the official or mother church, that is, the home church of the apostles, the church in Jerusalem (cp. Gal.1:17-18).
- ⇒ Because he by-passed the religious forms and rituals of the official church (cp. Gal.4:9-10; 5:6; 6:12-15).
- ⇒ Because he preached a different message than the official church: that a person is not saved by ritual and works, but by the love and grace of God demonstrated in the death of Jesus Christ (Gal.1:4-9; 2:16; 3:1f, esp. v.10,11, DEEPER STUDY # 2,3).

Paul answered his critics in no uncertain terms: he was an apostle (apostolos). The word apostle means a person called and sent forth on a very special commission (see DEEPER STUDY # 5, *Apostle*—Mt.10:2 for more discussion). The apostle...

- is like an *ambassador* who is sent forth to represent the Person who called and appointed him.
- is like a very special *messenger* who is called and sent forth to proclaim the message of the Sender.
- is like a very special *minister* who is called and sent forth to serve as the Leader wills.
- is like a very special *servant* who is called and sent forth to do the bidding of the Master.

Note that Paul was not arguing with his critics: he was declaring that God had called and appointed him to the ministry. He was making his call a part of his personal testimony (Acts 9:1f; 22:7f; 26:16f; 1 Cor.9:1).

1. His call and ministry were "not of men, neither by man."
  - ⇒ "Not of men": men were not the source of his call and ministry. His call had not come from man.
  - ⇒ "Neither by man": no man had qualified or made him fit for the ministry. He was not made a minister *by man*.
2. His call and ministry were by Jesus Christ and God the Father.
  - ⇒ Note that Jesus Christ is placed side by side with God the Father. This is a crucial fact, for it means that Paul's call and ministry came from the highest source possible: from both God the Father and God the Son.

Note also that Jesus Christ is said to be raised from the dead. Therefore, Paul's call and ministry came from the Risen and Living Lord Himself. He was called to *serve* the Living Lord, the very same Lord served by the twelve apostles. If they were true ministers, then he also was a true minister, for he had been called by the same Living Lord who had been raised from the dead by God the Father.

**Thought 1.** Critics often arise and cause trouble for the minister of God. At such times the minister must boldly declare his call and ministry—not in a boastful and super-spiritual way, but in a humble and clear way.

**Thought 2.** Every minister should examine his heart to make sure his call and ministry have been commissioned by God. The ministry is...

- not a profession to be chosen.
- not a job to earn a living.
- not a position to secure recognition and esteem.
- not a service agency founded by men.
- not an ordained commission from men.
- not a call *of* men nor *by* men.

The ministry is of God; therefore a call to the ministry must come from God. God alone can give a true call and commission to the ministry.

“[God] who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament” (2 Cor.3:6).

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry [from God] as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:1-2).

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation....Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:18, 20).

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Eph.3:7).

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).

“But [God’s grace] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim.1:10-11).

**2** (1:2) **Minister—Call:** the minister of God is recognized as God’s man by Christian believers. Note: the brothers with Paul were not just sending their greetings to the Galatian churches, they were agreeing with everything that Paul was writing. They were as concerned as Paul over the critics and false teachers in the churches of Galatia, and they clearly recognized Paul’s call and commission as being of God. This is the stress of the point. Paul called them *brothers*, not friends. A true brother in Christ is much more than a friend. True brothers have a much deeper and richer bond and relationship: they are of one faith, mind, spirit, and purpose. They may have different abilities and be assigned different work, but they believe in and serve the same Lord.

This is what Paul was saying: there were *brothers in the Lord* who knew him and his call. They readily verified his call and ministry. In fact, they *joined him* in writing and declaring the truth.

Note: there was more than one church that was questioning Paul’s call and ministry. All the churches in Galatia were attacking him.

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Mt.25:40).

“And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it” (Lk.8:21).

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee” (Heb.2:11-12).

“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb.2:17).

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (Rev.12:10).

**Thought 1.** When critics attack the minister, it is time for *true brothers* in the Lord to step forward and support him in his ministry and in declaring the truth. True brothers always defend and come to the aid of a brother when he is criticized and attacked.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn.15:13).

“For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with father, he hath served with me in the gospel” (Ph.2:20-22).

“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Pr.17:17).

“There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Pr.18:24).

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (Pr.27:17).

“Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it” (Ezra 10:4).

“But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were stayed until the going down of the sun” (Ex.17:12).

**3** (1:3) **Minister—Grace—Peace:** the minister wishes the very best for other believers. The minister, Paul, wanted the believers of Galatia to experience the grace and peace of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Note again how the deity of Jesus Christ is proclaimed: He is placed side by side with God.)

1. Grace (*charis*) means the *undeserved favor and blessings* of God. (See notes—Ro.4:16; DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Cor.1:4; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Tit.2:11-15.) The word *undeserved* is the key to understanding grace. Man does not deserve God’s favor; he cannot earn God’s approval and blessings. God is too high and man is too low for man to deserve anything from God. Man is imperfect and God is perfect; therefore, man cannot expect anything from God. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Justification*—Gal.2:15-16 for more discussion.) Man has reacted against God too much. Man has...

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| • rejected God         | • sinned against God |
| • rebelled against God | • disobeyed God      |
| • ignored God          | • denied God         |
| • neglected God        | • questioned God     |
| • cursed God           |                      |

Man deserves nothing from God except judgment, condemnation, and punishment. But God is love—perfect and absolute love. Therefore, God makes it possible for man to experience His grace, in particular the favor and blessing of salvation which is in His Son, Jesus Christ. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Grace*—1 Cor.1:4 for more discussion.)

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor.8:9).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).

“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:7).

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).

“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.1:14).

2. Peace (*eirene*) means to be bound, joined, and weaved together with God and with everyone else. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God. It means to have a sense, a consciousness, and a knowledge that God will...

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| • provide    | • deliver                                   |
| • guide      | • encourage                                 |
| • strengthen | • save                                      |
| • sustain    | • give life, real life both now and forever |

A person can experience true peace only as he comes to know Jesus Christ. Only Christ can bring peace to the human heart, the kind of peace that brings deliverance and assurance to the human soul.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn.14:27).

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).

“I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord only makest me dwell in safety” (Ps.4:8).

The point is this: not everyone in the church was experiencing the grace and peace of God. Some had fallen from the grace of God, no longer trusting Christ to save them; they depended upon their own works and goodness to make them acceptable to God. As a result they did not have peace of heart. Some had even fallen into all forms of sin and shame (Gal.5:19-21). Others had become extremely critical and divisive, standing against Paul and any who supported Paul. Note: Paul wished the very best for the churches of Galatia—even for the false teachers and critics. He wanted everyone to experience...

- the grace of God by coming to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.
- the peace of God as they walked through life confronting all its struggles and trials.

**Thought 1.** Every minister should wish the very best for all believers, even for his critics and enemies. It might be difficult, but his very call to the ministry is to proclaim the grace and peace of God.

**Thought 2.** Believers must guard against falling from grace, guard against trusting their own works and goodness to save them and to make them acceptable to God.

**4** (1:4-5) **Jesus Christ, Work of; Death:** the minister of God proclaims the work of Christ. This verse is one of the great summaries of the gospel, that is, of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Note four significant points.

1. The message of the gospel is that Christ “gave Himself for our sins.” Christ died as our substitute. He took the place of the sinner before God. Two things show this.

- a. The word “for” (huper) means instead of, in place of, as our substitute, in behalf of our sins.
- b. The phrase “gave Himself” (dontos eauton) means that He sacrificed Himself for us. He gave His life for the sinner’s life. Jesus Christ...
  - offered Himself to God as the sacrifice for our sin.
  - offered Himself as the sin-offering, the offering that was to stand as the substitute for our sin.
  - accepted the judgment and condemnation of sin for us.
  - bore the punishment of God’s justice against sin for us.

Note that “our sins” are not listed or described. This means that Christ died for *all our sins*: big sins as well as little sins, known sins as well as unknown sins, terrible sins as well as mild sins, sins of the flesh as well as sins of the spirit.

**“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal.1:4).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation [sacrifice] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:1-2).**

**“Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev.1:5).**

2. The purpose of Jesus’ death was “to deliver us from this present evil world.” Note that the present world or age is said to be evil. It is evil in at least two senses:

- ⇒ The present world is sinful: it causes men to ignore, neglect, deny, and curse God. It also stirs and excites ungodliness, unrighteousness, immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, strife, deceit, ill will, cruelty, back-biting, gossip, slander, pride, boasting, inventions of evil things, disobedience to parents, misunderstanding and false understanding, the breaking of covenants, and the destruction of true love and mercy. (Cp. Ro.1:29-32.)
- ⇒ The present world is corruptible: it keeps both man and his world from being healthy and from living eternally. The present world of corruption causes man and his world to suffer and experience disaster, accident, disease, distress, sorrow, and calamities. It causes everything to age, deteriorate, waste away, decay, and die.
- ⇒ The present world causes man to die and face the judgment of God who is *perfectly holy*. Therefore, the present world dooms man to face the holiness of God as an unholy, sinful, and corruptible creature. The world dooms man to an eternity of death and judgment—dooms him to be separated from God forever.

But note the point: this was the very purpose for Jesus’ death. He died to deliver us from this present evil world. The word “deliver” (exelatai) means to rescue and to pluck out. Jesus Christ died to rescue and to pluck us out of this present evil world. How? As stated above, “He gave Himself for our sins.” He delivers or rescues us from both *the power and the fate* of the world. The believer experiences both abundant and eternal life now and forever.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Jn.11:25-26).**

3. The reason Christ died for us is because God willed it. This is a most glorious truth: God loves us even as Christ loves us. It was God’s will that we be saved and delivered from this evil world. God loves us so much that He wills us to be saved—wills it so much that He sacrificed His own Son for us.

Note that God wills to be our Father. The death of Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to be adopted by God as His sons and daughters (Ro.8:15-16; Gal.4:4-6).

**“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

**“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

4. The result of Jesus’ death is the glory of God. Note: Paul could not mention the death of Christ and the will of God without breaking forth in praise. All men should praise Him for His wonderful love and the unspeakable gift of His Son.

**“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Is.53:5).**

**“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Is.53:12).**

**“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (Jn.10:11).**

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly....But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:6, 8).**

**“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor.15:3).**

**“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:15).**

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).**

**“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

**“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:14).**

**“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb.2:9).**

**“...once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb.9:26).**

**“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb.9:28).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

**“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).**

**“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev.5:9).**

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1 God's gospel (v.4)</b><br/> <b>2 Some individuals turned to false gospels</b><br/>                 a. They deserted God<br/>                 b. They turned to another gospel, a false gospel<br/>                 c. They followed those who twisted the gospel</p> | <p><b>B. God's Only Message—the Gospel of Christ, 1:6-9</b><br/>                 6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:<br/>                 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.</p> | <p>8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.<br/>                 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.</p> | <p><b>3 Preachers of false gospels are accursed</b><br/>                 a. The gospel is greater than the apostle<br/>                 b. The gospel is greater than the angels<br/>                 c. The gospel is greater than any man<br/>                 d. The judgment: A double curse</p> |
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**DIVISION I**

**GREETING, 1:1-9**

**B. God's Only Message—the Gospel of Christ, 1:6-9**

(1:6-9) **Introduction:** the churches of Galatia were being led astray by false teachers, and the very souls of the believers were at stake. Paul had no choice; he had to be strong in what he wrote, for Christ had taught that the value of a single soul was worth more than all the wealth of the world.

**“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mk.8:36-37).**

Again, the souls of the Galatians were at stake. Forcefully and powerfully, Paul warned both the false teachers and believers: God has only one message—the gospel of Christ. It is God's gospel and God's gospel alone that must be obeyed, preached, taught, and heeded.

1. God's gospel (v.6).
2. Some individuals turned to false gospels (v.6-7).
3. Preachers of false gospels are accursed (v.8-9).

**1** (1:6) **Gospel:** God's gospel had just been clearly stated by Paul.

**“[Christ] gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal.1:4. See note—Gal.1:4-5 for more discussion.)**

The message of the gospel is that Christ died to rescue us from this present evil world, that is, from this world's sin...

- lawlessness
- corruption
- deterioration
- judgment
- doom
- unrighteousness
- aging
- death
- condemnation

Christ died that we might be delivered from sin and death and live eternally with God in a new heavens and earth.

Very practically, what happens is this: when a person looks at Jesus Christ and *truly believes* that Christ took his sins upon Himself and died for them, God counts it so. God credits it as a fact. God sees Christ bearing the person's sin, and He looks upon the person as being sinless and perfect, that is, completely free of sin. Therefore, the person becomes acceptable to God. God sees him *in Christ* who is without sin, completely righteous and perfect. But note a critical fact: the person is not sinless; no person is without sin; no person is perfectly righteous. But God counts the person as sinless, as perfectly righteous.

Why does God do such a wonderful and marvelous thing? Because He loves us that much; He loves us with an eternal, unlimited love. This is the message of the glorious gospel. We cannot earn the acceptance of God, for we are unrighteous and imperfect, and only righteousness and perfection can live in the presence of God. But God loves us so much that He has provided the way for us to become righteous and acceptable to him. This is what is meant by justification and the wonderful grace of Christ. This is the glorious message of the gospel. (See notes, *Justification*—also DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.2:15-16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:16 for more discussion.)

**“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” (Jn.1:29).**

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:8-10).**

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve” (1 Cor.15:3-5).

“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:15).

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb.2:9).

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb.9:28).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 Jn.3:5).

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev.1:5).

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev.5:9).

**2** (1:6-7) Gospel, False—False Teachers—Apostasy—Backsliding—Desertion: some persons turned to false gospels.

This is the subject of The Book of Galatians, the very reason Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia. Some false teachers had joined the church, false teachers who did not believe in the gospel as proclaimed by Paul and the apostles. They were adding to and taking away from the gospel of the Scriptures and attacking the minister. As a result, some believers were following the false teachers and turning to their false gospels. Paul warned the believers of the churches, and his warning was direct and forceful.

1. The believers were deserting God, removing themselves away from God. The word “removed” (metatitheste) means to turn away, to change places, to transfer elsewhere. The tense of the verb is present which means the Galatians were in the process of turning; they had not yet fully turned. There was still hope for them to repent and return to God. Note three striking facts.

- a. A person who turns away from the gospel is not turning away from a set of beliefs or principles, nor from a church. The person is turning away from God Himself. It is God who loves us and saves us, not a set of beliefs. It is God who *personally calls* us into the grace of Christ, not a message or a preacher. Therefore, to turn away is to desert God Himself, the Person who has loved us enough to save us and to give us eternal life in His Son, Jesus Christ.
- b. The words “so soon” show how quickly people can be led away from God. The false teachers had apparently just joined the church and had impressive ability and charisma, so much so that they were almost immediately accepted as teachers in the church. The result had been devastating: many were immediately swayed by the force of their charisma, ability, ideas, and worldly wisdom.
- c. The word “marvel” means astounded, astonished, surprised. Paul could hardly believe the fact, for the Galatians had been grounded in the true gospel and had been growing in Christ. But here they were turning away ever so quickly. The believers needed to be warned: they were treading on shaky ground. They were turning away from and deserting God Himself.

“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Mt.24:12).

“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away” (Lk.8:13).

“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk.9:62).

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first” (Lk.11:24-26).

“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal.4:9).

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Heb.10:38).

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (Rev.2:4).

2. The believers were turning to another gospel, that is, to a false gospel. The word “another” (heteron) means a different kind of gospel, not just a difference in emphasis or spirit (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*,

Vol.4. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931, p.276). It means a different kind of gospel that presents...

- a different Jesus
- a different grace
- a different way to be saved
- a different God
- a different picture of God's love

But note what Scripture declares: the gospel to which the Galatians were turning was *not another gospel*. There is no other gospel; there is only one true gospel by which men can become acceptable to God, and that is the gospel of God Himself revealed in the death of His Son, even "the grace of Christ" (v.6).

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).**

**"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (Jn.6:68).**

**"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (Jn.8:24).**

**"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).**

**"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor.2:2).**

**"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor.3:11).**

3. The believers were following those who twisted the gospel of Christ. They were following false teachers. Note what it was that made the teachers *false teachers*: a perverting of the gospel. The word "pervert" (metastrepsai) means to turn about, to change completely, to distort. They were taking the gospel of God's love and grace as demonstrated in His Son, Jesus Christ, and changing it. The false teachers claimed to be Christians, followers of Christ. They even believed with Paul...

- that God did love the world and send His Son into the world.
- that Jesus Christ was the Son of God who did actually come to earth.
- that Jesus Christ did die and arise from the dead.

However, the false teachers were adding to and taking away from the gospel, twisting its meaning and making it say something entirely different from the Scripture Paul preached. They distorted the gospel by saying...

- a. That God did show His love for the world by sending His Son, but He sent His Son in particular for the religious person (the Jew and the religionist). They were saying that God loves the world, but He especially loves the people who live religious lives. (Note how this makes God show favoritism and partiality and opens the door for caste systems and prejudice.)
- b. That Jesus Christ did come to earth; however, it was not to secure a perfect righteousness for men, but to show men how to live a good life that pleases God and merits God's approval.
- c. That Jesus Christ did die for man; however, He did not die for man's sin, but to show man how he should be so committed to God that he would die for God's cause.
- d. That the death of Jesus Christ is not sufficient by itself; it cannot stand alone; it is not enough to make man acceptable to God. More is needed than the raw love of God and the pure grace of Christ.
- e. That a person must undergo the ritual that had been the main ritual of believers down through the centuries: circumcision (church membership, baptism, etc.).
- f. That a person must work to keep the law of God and certain church ceremonies and rituals, rules and regulations.

Note how devastating the false teaching was: believers were troubled, that is, disturbed, bewildered, perplexed, confused. As pointed out above, they were not only turning away from the gospel, but from God Himself and from the glorious grace of Christ (v.6).

**Thought 1.** Note a shocking fact: how close false teaching within the church is to the truth! How a little addition here and a little subtraction there distorts the purity of the gospel! How diligently we must guard against adding our own ideas to the gospel of God.

**"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt.5:19).**

**"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mt.7:15).**

**"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast our devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Mt.7:22-23).**

**"In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mt.15:9).**

**"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Mt.23:13).**

“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30).

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Ro.16:17-18).

“We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God” (2 Cor.2:17).

“Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor.11:13-15).

“Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).

“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds” (Ph. 1:15-16).

“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision” (Ph.3:2).

“This I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words” (Col.2:4).

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col.2:8).

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col.2:18-19).

“I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (1 Tim.1:3-7).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats” (1 Tim.4:1-3).

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself” (1 Tim.6:3-5).

“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (1 Tim.6:20-21).

“Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim.3:13).

“There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” (Tit.1:10-11).

“A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself” (Tit.3:10-11).

“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines” (Heb.13:9).

“There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (2 Pt.2:1-2).

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them” (1 Jn.4:1-5).

“Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward” (2 Jn.7-8).

**“There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 4).**

**3** (1:8-9) **Ministers—False Teachers—Gospel, False:** preachers of false gospels are accursed. This is a strong statement, but it is clearly understandable. The gospel is the means by which men are saved out of the grip of sin, death, and condemnation. Without the gospel no person is saved—no person can become acceptable to God—no person can inherit eternal life. Scripture is clear about the matter and warns all false teachers and all churches.

1. The gospel is greater than the apostle Paul himself. This is a striking statement, for remember who Paul was: probably the most committed servant of God who has ever lived. He had ventured forth as a pioneer into the heathen areas of the world to reach people with the gospel of Christ, the good news that men could be delivered from sin and death and live forever. He loved the Galatians so much that he had risked all he was and had for their sake. To some Paul must have been a giant, and he must have been held ever so dear to their hearts. But note: Paul says that if he returned to them preaching any other gospel, he was to be accursed. The Galatians were not to receive him no matter how much they esteemed him: they were to reject him. The gospel in all its simplicity and purity was far more important than Paul himself.

2. The gospel is greater than the angels from heaven. Even if an angel came from heaven and began to preach another gospel, he was to be rejected, for he too would be accursed. The glorious message of the gospel is far more important than even the angels in heaven.

3. The gospel is greater than any man (v.9). If any man preached *any other gospel*, he was to be accursed. The gospel is far more important than any man.

4. The preachers of the false gospels shall suffer the judgment of a double curse. The word “anathema” means to be accursed, doomed to destruction, given over to eternal punishment, placed under the wrath of God. The idea is that of eternal death. This is clear from Paul’s use of the word elsewhere where he applies it to himself: “I could wish that myself were *accursed* from Christ for my brethren...” (Ro.9:3). Paul was a Jew; he was saying that he loved his Jewish brothers so much that he would gladly suffer eternal punishment for their salvation (the very same love that Christ had demonstrated for all men).

This is one of the most severe warnings in all of Scripture, and note to whom it is given: it is given to teachers, the *false teachers*. Lehman Strauss points out that every person who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ shall be accursed. How much more, then, shall the false teacher suffer at the hands of God’s eternal wrath (*Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1947, p.21)?

**“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?...Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Mt.7:15-16, 19).**

**“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:22-23).**

**“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation” (Mt.23:13-14).**

**“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mt.23:33).**

**“But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption....These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever” (2 Pt.2:12, 17).**

**“As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Pt.3:16).**

**“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 Jn.4:1).**

**“Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD” (Jer.23:2).**

## GALATIANS 1:10-16

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 He sought to please God not men</b></p>   | <p><b>II. THE PROOF OF GOD'S MESSENGER &amp; MESSAGE, 1:10-2:21</b></p> <p><b>A. The Minister's Life Was Completely Changed, 1:10-16</b></p> <p>10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.</p> | <p>13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:<br/>14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.<br/>15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.<br/>16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:</p> | <p><b>3 He had a radical change of life</b></p> <p>a. His former experience</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) An arch-persecutor</li> <li>2) A supreme example of self-righteousness</li> </ol> <p>b. His radical change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Set apart &amp; called by God's grace</li> <li>2) Called as a vessel to reveal Christ</li> <li>3) Called to preach Christ</li> <li>4) Called to seek his gospel from God alone</li> </ol> |
| <p><b>2 He proclaimed the gospel</b></p> <p>a. Not a man-made gospel</p> <p>b. Not received of man</p> <p>c. A revelation of Christ</p> | <p>11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.<br/>12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.</p>   | <p>15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.<br/>16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:</p>   | <p>b. His radical change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Set apart &amp; called by God's grace</li> <li>2) Called as a vessel to reveal Christ</li> <li>3) Called to preach Christ</li> <li>4) Called to seek his gospel from God alone</li> </ol>   |

### DIVISION II

#### THE PROOF OF GOD'S MESSENGER AND MESSAGE, 1:10-2:21

##### A. The Minister's Life Was Completely Changed, 1:10-15

(1:10-16) **Introduction:** critics of Paul and false teachers had arisen in the churches of Galatia. They were saying that Paul's call and the gospel he preached were false. He was not a true minister of God; he was a self-made minister who was only using the ministry for a livelihood and other greedy purposes.

Paul's answer was direct and forceful: his message and life were of God. His old life and old message had been radically changed.

1. He sought to please God not men (v.10).
2. He proclaimed the gospel (v.11-12).
3. He had a radical change of life (v.13-16).

**1** (1:10) **Minister—Paul:** the minister sought to please God not men. The critics of Paul were saying that he was inconsistent...

- seeking the favor and approval of men instead of God.
- striving to please men instead of God.
- living by the law when he was with the religionists (Jews) and living a looser life when he was with the heathen and non-religionists (Gentiles).
- saying one thing to one group of people and something else to another group of people.
- living a life of duplicity and deception in order to secure the support of the people.

Paul minced no words; he fired two questions at his critics: "Am I *now* seeking the favor of men or of God? Do I seek to please men?" As stated, Paul minced no words. He answered his own questions by making a startling statement: he agreed with his critics. "If I yet [still] pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

The point is clear: note the word "yet" or *still*. Paul was saying that there was a time when he was a man-pleaser, a time when he sought the favor and approval of men instead of God. But no more: he was not "still pleasing men." He was now seeking to please God and God alone. Pleasing men, courting their favor, and securing their acceptance, approval and recognition used to be part of his life. But now, honor, position, and wealth did not matter to him anymore. He now wanted one thing and one thing alone: the favor and approval of God. For this reason, he was the slave (doulos) of Jesus Christ.

**"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (Jn.12:26).**

**"For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant (1 Cor.7:22).**

**"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph.6:6-7).**

**"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col.3:24).**

**"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts, For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness" (1 Th.2:4-5).**

**"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb.12:28).**

**2** (1:11-12) **Minister—Paul:** the minister proclaimed the gospel. Some critics of Paul were saying that he was not a true apostle of the Lord Jesus because he had not been a follower of the Lord when the Lord was upon the earth. Therefore, what he was teaching was a man-made gospel taught by mistaken and misguided men.

Note that the word “certify” (gnorizo) is a solemn word, a strong declaration that what follows is of crucial importance and needs to be heard.

1. The gospel Paul preached was not a man-made gospel. It was not a gospel created by man’s...
  - mind
  - ideas
  - rationalizations
  - hopes
  - religions
  - dreams
  - imaginations
  - science
  - energy

The gospel was not a human thing; it did not originate with man. The gospel was not the good news *of men*.

2. The gospel Paul preached was not received of man. It was *not a taught message*, not a message which he had learned from any man. The gospel he preached was not a message...

- handed down to him like tradition
- learned by him from an educational institution
- taught to him by men.

3. The gospel Paul preached was given to him by a *direct revelation* from Jesus Christ. Revelation means a truth that is shared by God to man, a truth that man never knew. It is crucial to note this point, for Paul’s call to the ministry and the gospel which he preached rested upon this single fact: did Jesus Christ really reveal Himself and the truth of His death and resurrection to Paul or not? If Paul was lying, then he was not a true minister of the gospel. He would be a fraud, a deceiver, a man who viewed the ministry only as a profession to provide a livelihood, to secure honor, and to secure power over people.

However, as Paul plainly declared, he received the gospel by the direct revelation of Jesus Christ. Time and again he declared the fact (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Cor.2:7 for a complete list of the revelations or mysteries of Scripture).

**“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery [revelation], even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory” (1 Cor.2:7).**

**“[God] having made known unto us the mystery [revelation] of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself” (Eph.1:9).**

**“Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery [revelation] of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Eph.3:4-6).**

**“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery [revelation] which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col.1:25-27).**

**“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (1 Th.2:4).**

**“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust” (1 Tim.1:11).**

**“[God] hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:3).**

**3** (1:13-16) **Minister—Paul:** the minister of God had a radical change of life. This was clearly seen by comparing his former life with his present life.

1. Paul’s former life included two terrible things.
  - a. Paul had been the first arch-persecutor of the church. He had been an *inflamed* man who struck out more than anyone else against the early believers.

**“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest....And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:1, 3-4).**

Apparently Paul had launched the persecution of the church on the very day of Stephen’s death. Saul had wanted to act and act quickly in wiping out the church. The believers were frightened and on the run; therefore, Paul felt that he had to strike immediately in order to catch them before they could escape.

The point to see is that Paul had been bent on violence; he had sought to utterly stamp out the church; to wipe believers off the face of the earth. The word “wasted” (eporthoun) means to make havoc; to utterly rack or lay waste; to devastate, destroy, ruin, or wipe out. (See note, *Church, Persecution of*—Acts 8:3 for more discussion.)

**“As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison” (Acts 8:3).**

“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1-2).

“And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished” (Acts 22:4-5).

“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities” (Acts 26:9-11).

“For ye have heard of my conversation [behavior] in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it” (Gal.1:13).

“Concerning zeal, persecuting the church” (Ph.3:6).

“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” (1 Cor.15:9).

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim.1:12-13).

- b. Paul had been the supreme example of self-righteousness. Paul declared that he had “profited” in the Jews’ religions above and beyond what others had done. The idea is that he had blazed a path and given well beyond what they had achieved. He had been much more *zealous* than they.

But note where his commitment had laid: in religion and in the traditions of the religious leaders. His focus and fanaticism had been placed upon religion and its traditions, rituals, and ceremonies and not upon God.

“But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” (Mt.15:3).

“For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men” (Mk.7:8).

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col.2.8).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).

2. Paul’s radical change included four significant points.

- a. God had set Paul apart and called him by His grace. Paul clearly said...

- that it was *God’s grace* that had saved him from a life of self-righteousness and destruction.
- that God’s grace had separated him to serve Christ “from his mother’s womb.” The idea is that God had Paul in his mind even before Paul’s birth. Paul’s call and ministry were not due to Paul, but to God and His grace. God had His eye on Paul throughout all eternity.

**Thought 1.** The believer’s call and ministry is of God not of himself.

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (1 Cor.1:26-27).

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph.1:18).

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph.4:1).

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Ph.3:13-14).

“That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kindgom and glory” (1 Th.2:12).

“Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th.2:14).

“[God] who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim.1:9).

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Heb.3:1).

## GALATIANS 1:10-16

**“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pt.5:10).**

**“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Pt.1:10).**

- b. God called Paul as a vessel to reveal Christ. Note the words “in me.” God’s primary call to Paul was the same as it is for every believer: to reveal His Son Jesus Christ both *to him* and *through him*. God wants the believer both to know Christ and to make Christ known. We are chosen to fellowship and commune with the Lord more and more and to let Him be seen in us more and more. The believer is a mere vessel in and through whom Jesus Christ lives.

**“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor.2:9-10).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

**“To whom [believers] God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col.1:27).**

- c. God called Paul to preach Christ. Believers are not only called to know Christ, but also to make Christ known. We must preach and bear witness to Christ.

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“And straightway he [Paul] preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God” (Acts 9:20).**

**“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor.4:5).**

- d. God called Paul to seek his gospel from God alone. Paul was not to seek his gospel from men but from God. God and God alone is the source of the gospel; therefore, God alone must be sought for the message of the gospel.

**Thought 1.** This does not mean, of course, that ministers are not to learn from others; it means that ministers are not to proclaim the gospel of men. God has given us the gospel to study and preach. It is His message, not man’s message, that the world needs.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn.6:68).**

**“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).**

**“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).**

**“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2).**

**“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>1 <b>First, he went to Arabia: He got alone with God</b></p> <p>2 <b>Second, he returned to Damascus: He corrected the wrong he had previously done</b></p> <p>3 <b>Third, he went to Jerusalem: He faced his past, v.13-14</b></p> <p>a. Faced Peter &amp; James: Faced them as an equal—did not consult them about the gospel</p> | <p><b>B. The Minister Followed God First in His life, <sup>psl</sup> 1:17-24</b></p> <p>17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.</p> <p>18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.</p> <p>19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.</p> | <p>20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.</p> <p>21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;</p> <p>22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:</p> <p>23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.</p> <p>24 And they glorified God in me.</p> | <p>b. A solemn protest, cp. v.11-12</p> <p>4 <b>Fourth, he went to Syria &amp; Cilicia, that is, Tarsus: He faced his hometown</b></p> <p>5 <b>The result of a God-centered life</b></p> <p>a. His testimony spread</p> <p>b. His life honored God</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE PROOF OF GOD'S MESSENGER AND MESSAGE, 1:10-2:21**

**B. The Minister Followed God First in His Life, 1:17-24**

(1:17-24) **Introduction:** Paul was under attack by some critics in the churches of Galatia. They were saying that he was not a God-called minister and that he preached a false gospel. They sowed the poison of gossip: that he was in the ministry only as a profession and for what he could get out of it.

The present passage is a continuation of the former verses. Paul was proving that his call and message did come from God, that he was a God-called minister and his message was the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, he had never received the gospel from anyone other than Christ Himself. To prove his point, he recounted his journeys right after his conversion. The point is this: he sought to learn the truth from God and from God alone. In the first few years after his conversion, he followed God first in his life, not men.

1. First, he went to Arabia: he got alone with God (v.17).
2. Second, he returned to Damascus: he corrected the wrong he had previously done (v.17).
3. Third, he went to Jerusalem: he faced his past (v.18-20).
4. Fourth, he went to Syria and Cilicia, that is Tarsus: he faced his hometown (v.21).
5. The result of a God-centered life (v.22-24).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:17-24) **Paul, Journeys; Trips to Jerusalem:** Paul said "immediately...I went into Arabia." The time-table of his ministry would seem to be as follows. (See notes—Acts 15:1-31.)

1. His conversion (Gal.1:15-16; Acts 9:1f).
2. His "immediate" preaching and ministry in Damascus (Acts 9:19-22).
3. His time alone with God in Arabia (Gal.1:17). The three years could be three full years or parts of three calendar years. In comparing this passage with Acts, Paul's Arabian experience would seem to fit in best at the close of Acts 9:22. There seems to be a natural break there. Acts 9:23 begins by saying, "And after that *many days were fulfilled*," which seems to be saying there was a long period of time between his conversion visit to Damascus (Acts 9:3, 10-22) and the ministry which he launched after his Arabian seclusion. He launched the ministry in the most natural place, Damascus, among the believers whom he knew (Acts 9:23).
4. His second ministry in Damascus after returning from Arabia (Acts 9:23-25).
5. His first trip to Jerusalem for fifteen days to see Peter (Gal.1:18-19; Acts 9:23-30). The apostles in Acts 9:27 would be Peter and James, the Lord's brother.
6. His ministry in and around Tarsus which apparently lasted for about eleven years (Gal.1:21-2:1).
7. His call by Barnabas to help him minister in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26).
8. His second trip to Jerusalem to carry relief goods during a famine (Gal.2:1f; Acts 11:30; 12:25). Some say that this return trip to Jerusalem is the trip to the Jerusalem Council described in Acts 15. However, two significant problems exist with this position. First, Paul emphasizes a private interview in Gal.2:2, whereas the Acts account is a public meeting. Second, where does the famine visit fit in? If the account given in the second chapter of Galatians is not the famine visit, then Paul omitted the famine visit altogether from the account in Galatians. This is difficult to explain in light of the fact that Paul goes to extra pains in giving his contacts with the Jerusalem church. In listing his visits, he declares that he speaks the plain truth, "I lie not" (Gal.1:20).
9. His call and commissioning as a missionary (Acts 13:2-3).
10. His first great mission to the Gentiles: to Cyprus and Galatia (Acts 13:1-14:28).
11. His return to Antioch after completing his first missionary journey (Acts 14:26-28).
12. His third trip to Jerusalem to defend the gospel of grace before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-30).
13. His return to Antioch with the message from the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:30-35).
14. His second great mission to the Gentiles: to Europe (Acts 15:36-18:22).
15. His return to Antioch after completing his second missionary journey (Acts 18:22).
16. His third great mission to the Gentiles: Asia Minor and Europe (Acts 18:23-21:16).

17. His fourth and final trip to Jerusalem when he was arrested (Acts 21:17-26:32).  
 18. His journey to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:1-28:15).  
 19. His ministry in Rome while a prisoner (Acts 28:16-31).

**1** (1:17) **Paul, Devotions—Scripture—Study:** first, Paul went to Arabia to be alone with God. He had just been converted, and his conversion was a most dramatic experience (cp. Acts 9:1f). Paul's former life had taken two terrible turns.

1. Paul had been very self-righteous. He had been steeped in religion and its traditions, form, and ritual. He had felt that he was acceptable to God because he was religious and did as much good as he could. He felt that his own goodness and religion made him righteous before God. He failed to see the absolute perfection and love of God and the absolute imperfection and unlovingness of man. He was utterly deceived about the true nature of man and God, of unrighteousness and righteousness, of sin and forgiveness, of life and death. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.2:15-16 for more discussion.)

2. Paul had become so self-deceived that he had launched a campaign of hatred and murder against the followers of Christ. He had used everything at his disposal to stamp out the name of Christ from the face of the earth. (See notes—Acts 8:1-4 for more discussion.)

The point is that Paul was saved from a terrible life of sin and shame, a life steeped in as much sin and shame as a man could be. He was self-righteous and arrogant, full of bitterness, hatred, and murder; and he went about misusing his position and power just like a tyrant—to the point of imprisoning and murdering those who differed with him.

When Paul was converted, he had a dire need to be alone with God. He did not need the counsel and help of men; he needed the presence and help of God and His Spirit. He already knew the Scripture. He had studied them at the feet of the greatest religious teachers of his day, but he had not known God nor Christ, not in a personal way. Paul had no knowledge of God, not a personal knowledge. What he had known about God had been twisted and corrupted, misapplied and misused. He desperately needed...

- time to learn how to live with Christ day by day, drawing confidence and strength from Him.
- time to learn the real meaning of the Scriptures: how they applied to Christ.
- time to accurately handle the Word of Truth (the Scriptures).
- time to learn how to fellowship with Christ in daily worship (devotions, quiet times).
- time to learn how to walk in the presence and communion and fellowship of Christ all day.
- time to learn the commandments and will of Christ.
- time to think through how to go about making Christ known to a world steeped in dire need, sin, and darkness.

How much time did Paul need? Apparently, he spent about three years in Arabia (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Paul, Journeys—Gal.1:17-24*). Imagine spending three years seeking the Lord and learning how to live and serve Him!

**Thought 1.** What a lesson for believers and ministers! What power would be in our lives and ministries if we sought to know Christ as Paul did!

“And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone” (Mt.14:23).

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb.10:22).

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (Jas.4:8).

“But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Dt.4:29).

“Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day” (Ps.25:5).

“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Ps.27:14).

“My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him” (Ps.62:5).

“But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works” (Ps.73:28).

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (Ps.91:1).

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Is.40:31).

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near” (Is.55:6).

“Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually” (Hos.12:6).

**2** (1:17) **Paul—Restitution:** second, Paul returned to Damascus to correct the wrong he had previously done. When Paul was converted, he was on his way to Damascus to arrest and stamp out the followers of Christ. It was his intent and purpose to literally cleanse Damascus of all Christians. The bitter persecution had, of course, greatly disrupted the lives of believers. It had forced many to flee for their lives, leaving their families, homes, jobs, and all means of livelihood.

The point is this: Paul had returned to Damascus to do what he could to right the terrible wrong he had done to the believers of Damascus. He wanted to ask their forgiveness and assure them that he had been saved; and no doubt, he wanted to share Christ among the very people he had been so bent on destroying.

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Mt.5:9).

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath

ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Mt.5:23-24).

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Ro.14:19).

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph.4:32).

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col.3:13).

**3** (1:18-20) **Paul—Home Evangelism:** third, Paul went to Jerusalem to face his past. Before his conversion, Paul had lived in Jerusalem and had been one of the officials of the ruling body (the Sanhedrin) or else had been close to the leaders of the Sanhedrin. We know this because the Sanhedrin had been the official body which stood behind Paul's attack against the Christians. Whatever the case, Paul was well known in Jerusalem, and he knew that some of his former friends would consider him a betrayer to their religion and cause. Nevertheless, Paul wanted to share his testimony with as many of them as could be trusted.

However, Paul's primary reason for going to Jerusalem was to see Peter, the leader of the early Christians. By sharing with Peter, Paul felt that many of the believers would know that he had been truly converted. They would thereby be more ready to accept him and his ministry.

But note: the other apostles were apparently away on evangelistic and mission tours. Paul saw no other Christian leader except James, the Lord's brother, who was pastor of the great Jerusalem church. Imagine the sharing that must have taken place between Paul and Peter...

- as Paul shared his past, his conversion, and his experiences with the Lord in Arabia.
- as Peter shared the life of Christ while on earth.

Remember that Paul was relating his journeys to the Galatians for a very specific purpose: to show that he had not learned the gospel from men; he had received it from the Lord Himself. He was a true apostle and minister of the Lord, and his gospel was the true gospel, the gospel revealed to him by Christ Himself. Paul asserted the truth of his claim with the solemn declaration:

**"Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not" (v.20).**

**Thought 1.** As much as possible...

- believers should seek to share Christ with former friends and associates. Unbelievers need to see the change Christ can make in lives.
- believers should seek counsel and help as they launch their ministries, in particular the counsel and help of leaders.

**"Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mk.5:19).**

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem [home], and in Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).**

**"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pt.3:15).**

**4** (1:21) **Paul—Home Evangelism:** fourth, Paul went to Syria and Cilicia, that is, to Tarsus, to face his hometown. Tarsus was where Paul's family lived and where his childhood friends were, the place where he had gone to school and played as a child. It was, of course, Paul's desire to share Christ with as many of his family and friends as he could.

**"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mt.5:16).**

**"Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mk.5:19).**

**"Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him" (Lk.8:39).**

**"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).**

**"And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:30-31).**

**"Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul" (Ps.66:16).**

**5** (1:22-24) **Paul:** the results of a God-centered life are twofold, and they are powerful results.

1. The testimony of a God-centered life was spread throughout the whole area. Paul had not yet visited the churches in Judaea, that is, the area surrounding Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the believers of the area had heard about Paul's conversion, that he who had formerly persecuted the church was now preaching Christ.

2. The testimony of a God-centered life stirred believers to honor God. The churches of Judaea had never seen Paul, but they glorified God because of his strong testimony about which they had heard.

**"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mt.5:16).**

| CHAPTER 2  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>1 Paul's second Jerusalem trip</b></p> <p><b>2 He defended the work of the gospel</b></p> <p>a. Bc. God led him</p> <p>b. The purpose for his defense: To protect the work of the true gospel</p> <p><b>3 He defended the gospel before false believers</b></p> <p>a. Titus was made a test-case</p> <p>b. The false believers<sup>DSZ</sup></p> <p>1) A hypocritical entrance into the church</p> <p>2) A false message of bondage</p> <p>c. The purpose for his defense: To preserve the pure gospel</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>C. The Minister Defended the Gospel, 2:1-10</b></p> <p>Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.</p> <p>2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.</p> <p>3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:</p> <p>4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:</p> <p>5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.</p> <p>6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:</p> <p>7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;</p> <p>8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)</p> <p>9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.</p> <p>10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.</p> |
|  | <p><b>4 He defended the gospel before any &amp; all persons</b></p> <p>a. Because God shows no partiality</p> <p>b. The purpose for his defense: To keep the real gospel from being added to</p> <p><b>5 He defended the special call given each man to proclaim the gospel</b></p> <p>a. A special task is given to each</p> <p>b. The purpose for his defense</p> <p>1) To assure that each person's task is recognized</p> <p>2) To assure that each person has the right to carry out his task</p>   |

**DIVISION II**

**THE PROOF OF GOD'S MESSENGER AND MESSAGE, 1:10-2:21**

**C. The Minister Defended the Gospel, 2:1-10**

(2:1-10) **Introduction—Paul, Accusations Against:** Paul was under attack by some false teachers and critics in the Galatian churches. They were charging him with being a self-proclaimed minister and with preaching a false gospel. Paul was defending himself and the gospel which he preached. In the present passage he defended the gospel which he preached in no uncertain terms, and he showed how he defended it before the recognized leaders of the church, the apostles themselves.

1. Paul's second Jerusalem trip (v.1).
2. He defended the work of the gospel (v.2).
3. He defended the gospel before false believers (v.3-5).
4. He defended the gospel before any and all persons (v.6).
5. He defended the special call given each man to proclaim the gospel (v.7-10).

**1** (2:1) **Paul, Journey:** Paul clearly said this was his second trip to Jerusalem. It must be remembered that Paul was being very careful and going to extra pains to list his contacts with the Jerusalem church. He had to show that his call and gospel had come from Christ and not from men, not even from the leaders in Jerusalem. This was absolutely necessary, for the basic qualification for being an apostle was having been called by Christ Himself. Christ had appeared to him on the Damascus road; Christ had saved and called Paul to preach the gospel. Therefore, Paul met the basic qualification of being an apostle: he had seen the Lord Jesus face to face. Christ had confronted him and personally called him to be an apostle.

What Paul was doing in this particular verse was answering his critics: he did not visit Jerusalem to discuss his call and gospel until fourteen years after his first trip to see Peter, whom he had visited for fifteen days (cp. Gal.1:18-20). He had been serving the Lord Jesus as a minister and preaching the gospel for years before he visited the church leaders at Jerusalem. His call and message had been proven by years of service. His ministry for Christ was set; it could not legitimately be questioned and denied—not by an honest person. The critics were terribly wrong to be questioning his call and message. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.1:17-24 for a list of Paul's journeys, esp. pt.8 for a discussion of this trip being discussed in Gal.2:1f.)

**2** (2:2) **Gospel—Missions:** the minister defended the work of the gospel. God led Paul to go to Jerusalem. The trip was not a man-planned journey; it was a God-called journey. God wanted Paul to go to Jerusalem and protect the world-

wide mission work of the gospel. There were those in the church who were pressing the necessity of ritual and rules for salvation, in particular the necessity of being circumcised and of subjecting oneself to keep the law of Moses.

Paul knew something: if men were allowed to add ritual and rules to the gospel, he and his ministry would have been in vain (fruitless). Every person who had trusted in Jesus Christ and every person who would trust in Jesus Christ for salvation would have to undergo the ritual of circumcision. He would have to focus his life upon the law instead of Jesus Christ.

This was the reason God led Paul to Jerusalem: to save the message and work of the *true gospel*.

- ⇒ Just imagine the thousands of Gentile believers who had been led to the Lord, and all the churches that had already been established by Paul and others throughout the world.
- ⇒ Just imagine the catastrophic devastation upon the believers and the churches if they had to return to their conversion experience and add a ritual and other rules to their lives.

Note the method used by Paul to defend his case: private discussions with the leaders, in particular with the apostles.

**Thought 1.** The minister must not run in vain. He must preach the gospel and only the gospel, and he must build his ministry upon the gospel and only the gospel. He must not allow ritual, rule, ceremony, or law *to be added* to the gospel. People are saved and people grow only by the gospel, only by the good news of God's love for the world—a love that was demonstrated in the supreme gift of His Son to die *for us*.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (Jn.3:16-17).**

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

**“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2).**

**“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:3-4).**

**3** (2:3-5) **Paul—Teachers, False—Judaizers:** the minister defended the gospel before false believers. A brief look at what lies behind these verses will greatly help the reader. Paul was preaching the gospel of grace and of grace alone and this aroused some of the Jewish believers. Remember that most of the believers at Jerusalem were Jews. They had been circumcised when eight days old and had been steeped in the law of Moses since childhood. When they accepted Christ, some just refused to forsake their Judaistic religion. They saw Christianity only as an extension of Judaism. In their minds Christ had *only added* new teachings to their existing law and religion. Therefore, if a person wished to accept Christ, he had to become a Jew first...

- to undergo the ritual of circumcision.
- to commit himself to the law of Moses.
- to observe all the ceremonies and rituals of Jewish religion.

Once a person had done these things, that is, become a Jew, then and only then could he receive Christ and be baptized. Only then could he be accepted into the church.

Paul, of course, had gone against these beliefs and practices. He had...

- allowed people to receive Christ by grace through faith alone without undergoing the ritual of circumcision.
- allowed people to follow and focus upon Christ instead of the law of Moses.

This shocked those who were still loyal to their Judaistic religion, and they began to form an alliance and oppose Paul vehemently. They felt he was out to destroy their religion and its form and rituals. Therefore, they set out to discredit and destroy him...

- by questioning his salvation and call.
- by denying that his apostleship and ministry were of God.
- by planting their own teachers in the churches where Paul had ministered and by indoctrinating the churches with their own false teaching.
- by sending their own emissaries to follow and hound Paul by stirring up the people against him—stirring them to question his message and call.

These men were called Judaizers, men who mixed ritual and law with the gospel of Christ. Paul's argument was that this teaching was the very opposite of the true gospel. A man is not saved by fleshly signs nor by ritual nor by his own ability to keep the law and regulations and rules. A man just cannot earn, win, or do anything to save himself. Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone (Gal.2:16). A man can only accept salvation, and then in thankfulness for God's gift, he must depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit to live for God.

Now to the point of the present verses. When Paul went to Jerusalem, he took Barnabas and Titus, two co-workers, with him. Barnabas was a Jew who had been converted in Jerusalem. He was well known by most believers, for he was one of the very first missionaries, and he had experienced great movements of God wherever he had carried the gospel.

Titus, however, was a different matter. He was a heathen (Gentile) convert. He was not a Jew, which meant he had never undergone the ritual of circumcision, nor had he committed himself to keep the law of Moses and the rituals of religion. Titus was a perfect example of salvation by grace alone, for he had been saved and called by Christ to preach without

ever having been circumcised and without submitting to the law of Moses. Apparently, it was Paul's intention to present him as a prime example of God saving people by grace through faith alone—without any religion, ritual, or rule whatsoever.

However, when the Judaizers heard about Titus, they planted several of their followers in the church who reacted and demanded that Titus undergo the ritual of circumcision and make the law of Moses the focus of his life. Note that they entered the church hypocritically; they were not true believers. Paul calls them "brothers," but "false brothers."

Note that Paul refused to subject to the false teachers. He would not tell Titus he had to undergo a ritual and focus upon the law in order to be saved. Paul fought to preserve the pure gospel in all its truth. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Judaizers*—Gal.2:4 for more discussion.)

**"[Christ] who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal.1:4).**

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

**"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal.3:2-3).**

**"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal.3:11-13).**

**"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal.4:4-6)**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(2:4) **Judaizers—Legalists:** these were Jews who professed Christ but still hung on to their Judaistic religion, in particular to the rite of circumcision and to the law of Moses (cp. Acts 5:1-35, esp. 1, 24-29). They believed a man became a Christian...

- by first becoming a Jew. The man was to embrace Judaism with all its rituals and ceremonies and be circumcised, and begin to obey the laws of Moses,
- then the man could accept Christ as his Savior.

In the mind of the circumcised, Christianity was a mixture of Judaism and the teachings of Christ. The law was just as important as Christ and Christ was no more important than the law. They failed to grasp...

- that Christ was the fulfillment of the law.
- that Christ had kept the law perfectly, thereby becoming the Ideal Man, the Perfect Pattern of what every man should be.
- that Christ was not only the embodiment of the law, but so much more—the very embodiment of God Himself, the Ideal Man, the Perfect Pattern to whom *all men* were to look for their salvation and standard.
- that Christ, as the Son of God, as the Ideal Man, and as the Perfect Pattern, was the One to whom *all men* were now to look and obey.

Some Jews were impressed with Christ and professed Him, but they were never able to understand or else were unwilling to accept Christ as the fulfillment of the law and as the Savior of all men. Therefore, they never turned to Christ alone, never broke away...

- from their legalistic religion.
- from requiring men (Gentiles) to become Jews before they could become Christians.

This was the great battle the church had to fight in its beginning. It was the great problem that faced God: how to break the church away from its Judaistic roots and away from excluding and shutting out the other people of the world (Gentiles). This had always been the problem of the Jews—the problem of keeping the Gentiles away from God and the glorious salvation He had planned for *all men*. Now, since Christ had come, God had to lead the early church away from the Judaistic approach, away from making a man become a Jew before he could accept Christ. This just was not the will of God, for God had sent Christ into the world to save *all men*, not just the Jews. The message had to be carried to all. He had to break the early Jewish believers away from their legalism, away from their...

- making distinctions between themselves and others.
- making others become religionists before accepting Christ.
- discriminating against others.
- building barriers and walls for others to cross (legalistic rules).
- being separatists and being divisive.
- being a people of prejudice and bigotry.

However, note this: all through the history of the church, extending from the early church up to the present time, there have been some who have refused to follow Christ *alone*. They have laid the burden of the law, ritual, and ceremony (legalism, becoming a religionist, a Jew) upon people. In the past such people were known as *the circumcision* or the *Judaizers*; in modern times they are known as religionists or legalists .

“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised [undergo a ritual] after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1).

“Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised [undergo a ritual], and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment” (Acts 15:24).

“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily [secretly] to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage” (Gal.2:4).

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

**4** (2:6) **Gospel—Partiality:** the minister defended the gospel before any and all persons. The false brothers were saying that Paul should not be followed, for he was not a true minister. His call was not equal to the apostles of Christ: he had never been an associate of Jesus Christ nor of the other leaders of the church. How then could he be a true minister of God? He did not have the right credentials or education and he was not an associate of the right leaders.

Bluntly, Paul declared the piercing truth:

⇒ God accepts no man’s person; God shows no partiality.

⇒ No man, not even a man of reputation, can add anything to another man’s call or to the gospel. God is the creator of the gospel and the One who calls men to the ministry. Men have not developed the gospel, not the real gospel, and men do not call other men to the ministry, not to the real ministry.

**Thought 1.** All believers, especially ministers, need to search their hearts with such questions as:

⇒ How many of us seek the approval of leaders over the approval of God?

⇒ How many of us seek the call of churches or leaders over the call of God?

⇒ How many of us seek the favor and help of men over the favor and help of God?

⇒ How many of us seek to add to our reputation by associating with leaders instead of seeking God and His place of service?

⇒ And, of extreme danger, how many of us add and teach our own ideas, rituals, and rules instead of the pure gospel?

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).

“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15).

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Cor.1:27-29).

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry [from God], as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:1-2).

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:18-21).

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Eph.3:7).

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).

“[God] who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim.1:9-11).

**Thought 2.** God treats all men alike. He has no favorites and shows no partiality. Every person is saved by the same gospel, and every true minister is called by the same Lord.

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

“And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8-9).

“For there is no respect of persons with God” (Ro.2:11).

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ro.10:12-13).

**5** (2:7-10) **Gospel—Call:** the minister defended the special call given each man to proclaim the gospel. Note the word “contrariwise” (tounantion): the leaders of the church did not agree with the Judaizers as the Judaizers had hoped; on the contrary they stood with and championed the call and gospel of Christ. They saw that God had called Paul to preach to the Gentiles (the uncircumcision) just as he had called Peter to preach to the Jews (the circumcision). They championed the truth that God gives to every man a particular task.

Note who the leaders were in Jerusalem: James, the Lord’s brother who was pastor of the great Jerusalem church, and Peter and John. The point to note is that the great pillars of the church were *now standing together* proclaiming...

- that salvation by grace through faith alone was the true gospel.
- that God was the Person who called Paul and all other ministers to preach the gospel.
- that Paul and all other ministers should remember and minister to the poor, not just to the middle classes and wealthy.

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation [trust, trusteeship, commitment] of the gospel is committed unto me” (1 Cor.9:16-17).

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation [trust, trusteeship, stewardship] of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God” (Col.1:25).

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (1 Th.2:4).

“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:11-12).

“But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:3).

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| <p><b>1 Paul confronted Peter</b></p> <p>a. Peter's failure<br/>             1) A follower of men, of the crowd<br/>             2) A man of prejudice &amp; legalism</p> <p>b. The result of Peter's failure: Others are led away—even a leader, Barnabas</p> <p><b>2 A believer cannot have double standards</b></p> <p>a. An unrighteous walk: Not true to the gospel<br/>             b. A hypocritical walk: Living one way while telling others to live another way</p> <p><b>3 A believer is justified by faith alone<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> | <p><b>D. The Minister Proclaimed the Gospel to Those Who Had Drifted Away, 2:11-21</b></p> <p>11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.<br/>             12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.<br/>             13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.<br/>             14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?<br/>             15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the</p> | <p>Gentiles,<br/>             16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.<br/>             17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.<br/>             18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.<br/>             19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.<br/>             20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.<br/>             21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.</p> | <p>a. Not by works<sup>DS2</sup><br/>             b. But by the faith of Christ alone</p> <p>c. No one is ever justified by the works of the law</p> <p><b>4 A man is not misled by Christ</b></p> <p>a. God forbid such a thought<br/>             b. A man makes himself a sinner</p> <p><b>5 A man is justified by living for God</b></p> <p>a. By dying to the law<br/>             b. By being crucified with Christ<br/>             c. By allowing Christ to live His life through his body</p> <p>d. By trusting the grace of God: Jesus Christ, who is God's righteousness</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE PROOF OF GOD'S MESSENGER AND MESSAGE, 1:10-2:21**

**D. The Minister Proclaimed the Gospel to Those Who Had Drifted Away, 2:11-21**

(2:11-21) **Introduction:** this is a passage packed full of truth and meaning for all men, but especially for the believer. It is a passage that deals with backsliders, with righteousness and self-righteousness, works and faith, the law and God's grace. It is a passage that needs to be proclaimed to the world. It is the message of the gospel proclaimed to those who drift away.

1. Paul confronted Peter (v.11-13).
2. A believer cannot have double standards (v.14).
3. A believer is justified by faith alone (v.15-16).
4. A man is not misled by Christ (v.17-18).
5. A man is justified by living for God (v.19-21).

**1** (2:11-13) **Paul—Inconsistency—Double-minded:** Paul confronted Peter. What happened is simply explained. Paul and Barnabas were ministers of the Antioch church and they had apparently invited Peter, or else Peter had taken it upon himself to conduct some services in Antioch (cp. Acts 11:25-26). Antioch was not only a great church, but the first great Gentile church and the very first church to send missionaries forth. It was comprised mainly of Gentile believers (cp. Acts 11:20-21; 13:1-3). When Peter began his ministry in Antioch, he joined right in with the Gentiles, fellowshiping, eating, and sharing with them. However, some Judaizers or religionists came to Antioch and began to visit the church. They were astounded to find Peter fellowshiping and eating so freely with Gentiles, even if they were Christians. Remember: the Judaizers believed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, but they thought it was only an addition to the existing religion (Judaism). They said that if people wished to be saved...

- they had to undergo the ritual of circumcision.
- they had to subject themselves to the law of Moses.
- they had to adopt the ritual and ceremonies of the existing religion.
- they had to practice the rules and regulations of religion, for example, observe strict food laws which prohibited the eating of pork and meat bought in the marketplace.
- they had to separate themselves and have no fellowship with Gentiles who had not been circumcised nor subjected themselves to the law of Moses and the rules and regulations of religion.

When the Judaizers saw Peter, the great Jewish apostle, eating with Gentiles who had not done these things, they apparently "rebuked him." They even used James' name to support their position. Of course, James did not support their posit-

tion or false teaching (cp. Acts 15:24). However, Peter weakened under their attack and withdrew himself from close fellowship with the Gentiles. When Peter withdrew, the inevitable happened: the church split. The church became tragically divided just as any church does when a leader becomes a man-pleaser and begins to follow critics and cliques.

Note how severe the split was: Peter and the other Jews separated themselves from the Gentiles. And note another fact: their argument was so strong that the senior minister, Barnabas, was even led to join their ranks. Paul stood alone among the leaders to fight for the truth of the gospel.

Another way to look at Peter's failure is to look at the three gross sins he committed. (See note—Gal.2:14 for discussion.)

**2** (2:14) **Double-minded—Inconsistency:** a believer must not have double standards. In common language, Peter was two-faced; he was a man-pleaser. He ate with the Gentile Christians; but when some Judaizers arrived, he separated himself completely from the Gentiles. He feared what the Judaizers would think. His failure was threefold.

- ⇒ He was hypocritical. He said one thing (Gal.2:9) but lived something else (Gal.2:11-12).
- ⇒ He followed the crowd simply because they put pressure upon him—even when he knew better.
- ⇒ He esteemed some persons better than others (Gal.2:12).

1. Peter was walking an unrighteous path, not living according to the truth of the gospel. The gospel declares that God loves and receives *all men*. But Peter was separating himself from those who *followed Christ differently* than he and the mother church at Jerusalem.

2. Peter was walking a hypocritical path, living one way while telling others to live another way. When the Judaizers were not around to see him, he fellowshipped with the Gentiles; but when the strict religionists arrived, he began to be more strict and follow their strict lifestyle. Note: he even began to compel the Gentiles to undergo the ritual of circumcision and submit to the law of Moses in order to be accepted into the true church of Christ.

**Thought 1.** The fact that Peter could be led astray is a strong warning to every believer, especially to ministers.  
 ⇒ We must guard against an unrighteous walk, against not being true to the gospel.

**“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal.4:9).**

**“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).**

**“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein” (Heb.13:9).**

⇒ We must guard against a hypocritical walk, against living one way while telling others to live another way.

**“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Mt.7:3).**

**“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Lk.6:46).**

**“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things” (Ro.2:1).**

**“Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?” (Ro.2:21).**

**“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit.1:16).**

**3** (2:15-16) **Justification—Faith vs. Works:** a believer is justified by faith alone. Note that Paul now identifies himself with the Jews, for he was a Jew by *nature*, that is, by birth. Note also the reference to the Gentiles as “sinners.” The meaning is *rank sinners*. The Jews considered themselves to be religionists and considered the Gentiles to be rank sinners. What Paul was saying is this: *all Jews (religionists) who had believed in Christ* had confessed the very same thing the rank sinners had confessed: a person is justified by faith alone and not by the works of the law.

By coming to Christ the Jewish religionists were confessing that their religion, ritual, works, and law were not able to save them. They needed something more, much more; therefore, they had turned to Christ. Note three crucial points.

1. A person is not justified and made acceptable to God by works nor by law. Why? Because man is short of God's glory; he is imperfect, incomplete, and less than what he should be. Yet everything that lives in God's presence must be perfect and complete, full to the ultimate degree, for God is the very embodiment of perfection, completeness, and fullness. Therefore man, who is imperfect and incomplete, cannot stand or live in God's presence.

However, a question needs to be asked: Is there a work that man can do or a law that he can keep that will make him perfect? God says, “No!” For everything that an imperfect being does is imperfect and incomplete. An imperfect being cannot do anything perfectly good, and certainly not good enough to make him perfect. An imperfect man is short of God's perfection; therefore, no matter what man does, he is short of what he should be. He could always be better and do better, much better in the world of infinity and perfection.

Hence, man is not saved by works nor by law. If our salvation is dependent upon some work or works that we can do, then we are hopelessly lost. For what work can we do that will make us a perfect and eternal creature? No man can make us perfect and eternal and cause us to live forever in a perfect and righteous world—and we know it. What can any person

do to make his loved one live forever—to be perfected and made eternal? There is no work that we can do or law that we can keep to save ourselves from unrighteousness and death. If we are to be justified before God, accepted as perfect and complete, it will not be by the works of the law. (See outline and notes—Ro.4:14-15; 7:1-6; 7:7-13; 7:14; DEEPER STUDY # 1—8:3 for more discussion.)

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:19-20).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Ro.3:23).

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal.3:10).

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas.4:17).

“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one” (Job 14:4).

“If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” (Ps.130:3).

“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Pr.20:9).

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).

“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Eccl.7:20).

What then is our hope? How can we become justified, made perfect and complete before God? God says there is only one way. Note the middle of the verse:

We must believe “in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ” (v.16).

2. A person is justified by the faith of Christ alone (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Justification*—Gal.2:15-16; 2:16 for discussion).

3. No person is ever justified by works nor by law (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Faith vs. Works*—Gal.2:16 for discussion).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(2:15-16) **Justification:** (diakioun): to count someone righteous. It means to reckon, to credit, to account, to judge, to treat, to look upon as righteous. It does not mean to make a man righteous. All Greek verbs which end in “oun” mean not to make someone something, but merely to count, to judge, to treat someone as something.

There are three major points to note about justification.

1. Why justification is necessary.

a. Justification is necessary because of the sin and alienation of man. Man has rebelled against God and taken his life into his own hands. Man lives as he desires...

- fulfilling the lust of the eyes and of the flesh.
- clinging to the pride of life and to the things of the world.

Man has become sinful and ungodly, an enemy of God, pushing God out of his life and wanting little if anything to do with God. Man has separated and alienated himself from God.

b. Justification is necessary because of the anger and wrath of God. “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Ps.7:11). Sin has aroused God’s anger and wrath. God is angry over man’s...

- rebellion
- ungodliness
- sin
- hostility
- unrighteousness
- desertion

Man has turned his back upon God, pushing God away and having little to do with Him. Man has not made God the center of his life; man has broken his relationship with God. Therefore, the greatest need in man’s life is to discover the answer to the question: How can the relationship between man and God be restored?

2. Why God justifies a man. God justifies a man because of His Son Jesus Christ. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that man’s faith and counts it as righteousness. The man is not righteous, but God considers and credits the man’s faith as righteousness. Why is God willing to do this?

a. God is willing to justify man because He loves man that much. God loves man so much that He sent His Son into the world and sacrificed Him in order to justify man (Jn.3:16; Ro.5:8).

b. God is willing to justify man because of what His Son Jesus Christ has done for man.

⇒ Jesus Christ has secured the *Ideal* righteousness for man. He came to earth to live a sinless and perfect life. As Man He never broke the law of God; He never went contrary to the will of God, not even once. Therefore, He stood before God and before the world as the *Ideal Man*, the *Perfect Man*, the *Representative Man*, the *Perfect Righteousness* that could stand for the righteousness of every man.

⇒ Jesus Christ came into the world to *die* for man. As the *Ideal Man* He could take all the sins of the world upon Himself and die for every man. His death *could stand* for every man. He exchanged places with man by becoming the sinner (2 Cor.5:19). He bore the wrath of God against sin, bearing the condemnation for every man. Again, He was able to do this because He was the *Ideal Man*, and as the *Ideal Man* His death could stand for the death of every man.

⇒ Jesus Christ came into the world to *arise from the dead* and thereby to conquer death for man. As the *Ideal Man* His resurrection and exaltation into the presence of God *could stand* for every man’s desperate need to conquer death and to be acceptable to God. His resurrected life could stand for the resurrected life of the believer.

Now, as stated above, when a man believes in Jesus Christ—really believes—God takes that man’s belief and...

- counts it as the righteousness (perfection) of Christ. The man is counted as *righteous in Christ*.
- counts it as the death of Christ. The man is counted as having already *died in Christ*, as having already paid the penalty for sin *in the death of Christ*.
- counts it as the resurrection of Christ. The man is counted as already having been *resurrected in Christ*.

Very simply, God loves His Son Jesus Christ so much that He honors any man who honors His Son by *believing on Him*. He honors the man by taking the man’s faith and counting (crediting) it as righteousness and by giving him the glorious privilege of living with Christ forever in the presence of God.

3. How God justifies a man. The word justify (diakioun) is a legal word taken from the courts. It pictures man on trial before God. Man is seen as having committed the most heinous of crimes; he has rebelled against God and broken his relationship with God. How can he restore that relationship? Within human courts if a man is acquitted, he is declared innocent, but this is not true within the Divine Court. When a man appears before God, he is anything but innocent; he is utterly guilty and condemned accordingly.

But when a man sincerely trusts Christ, then God takes that man’s faith and counts it as righteousness. By such God counts the man—judges him, treats him—as if he was innocent. The man is not made innocent; he is guilty. He knows it and God knows it, but God treats him as innocent. “God justifies the ungodly”—an incredible mercy, a wondrous grace. (See notes—Ro.4:1-3; DEEPER STUDY # 1—4:1-25; DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—4:22.)

How do we know this? How can we know for sure that God is like this? Because Jesus said so. He said that God loves us. We are sinners, yes; but Christ said that we are very, very dear to God.

**“And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6).**

**“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).**

**“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:23-24).**

**“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ro.4:3).**

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

**“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:9).**

**“For he that is dead [counted dead, justified] is freed from sin” (Ro.6:7).**

**“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Ro.8:33).**

**“And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).**

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

**“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).**

**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).**

**“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(2:16) **Faith vs. Works—Self-Righteousness:** Why is it that a man can never be justified nor secure righteousness by works and law? Why is it that a man can never approach God by works and law?

1. There are two ways that a man can try to secure righteousness and approach God.

a. A man can try to work to secure righteousness; he can do all he can to keep the law of God and to please God. But note: a man can do this...

- only if he can keep the law perfectly, never breaking it once and never violating it a single time
- only if he can make sure that every single thing he ever does or thinks is perfectly good and righteous and pure
- only if he can please God in every act, word, and thought, never displeasing God in anything

Only if a man can do this can he secure righteousness by works and law. But what man can be perfect and good and righteous and pure in every single act, word, and thought? It is absolutely impossible to secure righteousness by works and law. A person may try to approach God through works and law, but he can never achieve perfection—not perfect righteousness and holiness without which *no man* shall ever see God.

**“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb.12:14).**

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:22-23).

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal.3:10).

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas.4:17).

b. A man can believe that Jesus Christ is God’s gift of righteousness to the world—that God so loved the world...

- that He gave His Son to live a perfect life upon earth in order to secure the Perfect and Ideal Righteousness for man.
- that He gave His Son to take the unrighteousness of man upon Himself and to die for man, that is, to bear the judgment of unrighteousness for man.
- that he gave His Son to arise from the dead for man in order to conquer death and to give man a new and perfect life that is eternal.

A man can believe that God loves him and takes his faith in Christ and counts it as righteousness.

A man can believe that God loves him and accepts him because he honors His Son Jesus Christ—honors Jesus Christ by believing and following Him.

A man can believe that God loves His Son so much that He will take any man who honors His Son and do anything for him. If the man believes in Jesus Christ for righteousness, then God will count the man righteous.

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

**“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:4-5).**

2. Note another point: the two ways that men try to approach God are completely different from each other. Faith and works are incompatible. Faith is always the opposite of works.

- ⇒ If a man works to keep the law in order to be righteous, then he can offer to God only *self-righteousness*, only the righteousness of the works *he has done*.
- ⇒ If a man trusts the righteousness of Jesus Christ *for his righteousness*, then he can offer the righteousness of Christ to God. He can come to God in the righteousness of Christ.

God always accepts the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ. For any man who truly trusts the righteousness of Christ—who truly gives Christ all he is and has—God accepts that man’s trust as righteousness. The man is not righteous, but God takes his trust in Christ and accepts it as righteousness.

3. Note still another fact: a man who *believes God for righteousness* approaches God entirely differently than the man who approaches God in his own self-righteousness.

a. The man who approaches God in his own righteousness...

- presents his self-righteousness to God *by himself*.
- depends upon his own righteousness.
- trust his own righteousness.
- believes in his own righteousness.
- declares that he has the strength and power to make himself righteous and acceptable to God.

b. The man who approaches God in the righteousness of Jesus Christ...

- presents his love and trust in the righteousness of Jesus Christ as his righteousness. (God could never turn down a person who loved and trusted His Son with all his heart.)
- rejects dependence upon himself and depends upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- gives up trusting his own righteousness and trusts the righteousness of Christ.
- no longer believes in his own righteousness, but believes in Christ for righteousness.
- declares that he does not have the power to make himself righteous and acceptable to God; he trusts the power of God to make him righteous and acceptable.

Note what this is saying: a man either believes he has the power to save himself and to keep himself from dying or else he believes that God has the power to save him. A man either trusts his own power for salvation and life or else he trusts God’s power. If he believes that he has the power to save himself, then he works to make himself righteous and to live forever. If he believes that God alone has the power to save him, then he trusts God for righteousness and life.

In conclusion, no one is ever justified by works or by law. We may try to secure righteousness by works and law, but it is always self-righteousness, and self-righteousness always ends up with self: in the grave—dead, having passed the way of all flesh—short of God’s glory, perfection, and disqualified from ever living with God. Self-righteousness is never acceptable to God; works and law can never justify a man and make him perfect.

However, we can secure righteousness by faith. We can trust God as a child trusts his father. We can trust that God loves us enough to count our love and trust for His Son as righteousness.

*FAITH IN CHRIST IS GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE ONLY RIGHTEOUSNESS  
THAT MAKES A PERSON ACCEPTABLE TO GOD*

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested....even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Ro.3:21-22).

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:4).

“...Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).

“But of him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor.1:30).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col.3:3).

4. Note one other fact: righteousness by works honors and makes man supreme and preeminent, the center and core of life. Righteousness by faith honors God and makes God supreme and preeminent, the center and core of life. God is the One to be obeyed out of a heart of love, adoration, and appreciation for what He has done (Ro.2:29).

**4** (2:17-18) **Righteousness—Law—Works:** a believer is not misled by Christ. The question is, “Could Christ be making us sinners by our trusting that we are justified by faith in Him alone?” Some argued that Paul was making Christ a *minister of sin*. Their reasoning went like this: when men turned away from the law and trusted Christ for righteousness, Christ caused them to sin, for Christ made it easy for them to transgress the law. They said that Christ tore down the law, for He led men away from the law. He removed the restraints and barriers of the law; therefore, men became transgressors by rejecting the law.

Paul simply says two things about this argument. First, God forbid! Second, the man who tries to keep the law makes himself a sinner, for it is the law that condemns him (Gal.3:19).

The believer, of course, rejects the righteousness which comes by law, for the law gives him no righteousness. It only shows him where his failures are. The law condemns his conscience and makes him feel miserable and broken. However, the law has its place in the plan of God just as much as faith does (see outline and notes—Ro.3:31; 4:14-15; 7:1-6; 7:7-13; 7:14; DEEPER STUDY # 2—8:3). Very simply, when a man sees what God has done for him, he is driven to please God. The believer sees Christ bearing the guilt and punishment for his crimes (sins) and then bows in love and adoration arising to work in appreciation for such amazing love. The believer tries to be good, not to earn or to win righteousness but to serve God out of appreciation for salvation. He does not try to put God in debt for salvation, but he thanks God for righteousness. He sees that he owes God whatever service he can perform. The genuine believer has come to know above all others that love is a much stronger force than fear. He follows Christ—does all he can to live like Christ—because he loves Christ. He loves Him because Christ has done so much for Him.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).

**5** (2:19-21) **Believer, Position—Indwelling Presence—Christ, In the Believer:** a believer is justified by living for God. A believer lives for God by doing four things.

1. The believer lives for God by *dying to the law*. The law shows a man that he is a sinner and that he comes ever so short of perfection and righteousness. The law shows man that he is to be punished and separated from the society of God forever. The law shows man that he stands no chance of ever being accepted by God—not if he has to approach God by keeping the law. He just cannot keep the law—not continually, not consistently—for he is always coming short of the law and of God’s glory. The law slays man; it kills him and condemns him to death. The only hope man ever has of being acceptable to God is to die to the law—somehow, some way to be delivered out from under the law—to be removed so far away from the law that it has no bearing upon him. How can man do this? By turning away from the law and finding Someone who can stir God to count him righteous and to accept him. The first thing that a man must do in order to live for God is to *die to the law and to self-righteous works*.

2. The believer lives for God by being *crucified with Christ* (v.20). How in the world can a man be crucified with Christ when Christ died so many centuries ago? Scripture tells us how. When a man believes that Jesus Christ died for him—that Jesus Christ bore the punishment of sin for him—God takes that man’s faith and...

- counts his faith as his *having died in Christ*.
- counts his faith as his *identification with Christ in death*.
- counts his faith as his having already been punished for sin *in the death of Christ*.

As Scripture says, the man is “crucified with Christ.” God counts or credits the believer as having already died—as having died with Christ. (See notes—Ro.6:3-5; note 3—Ro.8:1 for more discussion.)

3. The believer lives for God by allowing Christ to live His life through his body. (See outline and notes—Ro.6:1-10; 6:11-13; 6:14-23; 8:1-17.) Now note: the believer is “crucified with Christ,” yet he is still living upon earth. How-

ever, he is not to be the one in *charge of his life*. By faith he has died with Christ; therefore, he is to live with Christ. He is to allow Christ to live *in and through his body*, to control and to be in charge of his life.

- ⇒ The believer is to be so merged into Christ that it is as though Christ is walking upon the earth in his body.
- ⇒ The believer is to be so much in union and fellowship with Christ that it is as though he is but a branch drawing his very life and nourishment from Christ (cp. the Vine and the branches, Jn.15:1-6).

**Thought 1.** Jesus Christ (God's Spirit) lives in the body of the believer.

**"At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you"** (Jn.14:20).

**"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing"** (Jn.15:4-5).

**"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me"** (Jn.17:23).

**"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"** (Gal.2:20).

**"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God"** (Eph.3:17-19).

**"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"** (Col.1:27).

**"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"** (Rev.3:20).

**Thought 2.** The believer is to allow Christ to live through his body.

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"** (Ro.12:1-2).

**"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"** (1 Cor.3:16-17).

**"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"** (1 Cor.6:19-20).

**"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"** (2 Cor.6:16-18).

4. The believer lives for God by trusting the grace of God, that is, by trusting Jesus Christ who is God's righteousness. The word "frustrate" (atheto) means to set aside, void, invalidate, make ineffective, and nullify. If a man sets aside the grace of God and seeks righteousness by the law, then Christ died in vain. The person who preaches that a man can be good enough—that he can work enough and keep enough law—to become righteous and acceptable to God...

- voids and does away with the love and grace of God.
- makes the death of Christ empty and meaningless.

The only way a man can live for God is by trusting the grace and love of God, that is, by trusting the death of Jesus Christ for His righteousness.

**"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe"** (Ro.3:21-22).

**"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"** (Ro.10:3-4).

**"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"** (1 Cor.1:30).

**"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"** (Ph.3:9).

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|   | <b>CHAPTER 3</b>   | among you?  | d. Bc. he has seen Christ so clearly  |
|   | <b>III. THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE &amp; NOT BY WORKS, 3:1-4:7</b>   | 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?                                       | <b>2 A believer receives the Spirit by faith, not by works nor by law</b>                       |
|   | <b>A. The Proof of a Believer's Experience, 3:1-5</b>  | 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?  | <b>3 A believer grows by faith</b>  |
| <b>1 A believer corrects error (false teaching)</b>   | <b>O</b> foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified | 4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.  | <b>4 A believer suffers by faith</b>  |
| a. Bc. it makes him foolish<br>b. Bc. it deceives him<br>c. Bc. it shows that he is disobedient |  | 5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? | <b>5 A believer experiences God's miraculous working by faith &amp; not by works nor by law</b> |

**DIVISION III**

**THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS, 3:1-4:7**

**A. The Proof of a Believer's Experience, 3:1-5**

(3:1-4:7) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Justification—Faith vs. Works:** this passage begins the major teaching of the Book of Galatians, that a man is justified by faith alone and not by good works nor by law. Of course, a man should be good and do good, be as good as he can be and do as much good as he can. A man should live a moral and just life like the law says. But this is not the point; this is not what Scripture is saying. Scripture is saying that a person is *not justified* before God by doing good and keeping the law. No man can do enough good nor keep enough laws to become perfect and acceptable before God. God is perfect, and no matter how much good and how much law we keep, we do not become perfect. We are still short: we still fail, sin, age, and die. Good works and law do not perfect us; they do not make us acceptable to God, nor impart to us eternal life. Only God Himself can perfect us, accept us, and give us eternal life. Any thinking and honest person knows that there is nothing—absolutely nothing—on earth that can keep us from coming short and dying. There is absolutely nothing on earth that can give us eternal life in a perfect world where there is nothing but love, joy, and peace. If we are to ever inherit eternal life, then God has to give it to us. (See outlines, notes, and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal. 2:15-16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:16; note—2:19-21 for more discussion.)

The point is this: How do we know that God will justify us? How do we know that God will accept us and give us life with Him forever? The answer to this question is the discussion of the present passage. There are six proofs that God will justify us by faith alone, six proofs that God will not justify us by works and law.

1. The proof of a believer's experience (3:1-5).
2. The proof of Scripture (3:6-14).
3. The proof of God's Covenant or promise (3:15-18).
4. The proof of the law's powerlessness (3:19-22).
5. The proof of what faith does for us (3:23-29).
6. The proof of Christ and the fullness of time (4:1-7).

(3:1-5) **Introduction:** some influential people had joined the churches of Galatia and the churches took pride in their presence. The new members were so capable and the churches were so glad to have them that they were immediately placed in positions of leadership and teaching. However, these new members had not been truly converted by Christ or else their understanding of the gospel was all confused. They began to teach that faith alone was not enough to save a person, that a person had to undergo the basic ritual of religion (circumcision) and focus his life upon the law in order to become acceptable to God.

Paul's answer is direct: the *experience* of the Galatian believers disproves that a person becomes acceptable to God by law. The *believer's experience* proves that he is justified by faith alone, and all a believer has to do is to rethink his experience and he will see the truth.

1. A believer corrects error (false teaching) (v.1).
2. A believer receives the Spirit by faith, not by works nor by law (v.2).
3. A believer grows by faith (v.3).
4. A believer suffers by faith (v.4).
5. A believer experiences God's miraculous working by faith and not by works nor by law (v.5).

**1** (3:1) **Deception:** a believer corrects error. There are four reasons why he must do so.

1. Error makes a person "foolish." Note that Paul calls the Galatian believers "foolish Galatians." The word "foolish" (anoetoi) means misunderstanding, thoughtless, and unthinking. The Galatians were listening to false teaching and passively accepting it. They were not thinking through what was being taught. They were lazily sitting and soaking it up. They were not applying their minds to see if what was being taught was true or not. They were *foolish*, acting like senseless people who were incapable of thinking.

2. Error deceives a person. The word “bewitched” means to fascinate, cast a spell upon, mislead, deceive. The false teachers were, as so many are, very capable, fluent, and persuasive speakers with dynamic personalities and charisma. Their teaching sounded reasonable and logical.

- ⇒ A man must keep the ritual of religion.
- ⇒ A man must do good works to be good.
- ⇒ A man must keep the law in order to be acceptable to God

It all sounded reasonable and logical, especially to a person who was not thinking and comparing the teaching to the gospel of Christ. The error was *bewitching*, deceiving the believers.

3. Error shows disobedience. The Galatians simply were not obeying the truth. They were trying to become acceptable to God...

- by undergoing the ritual of religion (circumcision, baptism, etc.) instead of trusting the death of Jesus Christ.
- by subjecting themselves and focusing their lives upon the law instead of Christ.

4. Error leads a believer away from Christ. This is tragic, for the true believer is a person who has seen Christ crucified for him. The Galatians had clearly seen the death of Christ through the preaching of Paul. Paul’s preaching had plainly pointed out and explained the death of Christ. In fact, the Lord’s death had been so clearly explained that it was as though the Lord Jesus had been crucified in their presence, before their very eyes. There was, therefore, no excuse for their following false teachers. They knew what Christ had done for them, that Christ had died for them and had taken their sins upon Himself and borne their punishment for them.

They knew that God loved them, that God loved the world...

- that He had sent His Son into the world to die *for them*.
- that God expected all men to believe in the death of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- that God took their faith and love in His dear Son and accepted them because they believed and loved His Son.

How then could they be so foolish and bewitched and not obey the truth—especially when they had clearly seen and understood the death of Jesus Christ?

**2** (3:2) **Holy Spirit—Faith vs. Works:** a believer receives the Holy Spirit by faith, not by works nor by law. Note that this whole passage is a series of questions. Paul is stirring the Galatians to think. The present question strikes at the very heart of the gospel: How did you begin your Christian life? Did you receive the Holy Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

There is one thing genuine believers know, and the genuine believers in the Galatian churches knew it too: no person earns, wins, or merits the Spirit of God. Man is too polluted and too short of God’s glory to deserve the Spirit of God. His thoughts and behavior are too often...

- |           |            |                 |               |
|-----------|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| • ugly    | • unjust   | • lustful       | • unrighteous |
| • selfish | • negative | • undisciplined | • imperfect   |
| • greedy  | • immoral  | • impure        | • unholy      |

No matter how much good and how much of the law is kept, the believer knows that he did not and cannot eliminate such thoughts and behavior—not fully, not perfectly. Therefore, he did not become a Christian—he did not receive the Holy Spirit—by good works nor by the keeping of laws. He became a Christian and received the Spirit of God by hearing about faith in Christ. He heard the glorious news that Christ had died for him and his sins, and he believed the news. Therefore, God took his faith and counted it for righteousness. The believer knows that he is not righteous, but God *counts him righteous* because he *believes and loves* His Son. The believer knows that the Holy Spirit does not dwell in him because of any goodness or work of his own; he knows that he has the Holy Spirit because God counts his *faith in Christ* as reason enough to put His Spirit into his heart. That is how the believer receives the Spirit of God, and that is how the Galatians received the Spirit of God.

**Thought 1.** Every person must hear the glorious message of faith. “The hearing of faith” is the only way a person can ever become acceptable to God. A person must hear and believe the *report of faith*. The *message of faith* is the gospel of salvation—*faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His death for our sins*.

**“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Ro.10:14-17).**

**Thought 2.** The Holy Spirit is the gift of God. No man can earn, win, or merit the Spirit of God. God’s Holy Spirit is given by God and by God alone.

**“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).**

**“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

**“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).**

**3** (3:3) **Growth, Spirit—Maturity—Faith—Flesh:** a believer grows and will be perfected only by faith and not by the flesh. Again, note the question: “Having begun your Christian life in the Spirit, are you now maturing and being made perfect by the flesh?”

A believer does not become spiritually mature by focusing upon his flesh, upon what he can do...

- his efforts
- his works
- his goodness
- his discipline
- his morality
- his just behavior

No matter how strong and disciplined his flesh is—no matter how many good deeds and laws he is able to do in his own flesh—the believer’s flesh does not make him grow spiritually. Focusing upon his flesh and upon the strength and work of the flesh only causes the believer to concentrate upon himself. It emphasizes self, not the Spirit—the human and physical, not the spiritual and heavenly.

Note another fact: no matter how many good works are done and no matter how many laws are kept, they cannot make a man perfect; they cannot impart eternal life to a man. There is no man upon earth that is living eternally because of works. There is no law whatsoever that can keep a man alive forever and ever. No matter how many works of the law a man has done *in his flesh*, he has not achieved perfection—not the holy perfection that makes him acceptable to God. If he is ever to be perfect enough to be acceptable to a Holy God, it will be because God perfects him, not because he has worked and become perfect through his corruptible flesh and human efforts.

As Paul says, “Are you so foolish?” Is God so low that corruptible and dying man can achieve so much? Is man so exalted that he has so little to achieve in order to be perfected? Any thinking and honest heart knows not.

⇒ A man *begins* his journey to God when he truly believes in Jesus Christ and is “born again”—*a spiritual thing*.

⇒ A man *continues* his journey as he is daily renewed by the Holy Spirit—also *a spiritual thing*.

The only way a believer can spiritually grow and mature is to focus his life and mind upon Jesus Christ. The believer must focus his mind upon the things of Christ moment by moment, and as he does, the Spirit of God will draw his mind to spiritual things. Remember: the Spirit of God lives *within* the believer. He is there to work within the believer and to help him grow and mature in Christ.

⇒ The believer keeps his mind and thoughts upon Christ, casting down imaginations and making every thought obedient to Christ.

**“Casting down imagination, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).**

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Ph.4:8).**

⇒ The believer focuses and keeps his mind and thoughts upon being conformed more and more to the image of Christ. He keeps his mind and thoughts upon Christ all day long—praising, honoring, worshipping, and asking for His help and guidance. He learns to live and move and have his being in Christ.

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).**

**“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor.3:18).**

**“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).**

**“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting [progress, growth] may appear to all” (1 Tim.4:15).**

**“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever” (2 Pt.3:18).**

⇒ The believer who focuses his love, attention, and life upon the Lord Jesus Christ is accepted by God. God loves His Son so much that He accepts any person who truly loves and focuses his life upon His Son. And someday—in the glorious day of redemption—God will perfect the believer and conform him perfectly to the image of Christ.

**“For our conversation [citizenship, behavior] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).**

**“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).**

**4** (3:4) **Faith vs. Works—Suffering:** a believer suffers by faith. When the Galatians accepted Christ, they had suffered ridicule, abuse, isolation and persecution from their neighbors; and apparently the persecution had continued for some time (Acts 14:1-7, 19, 22). The point is this: if the Galatians now turned away from Christ to some false teaching, then the suffering they had borne for Christ would be in vain. They would have suffered for nothing. In fact, they would now appear foolish if they turned away from Christ when they had suffered so much in order to embrace Him.

**Thought 1.** Every believer who truly turns to Christ has some suffering to bear. It may be mild, but some suffering is borne. There are the sufferings of...

- separating from the world.
- denying self.
- taking up the cross-dying to one's own will and way every day.
- giving everything that one has to Christ and His cause (money, time, energy, effort).

The list could go on and on, but the point is clearly seen. If Christ is worth suffering for, why then forsake Him and turn to some false teaching?

**“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).**

**“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).**

**“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Mt.19:29).**

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?” (Lk.9:23-25).**

**“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).**

**5** (3:5) **Faith vs. Works:** a believer experiences God's miraculous working by faith and not by works nor by law. What were the miracles experienced by the Galatians? They were miraculous works of healing (cp. Acts 14:8-15). But note: the miracles were not due to the Galatians; they were due to God. The Galatians did not earn, win, or merit the miracles. They simply *heard about faith*, the power of faith, and they believed that God would count their faith as the miracle and meet their need. And God did—God worked miracles among them because of the “hearing of faith.” They heard the glorious message of faith in Christ, and they believed in the power of faith in Christ; therefore, God honored their faith and met their need.

**Thought 1.** What a lesson for us! To believe “the hearing of faith”—the glorious message of *faith in Christ and its power—and then to experience that power!*

**“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Mt.21:22).**

**“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Lk.11:9).**

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16. The miracle of regeneration.)**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24. The miracle of living eternally.)**

**“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Jn.15:7).**

**“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us [the Holy Spirit, faith]” (Eph.3:20).**

**“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him” (Ps.91:15).**

**“And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear” (Is.65:24).**

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| <p><b>1 Scripture uses Abraham to illustrate the truth</b><br/> a. He believed God—thus he was judged righteous<br/> b. Those who are of faith are the true sons of Abraham</p> <p><b>2 Scripture “preached the gospel of faith to Abraham”<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> a. Scripture foresaw that God would judge men righteous through faith<br/> b. Those who are of faith are judged righteous with Abraham</p> <p><b>3 Scripture says “the law puts a man under the curse”</b></p> | <p><b>B. The Proof of Scripture, 3:6-14</b></p> <p>6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.</p> <p>7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.</p> <p>8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.</p> <p>9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.</p> <p>10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written,</p> | <p>Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.</p> <p>11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.</p> <p>12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.</p> <p>13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:</p> <p>14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.</p> | <p>a. Because a man does not keep the whole law<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>b. Because God’s way is “to live by faith”<sup>DS3</sup></p> <p>1) The law is not of faith<br/> 2) The man of law will be judged by the law</p> <p><b>4 Scripture says “Christ has redeemed us from the curse”</b></p> <p>a. He was made a curse for us<br/> b. His purpose: To open the door of blessing to all men<br/> 1) Blessing of Abraham<br/> 2) Blessing of the Spirit</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS, 3:1-4:7**

**B. The Proof of Scripture, 3:6-14**

(3:6-14) **Introduction—Scripture—Justification—False Teachers:** some false teachers had arisen in the churches of Galatia. They were teaching that a man must focus his life upon the rituals and teachings of religion—upon the works of the law—instead of focusing upon Christ. Simply stated, they were saying that a man had to be *ritualized* (circumcised, church membership, baptism) and give his life to keeping the law in order to be acceptable to God. They placed ritual and law—their own works and effort—before Jesus Christ.

- ⇒ They focused upon what they had to do instead of Christ.
- ⇒ They concentrated upon themselves—upon what they could do to save themselves and make themselves acceptable to God—not upon Christ and His saving power.
- ⇒ They stressed the flesh, the physical and the natural, the strength of man instead of Gods love given to the world in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The answer of Paul is forceful: Scripture proves that a man is justified by faith and not by works or law.

1. Scripture uses Abraham to illustrate the truth (v.6-7).
2. Scripture “preached the gospel of faith to Abraham” (v.8-9).
3. Scripture says “the law puts a man under the curse” (v.10-12).
4. Scripture says “Christ has redeemed us from the curse” (v.13-14).

**1** (3:6-7) **Abraham—Justification—Faith—Righteousness:** Scripture uses Abraham to illustrate the truth that justification is by faith and faith alone. Abraham held a unique position in the Jewish nation, for he was the founder of the nation. He was the man whom God had challenged to be a witness to the other nations of the world—a witness to the only living and true God. God had appeared to Abraham and challenged him to leave his home, his friends, his employment, and his country. God made two great promises if Abraham would follow God unquestionably: Abraham would become the father of a new nation, and all nations of the earth would be blessed by his seed (Gen.13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; 22:15-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 35:9-12). (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22.)

Note two points.

1. Abraham believed God; therefore, he was judged righteous. He went out—left his home and risked all—not knowing where he was going (Heb.11:8). He completely and unquestionably trusted God and took God at His word.

Now note: it was not Abraham’s keeping of the law that pleased God. In fact, the law had not yet been given (Gal.3:17). What pleased God and what caused God to justify Abraham was Abraham doing as God had said. Abraham simply *believed* the promise of God that God would give him a new life—in a new nation—with a new people. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.3:8, notes—Gal.3:16; Heb.11:9-19.)

- a. Abraham and his “seed” were the only ones to whom God gave the promises. This is emphatically stated (Ro.4:13-25; Gal.3:6-16, 26, 29).
- b. Only a promise was given to Abraham (Ro.4:13-21; Gal.3:14, 18-21, 29). No other information whatsoever was given. God did not identify the country nor tell Abraham where he was to go. Neither did God tell Abraham when his wife Sarah would bear the seed (the male child) from whom the promised nation would be born. God made a simple promise, and all Abraham had to go on was that simple promise, that is, the sheer Word of God.
- c. Only one condition was attached to the promise: Abraham had to believe God. No works whatsoever were involved.

- d. Abraham did believe God (Gen.12:4-5; Ro.4:3, 11-22; Gal.3:6; Heb.11:8f).
- e. Abraham was *counted righteous* because he believed God (Ro.4:3-5, 9-13, 19-22; Gal.3:6; cp. Gen.15:6). God did not count him righteous because of who he was or what he had done. He simply believed God. Therefore, God took his faith and *counted* his faith as righteousness (see notes—Ro.4:1-3; DEEPER STUDY # 1,2—4:22; note—5:1).
- f. The proof that Abraham really believed God was that he did what God had said. His faith *preceeded* his obedience. He believed God and then he obeyed God. If he had not believed God, he would not have left his home or his employment. He would not have left his surroundings and friends, his meaningful relationships and personal attachments. The fact that he did as God asked was evidence that he believed the promise of God.

2. Those who are of faith are the true sons of Abraham. The person who believes God is the person who receives the promises of God (Ro.4:5-12, 16-17, 23-25; Gal.3:7-9, 14, 22, 26, 29). Paul argues that neither heritage nor nationality, neither merit nor works, neither the law nor the rules of the law have anything to do with the promises of God (Gal.3:6-7). The true sons of Abraham are those who believe God—any person of any nation. In fact, God’s promise that a nation would be born to Abraham and “his seed” was the promise of an eternal nation. This eternal nation is to be of another world, of another dimension of being: the spiritual dimension, a dimension just as real as the physical dimension. But it is to have one distinction: every citizen is to be a believer—one who has believed God and His Word. This is exactly what this passage is saying: “They who believe are the children of Abraham, the children of God’s promise. They are to be blessed along with faithful Abraham. They are to be the citizens of God’s Kingdom, ‘the new heavens and the new earth.’” (Cp. Heb.11:8-18; 2 Pt.3:10-14.)

**2** (3:8-9) **Scripture—Justification—Faith:** Scripture “preached the gospel of faith to Abraham.” To Paul, Scripture was the Word of God, the very voice of God Himself. Therefore, Paul could just as easily say that Scripture spoke to Abraham as he could that God spoke to Abraham. (Note Paul’s high view of Scripture, a strong rebuke to many.)

1. Scripture declared the gospel of faith long before Christ ever came: Scripture declared the gospel to Abraham. As stated in the former note, God told Abraham that He would accept him and bless him if Abraham would believe (love and follow) the promise of God. What was the promise?

“In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

Abraham believed God; he separated himself from the world and gave his life totally to God; therefore, God accepted and judged Abraham righteous.

2. Those who are of faith are judged righteous with Abraham. Abraham was justified by believing God. What happened was this. Abraham believed God, and God took Abraham’s belief and counted his belief as righteousness. It was not Abraham’s works, but his faith that God took and counted as righteousness. It was all an act of God; therefore, all glory belonged to God, not to Abraham. Man is saved by faith; in other words, God takes a man’s faith and counts that man’s faith as righteousness. This has to be the case:

- ⇒ God is perfect; He is perfectly righteous. No man can achieve perfection; therefore, no man can live in the presence of God.
- ⇒ God is love; therefore, what God does is take a person’s faith and counts that faith as righteousness and perfection. Therefore, a man is able to live in God’s presence by faith or justification

**“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:22-23).**

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

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

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

**“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:4-5).**

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(3:8, 16) **Abraham:** the Scripture...preached the gospel to Abraham (Gal.3:8). What does this mean?

God had promised Abraham an earthly son and a great earthly nation. But behind God’s promise lay something more than just an earthly, human fulfillment. Abraham’s son, Isaac, was a type of the *real seed* that was to come, and the Jewish nation was a type of the *real nation* that was to be born. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.4:1-25; notes—9:7-13; Heb.11:9-19.)

Paul gives at least two proofs for this typology.

1. The word “seed” is singular, not plural (Gal.3:16). God’s promise does not point to a great crowd of people, but to one single person. That person is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. And the nation promised is the new nation of believers that God is creating to inherit the new heavens and earth (see notes—Gal.3:16; Eph.1:9-10; 2:11-18; 3:6; 4:17-19).

2. The major events of Isaac’s life parallel the life of Christ.

- ⇒ First, Isaac was miraculously born (Gen.15:2-3; 18:11; cp. Ro.4:18-22; Heb.11:11).
- ⇒ Second, Isaac was to be offered up as a sacrifice (Gen.22). Abraham was willing to offer up Isaac, and God accepted his willingness and motive as an actual fact. The word of Heb.11:17 tells us this: “by faith Abraham...[who] received the promise offered up his only begotten son.”

⇒ Third, Isaac was delivered from death by a miracle of God (Gen.22:10-13). Abraham knew that God was able to raise up Isaac from the dead, in order to fulfil His promise, if need be (Heb.11:19).

**3** (3:10-12) **Law—Faith:** Scripture says that “the law puts a man under the curse.” Note a critical point: in this verse the word “curse” (kataran) means to be condemned and doomed to punishment by the righteous judgment of God. How do we know this? By verse 13 where it is said that Christ bore the curse of the law for us (the condemnation, doom, death, and punishment due us for having broken the law). The law carries with it a curse. A person either keeps the law or else he is cursed; that is, he is to stand before the Judge and bear the punishment of a lawbreaker. The curse (penalty or punishment) for violating the law is...

- the mark of death (2 Cor.3:7).

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

**“For when we were in the flesh, the motions [energy] of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” (Ro.7:5).**

- the mark of condemnation (2 Cor.3:9).

**“And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me” (Ro.7:10-11).**

**“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Ro.9:27).**

Why does the law put a curse upon men? There are two clear reasons.

1. The man who approaches God by law is cursed because he does not keep the whole law. Note a crucial fact: there is a righteousness that is of the law (Ro.10:5; Gal.3:12). That righteousness promises life to any man who can obey the law perfectly. If a man can meet every requirement of the law during his lifetime and never once fall below God’s holy standard, then that man can escape the penalty for sin, which is death. However, every thinking and honest man knows that he cannot keep the law of God in every single detail—not all the time. He knows that he sometimes comes short in...

- behavior
- motive
- service
- emotions
- worship

Every thinking and honest person knows that he is nowhere close to being perfect nor to attaining perfection. He knows that he fails and comes short too often. He knows that what this verse says is exactly true: no man can *continue in and do all things* which are written in the law of God.

**“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them” (Ro.10:5).**

**“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them....the man that doeth them shall live in them” (Gal.3:10, 12).**

2. God’s chosen way for approaching Him is to “live by faith.” Scripture declares as clearly as it can: no man is justified by the law in the sight of God. As stated above, God is perfect; He is perfectly righteous. No man can achieve perfection; therefore, no man can live in the presence of God. No matter how good he is or how much good he does, he cannot achieve perfection. The fact is evident, for if a man had achieved perfection, he would be perfect—living forever in a perfect state of being, even on this earth.

But note this: God is love. So what God does is take a person’s faith and count that faith as righteousness, as perfection. Therefore, a man is able to live in God’s presence by faith or justification. The point is this: God’s way for a man to approach Him is the way of faith: “The just shall live by faith.”

Note also that the law is not of faith, but any man who attempts to live by the law will be allowed to so live. But the man must realize: he shall be judged by the law.

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

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

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

**“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:4-5).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(3:10) **Law, The:** Chapter 3 gives an excellent study of the law.

1. The law carries with it a curse (Gal.3:10). The curse is the *mark of death* and the *mark of condemnation* or guilt: alienation from God both in this life and throughout all eternity (cp. Dt.27:1f; 28:15; Ro.6:23; 2 Cor.3:7, 9).

2. There is a righteousness which is of the law (Ro.10:5-10; Gal.3:12). That righteousness promises life to any man who can obey the law perfectly. If a man can meet every requirement of the law during his lifetime and never once fall below God’s holy standard, then that man can escape the penalty of sin which is death.

3. Jesus Christ delivers man from the curse of the law (Gal.3:13). What does this mean? Jesus Christ kept the law in every single detail. Therefore, He bore no guilt; and He bore no penalty, no mark of death. He had the right to stand before God and claim eternal life, the right to never experience death. He was perfect; He had secured incorruptible righteousness. The glorious gospel is that instead of claiming this right for Himself, He offered to give His perfection and righteousness to the people of the earth and to take their sins upon Himself. He offered to swap His righteousness for man's unrighteousness, to swap His life for man's life. This glorious expression of substitutionary love was the very purpose for which God had created the earth. God willed to show His great and unsearchable love that gave itself so perfectly (Eph.1:5f). The great tragedy is that man has so much difficulty accepting so great a love (1 Cor.1:18).

It also means another thing. Jesus Christ accomplishes the same purpose that God intended for the law, except much more. He not only sets the same ideals and standards before us, but He also relates Himself to us. Whereas the law is a set of cold letters with no power to give life (Gal.3:21), Jesus Christ is a living person possessing the power to raise the dead to life again. He sets the standards and gives the power to keep the standards. He has replaced the law in showing men the awfulness of their sin (through His death), and He adds the extra dimension of strength to live as He lived (Gal.5:22f; Eph.1:19f; 3:20).

4. The law was only meant to be a temporary arrangement between God and man (Gal.3:16). It was to extend only from Moses to Jesus Christ, for Jesus Christ is "the seed" to whom the promise of righteousness was given (see note—Mt.5:17). God never intended the law to be *the way of salvation*. It was for the temporary purpose of showing men their sin and its awfulness. Since Jesus Christ has come, He (His perfect life and righteousness) is to be the standard for men.

5. The law was given to show men their sin and to instill within them a personal guilt for disobeying God and His law (Ro.3:19-20; 7:7; Gal.3:19). This guilt was to lead men to seek and trust God for salvation. Thus, the law stops every mouth from claiming self-righteousness and makes all the world guilty before God.

6. The law is inferior to God's promise of grace (Gal.3:19c-20). Three arguments show this.

- ⇒ First, the law was not given directly by God. The law was given by angels to men through Moses. Moses was a mediator. But God and God alone gave the promise of grace and righteousness to Abraham.
- ⇒ Second, the law was between two parties—man and God. If man kept the law, he would receive the reward of righteousness. The gift of righteousness was conditional under the law. But the promise of grace is given by God alone. No one can break that promise. If man simply believes, he receives the promise of righteousness.
- ⇒ Third, the giving of the law came after the promise to Abraham—four hundred and thirty years after. The promise of grace was given first before the law. Therefore, the law cannot void the promise. The promise of God stands.

7. The law has no power to give life (Gal.3:21). The law demands that each commandment be kept and obeyed. But it is mere words, cold and lifeless. It is entirely external to man; it sets outside the being of man. It has no energy whatever to help in keeping the law.

8. The Scripture is conclusive: all men are lawbreakers and under sin (Gal.3:22).

9. The believer is no longer under the law, but under grace (Ro.6:14; 7:4; Gal.3:22). Man is unable to participate in the righteousness of the law, for he is totally incapable of fulfilling the law. But he can experience the grace of God by trusting the righteousness which Jesus Christ has secured. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ judges that man righteous. That man becomes a "partaker of the divine nature of God" (2 Pt.1:4).

10. The law shuts man up under sin (Gal.3:23). Man is a permanent prisoner under the law. Under the law he is put in bondage and held captive all the days of his life. The only avenue of escape is Jesus Christ, that is, faith in Him. If Christ fails to deliver, then there is no escape, for the law does not free man; it enslaves.

11. The law was man's guardian to lead him to see his need for Christ (Gal.3:24). The *schoolmaster* (*paidagogos*) was usually a trusted slave who was in charge of a child's moral welfare, but he had one particular duty to which Paul was referring. Every day the guardian took the child to school and delivered him to the teacher. And then at the end of the day, he returned for the child and brought him safely back home. This was what the law was to do. The law was to lead man to Christ, the true Teacher. The law does this by showing man that he cannot secure righteousness by himself. He must look to Christ, the real Teacher, for righteousness and acceptance by God. And once faith in Christ has come, there is no need for the law nor for any other guardian, for Jesus Christ brings us face to face with God.

12. The law is still in force for the unbeliever (1 Tim.1:8-14). It remains in force to condemn and to lead the unbeliever to see his need for God.

13. Men were not always transgressors (Ro.4:15; 5:20). There is no transgression where there is no law, for there is no law to transgress. But men were still sinners before the law was given to Moses. They were just not as aware of their sin nor did they sense as much guilt as was necessary to show their need for God. For that reason the law was given, that men might be more and more aware that they were sinners before God (see note—Ro.5:19-21).

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(3:11) **Justification—Faith:** this verse is used three times in the new Testament. A different point is emphasized each time it is used. It tells how a man can be just with God (cp. Hab.2:3-4).

1. "The just shall live by faith" (Ro.1:17). Who can live by faith? Only the just. People make two claims to justification. The man who says, "I am justified by doing the best I can" is simply saying that he expects God to excuse his sin. But God does not excuse sin; God forgives sin. Excusing sin is nothing more than license—allowing man to go on living as he wishes and always coming up short. Therefore, a man is not justified by doing the best he can—by living after the law. He is justified by faith, by trusting God to forgive him. Once a man has really trusted God, he is just. And *the just* then begins to live by faith. The former man, whether a legalist or a man of fleshly indulgence, has no opportunity to live by faith. Why? Simply because he never started the life of faith. It is the just, not the legalist or the man of sinful indulgence, who lives by faith.

2. "The just *shall live* by faith" (Gal.3:11). By what rule does a person live? By the principle of faith, not by the principle of works. The person declared *just* by faith shall live apart from works. The believer is saved by faith, and the believer lives by faith (Gal.3:11).

3. "The just shall live *by faith*" (Heb.10:38). By what power does a person live? By the power that is given us by God because of faith. The Christian believes God, believes in the promises God has made. Therefore, the believer does what God says. The power of faith *energizes* him to live a just life. Works have nothing to do with making him *just* nor with keeping him *just*.

**4** (3:13-14) **Jesus Christ, Death—Redemption—Curse:** Scripture says that "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." The word "redeemed" (exegorasen) means to buy back or to buy from or to ransom. Christ has bought man back and ransomed him from the curse of the law. That man has broken the law of God is unquestionable; every honest man knows this. Therefore, every man stands guilty before God and must be judged and condemned to bear the curse and punishment of the law. But this is the glorious news: Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. How?

1. Jesus Christ was made a curse for us. Simply stated, Jesus Christ took our condemnation, doom, death, and punishment upon Himself and bore them all for us. Jesus Christ took our place as the lawbreaker and guilty party before God, and He bore the punishment of the lawbreaker for us. How was this possible?

⇒ Because Jesus Christ had obeyed and kept the law of God perfectly. He had never broken the law, not even once. He was sinless and perfect. He had secured the Ideal Righteousness and Perfection before God. Therefore, He bore no guilt, no penalty, and no mark of death. He had the right to stand before God and claim eternal life, the right to be accepted by God and to never experience death. He was perfect; He had secured incorruptible righteousness.

⇒ Because God is love. The glorious gospel is that instead of claiming the right to live in God's presence, Christ determined to give His perfection and righteousness to the people of the earth, and to take their sin upon Himself. He was determined to swap His ideal righteousness for man's unrighteousness, to swap His ideal life for man's sinful life.

Stated as simply as possible, Jesus Christ substituted Himself, His perfect life, for man's sinful life. He substituted His obedience to God for man's disobedience. He bore man's sin and punishment so that man might stand righteous and perfect before God. Jesus Christ bore the curse of the law for us. (See notes—Gal.1:4-5; 1:6-9; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—2:15-16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:16; note—2:19-21 for more discussion. Also cp. all the notes in Romans dealing with the subjects of Justification and Law.)

Note the Old Testament quotation: "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree" (Dt.21:23). This does not mean that a man is cursed because he is executed upon a tree, but rather that a man who is executed upon a tree is there because he is cursed, having been judged as a lawbreaker. Jesus Christ took the sins of man, taking the place of the transgressor; therefore, He was cursed (condemned) to die as the unlawful and disobedient sinner died.

2. The purpose for Jesus Christ bearing the curse of the law was to open the door of blessing to all men. Christ bearing the curse of the law was the way God fulfilled His promise to Abraham: that all nations would be blessed in him. Christ bearing the curse of the law is also the way that God gives the promises made to Abraham to the world. Any man who believes in Jesus Christ—that Christ bore the curse of the law for him—is accepted by God and given the blessings of the promised land eternally.

In summary, the man who believes in Christ receives the promise of God's Holy Spirit, that is, the promise...

- of the divine nature.

**"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pt.1:4).**

- of the new birth.

**"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn.3:3-6).**

**"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pt.1:23).**

- of being made a new creature.

**"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor.5:17).**

- of being made into a new man.

**"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph.4:24).**

**"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col.3:10).**

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| <p><b>1 The illustration of a covenant</b><br/>                 a. A man's covenant stands<br/>                 b. The point: God's covenant stands even more</p> <p><b>2 God made His covenant with Abraham &amp; his seed</b><br/>                 a. Stated emphatically</p> | <p><b>C. The Proof of God's Covenant &amp; Promise, 3:15-18</b></p> <p>15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.</p> <p>16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And</p> | <p>to thy seed, which is Christ.</p> <p>17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.</p> <p>18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.</p> | <p>b. The seed is Christ</p> <p><b>3 God gave His covenant of faith before He gave the law</b></p> <p><b>4 God gave His covenant or inheritance (righteousness) by promise—not by law</b></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS, 3:1-4:7**

**C. The Proof of God's Covenant and Promise, 3:15-18**

(3:15-18) **Introduction:** some teachers in the Galatian churches were teaching a false doctrine, a very dangerous doctrine. They were saying that a person was not saved by the grace of God through faith alone; a man had to keep the rituals of the church and focus his life upon the law and upon doing all the good works he could possibly do. Very simply stated, if a man wanted to be acceptable to God, he had to be the very best person he could, be as religious as he could, and keep all the laws of God that he could.

This, of course, is totally wrong. A person is justified by faith alone; he is not justified by being religious, by doing good, and by keeping the law. Religion, good works, and the law all have their place in the plan of God and in the life of man. But man is not saved and made acceptable to God by his own effort. Man cannot earn, win, or merit God's acceptance; for no matter how good and disciplined man may become, he is still short of God's glory which is perfection. Despite all of man's goodness and achievements, man is still too often polluted with...

- selfishness
- injustice
- transgression
- pride
- lack of love
- envy
- anger
- bitterness
- unkindness
- favoritism
- lust
- evil thoughts
- immorality
- prejudice
- impatience
- being puffed up
- anger
- hatred
- failure to hope
- greed
- trespasses
- aloofness
- failure to honor God
- failure to worship
- unbecoming behavior
- being easily provoked
- failure to endure
- failure to pray

The list could go on and on. The point is that no matter how good we are, we are all guilty of so much so often—we are short of God's glory, ever so short of perfection. Our goodness just cannot earn or merit acceptance with God. If God is going to accept us, it will be because we *believe Him*, truly *believe that He will accept us* and that He loves us enough to honor that belief. If God does not love us enough to accept our faith in Him, then we are hopelessly lost forever. Faith in Him—in His love and in His promise—is our only hope for salvation and acceptance by God.

This is the point of the present passage. God's covenant and promise to Abraham proves that justification is by faith and not by works of the law.

1. The illustration of a covenant (v.15).
2. God made His covenant with Abraham and his seed (v.16).
3. God gave His covenant of faith before He gave the law (v.17).
4. God gave His covenant or inheritance (righteousness) by promise—not by law (v.18).

**1** (3:15) **Covenant—God, Promises:** there is the illustration of a covenant between men. (See note, *Covenant—2 Cor.3:6; Cp. Ro.9:4.*) A covenant (diatheke) is an agreement made between two parties, a special relationship set up and established by two or more persons. The point is that once a covenant has been made and executed, it stands: it cannot be annulled or added to. By law the promises of the covenant are sealed; both parties are bound to keep their word, their promise.

**2** (3:16) **Covenant—Testament—Seed, The—Abraham—God, Promises:** How do we know that a person is justified by faith alone? Because God made His covenant with Abraham and *his seed*. Note that the promise was not given to Abraham alone, but it was also given to the *seed*, the descendants and offspring of Abraham. The promise or covenant with Abraham is covered in the Book of Genesis:

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God” (Gen.17:7-8. See note, *Abraham—Gal.3:6-7* for more discussion.)

## GALATIANS 3:15-18

The important question is: Who is meant by the seed of Abraham? Scripture declares that it is Jesus Christ. The word “seed” is singular, not plural. Therefore, God’s promise points to one single person, and that person is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is...

- the *seed* promised to Abraham.
- the *seed* who is to receive the promises made to Abraham. This is a phenomenal truth, and it means three significant things.

1. It means that the promises made to Abraham have passed down to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the descendent who is to inherit the *promised land*, the land of Canaan for an *everlasting possession*. Canaan, of course, is a type of heaven and of the new heavens and earth which God has promised to recreate (see note, *The Promise*—Ro.4:13 for more discussion). The point is that Jesus Christ is to inherit the world and be exalted as the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, ruling and reigning forever and ever.

2. It means that believers, too, shall inherit the world and reign with Christ through all eternity. Abraham was promised that he would be the father of many nations or of many children, and believers are those children.

**“Blessed are the meek [the humble, trusting, believing]: for they shall inherit the earth” (Mt.5:5)**

**“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).**

**“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed” (Gal.3:29).**

3. It means that faith is the way men become justified and acceptable to God.

**“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Ro.4:13).**

**“Therefore it [the promise] is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all” (Ro.4:16).**

**“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Gal.3:6-7).**

**“So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (Gal.3:9).**

In summary Abraham believed God, and because he believed, God kept His covenant and promise.

⇒ Abraham has been given a *seed*, a descendent who has blessed the whole world, that is, Jesus Christ.

⇒ Abraham has also been given nations of people who are heirs of his and of Christ. And there is only one condition to receiving the inheritance: believing God, that is, following in the “steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Ro.4:12).

**“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ro.4:3).**

**“To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Ro.4:5).**

**“The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not...through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Ro.4:13).**

⇒ He, Christ, and his descendents are to receive the promised land—a new heavens and earth that will be perfected eternally.

**“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect” (Ro.4:13-14).**

**“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb.11:8-10).**

**“...These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country...But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb.11:13-14, 16).**

**“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [behavior] and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).**

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Rev.21:1-7).

**3** (3:17) **Covenant—Law**: How do we know that a person is justified by faith alone? Because God gave His covenant of faith before He gave the law. The covenant of faith preceded the covenant of law. The law of God did not even appear upon the scene until four hundred and thirty years later. Note two significant things.

1. When the law was given, the promise to Abraham had not yet been fulfilled; therefore, the law could not void or change the covenant of faith with Abraham. The promises of God to Abraham and his descendent, Jesus Christ, still stood. As Lehman Strauss points out:

⇒ The covenant of faith finds its roots in eternity past.

**“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Jn.1:17).**

⇒ Since Jesus Christ, who is eternal, existed before Abraham, the covenant of faith was given to Christ even before it was given to Abraham (*Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians*, p.45).

2. The covenant made with Abraham told man how he was to follow God and receive the promises of God, that is, by faith. Therefore, when the law was given, it must have been given for a different purpose entirely. It could not have been given to show men how to follow God, for that truth was already established in the covenant of faith given to Abraham.

The point is clear: no man is justified by the law, that is, by self-effort and works, trying to become good and righteous through obeying the law. That was not the purpose of the law. A person is justified by faith and by faith alone. (See outlines and notes—Gal.3:19-22; Ro.3:19-20; 7:7-13 for the purposes of the law.)

**Thought 1.** God’s covenant of faith or of grace is sure. It cannot be revoked or changed. *Believers* shall inherit the promises made to Abraham and Christ.

**“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away” (Lk.21:33).**

**“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all” (Ro.4:16).**

**“For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself....For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb.6:13, 16-18. The promise and the oath of God are the two immutable things which guarantee the promise.)**

**4** (3:18) **Covenant—Law—Inheritance**: How do we know that a person is justified by faith alone? Because God gave His covenant or inheritance by promise, not by law.

William Barclay sums up this passage in a most descriptive way.

*“Again and again Paul comes back to the same point. The whole problem of human life is to get into a right relationship with God. So long as we are afraid of God, so long as God is a grim stranger, there can be no peace in life. How can we achieve this right relationship? Shall we try to achieve it by a meticulous and even self-torturing obedience to the law, by performing endless deeds, by observing every smallest regulation the law lays down? If we take that way we are forever in default, for man’s imperfection can never fully satisfy the perfection of God; we are forever frustrated, forever climbing up a hill in which the peak never comes in sight, forever under condemnation; but if we simply abandon this hopeless struggle and bring ourselves and our sin to God, then the grace of God opens its arms to us and we are at peace with a God who is no longer judge but father. Paul’s whole argument is that that is what happened to Abraham; it was on that basis that God’s covenant with Abraham was made. And nothing that came in later can change that covenant any more than anything can alter a will that has already been ratified and signed.” (The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians. “The Daily Study Bible.” Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1954, p.30.)*

## GALATIANS 3:15-18

The inheritance given to Abraham is that of righteousness, of being accepted by God and given the privilege of living forever with Him in the new heavens and earth. The inheritance was not given to Abraham by law. Abraham could not earn, win, or merit it; but as Scripture declares: "God gave it [the inheritance] to Abraham by promise."

**Thought 1.** The same promise is given to believers, that is, to all those who walk in the faith of Abraham: the promise of being counted righteous and acceptable to God, and of being given the privilege of living forever in the new heavens and earth.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn.14:1-2).

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (Ro.4:13).

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Ro.8:16-17).

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal.3:29).

"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit.3:7).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pt.1:3-4).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pt.3:10-13).

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| <p>1 The law was given to reveal sin—to make men more aware of their sins</p> <p>2 The law was temporary</p> <p>3 The law was not given by God, but through a mediator; therefore, it is inferior</p> | <p><b>D. The Proof of the Law's Powerlessness, 3:19-22</b></p> <p>19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.</p> <p>20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is</p> | <p>one.</p> <p>21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.</p> <p>22 But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.</p> | <p>4 The law has no power to give life</p> <p>5 The law imprisons all men under sin</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS, 3:1-4:7**

**D. The Proof of the Law's Powerlessness, 3:19-22**

(3:19-22) **Introduction:** there were some teachers in the Galatian churches who were teaching that a person is justified, that is, acceptable to God because...

- he does the very best he can: he honestly tries to obey the law of God and to do as much good as he can.
- he practices religion: he keeps the rituals, ceremonies, and rules of the church.
- he has submitted to the basic ritual of the church (circumcision, church membership, baptism, or whatever).

All of these are important: everyone should be faithful in obeying the law, in practicing religion, and in being baptized. However, Scripture is abundantly clear: these are not the things that *actually justify* a person. Jesus Christ alone justifies a person. Man can do nothing whatsoever—exert no energy, no effort, no work—to make himself acceptable to God. A person is acceptable and justified before God only when he believes, truly believes in God's Son, Jesus Christ. There are many people...

- who exert all kinds of energy and effort in keeping the law and doing the best they can, but they *do not believe in Jesus Christ*.
- who practice religion, but they *do not believe in Jesus Christ*.
- who have been circumcised and baptized, but they *do not believe in Jesus Christ*.

The raw energy—the fundamental act—that saves a person is *faith in Jesus Christ, true faith* in God's very own Son. When a person truly believes in God's Son, God takes that person's belief and counts his belief as righteousness. God accepts that person because he honors God's Son—honors Jesus Christ by entrusting and giving all he is and has into His keeping.

Since this is so, why then did God give the law to man? If we are not saved and justified by obeying the law of God and doing the best we can, what is the purpose of the law? This is the discussion of this passage: to show that the law is powerless in saving a man. And the powerlessness of the law actually proves that a person is justified or made acceptable to God by faith.

1. The law was given to reveal sin—to make men more aware of their sins (v.19).
2. The law was temporary (v.19).
3. The law was not given by God, but through a mediator; therefore, it is inferior (v.19-20).
4. The law has no power to give life (v.21).
5. The law imprisons all men under sin (v.22).

**1** (3:19) **Law, Purpose:** How do we know that the law does not justify or make a person acceptable to God? Because the law was given to reveal sin—to make people more aware of their sins. Note the crucial fact: the law was not given to make men righteous, but...

- to make men aware of their sin and condemnation.
- to show men that they are short of God's glory.
- to stir men to pay attention to the fact that they are sinners.
- to stop every mouth from boasting and claiming self-righteousness.
- to awaken men to their crying need for God's help.
- to plant in man's mind that he desperately needs God to save him from sin and death.
- to arouse every mouth to confess its need for a Savior from sin and its punishment (death).

**"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Ro.3:20).**

**"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Ro.5:20).**

**"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Ro.7:7).**

**"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal.3:19).**

**"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal.3:24).**

**“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers” (1 Tim.1:9).**

**2** (3:19) **Law:** How do we know that the law does not justify or make a person acceptable to God? Because the law was temporary. It had a certain course to run and when it was run, it was to be set aside. To say that the law was temporary frightens some believers, for they fear that such a teaching makes way for loose living. Nothing could be further from the truth. Note what Scripture says:

**“[The law] was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come” (Gal.3:19).**

When Jesus Christ came, the law was to be set aside. The law was *meant* to have only a temporary purpose and life span. It was to extend only from Moses to Jesus Christ, for Jesus Christ is “the seed” to whom the promise of righteousness was given (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.5:17-18 for full discussion). God *never intended the law* to be the way of salvation. It was only for the temporary purpose of showing men their sin and its awfulness.

⇒ *However, note:* since Jesus Christ has come, He (His perfect life and righteousness) is to be the standard for men. Jesus Christ fulfilled the law; that is, in Jesus Christ God gave man more than just mere words to describe how He wants man to live. He gave man the Life, the Person who perfectly pictures and demonstrates the law before the world’s very eyes. Jesus Christ is the Picture, the Living Example, the Pattern, and the Demonstration of life as it is to be lived. He is the Perfect Picture of God’s will, the Ideal Man, the Representative Man, the Pattern for all men.

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

**“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Col.1:15).**

**“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:3).**

**“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pt.2:21-23).**

Now note: since the law was meant to be temporary until Christ came, does that mean that the law has no value for men today? Could we just cut the law out of our Bibles and be just as well off? No, a thousand times no! Jesus Christ fulfilled the law; therefore, He embodies the law. True, He embodies much more than the law, but He does embody the law. The law and its righteousness is part of His nature. Therefore, when a man looks at Jesus Christ, he sees the perfection of His nature, and that perfection includes the righteousness of the law. To cut the law out of our Bibles would be to erase part of our understanding of Jesus Christ and part of His very nature.

**“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mt.5:17).**

**“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:3).**

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal.5:16-18).**

**“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Heb.8:10).**

**“Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb.10:15-17).**

Note another point as well: the law is still in force for the unbelieving world. Why? Because all unbelievers who have not trusted Jesus Christ are trusting their own righteousness to make them acceptable to God. They are still trying to become righteous by the law. Therefore, God shall judge them by the law.

**“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:3-4).**

**“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal.3:10).**

Matthew Henry points out another fact that should be noted: the law can still be used to convince men of sin and to restrain them from living loose and evil lives (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol.5, p.661).

**3** (3:19-20) **Law—Mediator:** How do we know that the law does not justify or make a person acceptable to God? Because the law was not given directly by God, but through a mediator; therefore, it is inferior. Two arguments show this.

1. The law was not given directly by God. The law came from God, but it was given by angels to Moses and then to man. Moses stood as a mediator between God and man in the giving of the law; therefore, the law came to man as a second-hand thing. But not the promise of God. God Himself gave the promise of grace and righteousness (that is, His acceptance and eternal life or the promised land). Abraham received the promise of God directly from God. Therefore, the promise of God is bound to be superior to the law, for it involves more of a personal contact (relationship) with God.

2. The law was between two parties—man and God. In the covenant of law, man and God both had responsibilities or work to do. Man had to keep the law, and if he did, God would act and reward him with the gift of righteousness. The gift of righteousness was conditional under the law.

However, the promise of righteousness or grace was given by God alone. No one could break that promise. If man (Abraham) simply believed God's promise, he received the promise of righteousness and grace.

**4** (3:21) **Law:** How do we know that the law does not justify or make a person acceptable to God? Because the law has no power to give life.

1. The law is only words and rules. It can only inject the idea of behavior into the mind of a person. It can only demand—demand that each precept be kept and obeyed. The law is mere words, cold and lifeless. It is entirely external to man, outside the body of man. It has no spirit, no life, no power to enable a person to do the law. It cannot help man to any degree whatsoever as he tries to keep the law. The law demands obedience, but it leaves man entirely on his own as he struggles to obey.

2. The law cannot give life to man. It is not a living being with the power to give life. If it was, then righteousness would have come by law. But, as stated, the law has no life and it has no power. It is mere writing, mere words and rules. However, this is not true of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is both a Person and life. Therefore, He is able to put spirit and life to the words and rules of the law. He is able to live the life described by the words and rules. As such, He is able to inject both the idea and the power to behave into a person's mind and life. It is now His life that sets the standard and the rule for the believer; it is His spirit and life that gives the believer power to obey.

**“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mt.5:17).**

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Ro.3:20-22).**

**“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:3).**

**“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Heb.7:19).**

**5** (3:22) **Law—Promise:** How do we know that the law does not justify or make a person acceptable to God? Because the law imprisons all men under sin. Note several significant facts.

1. “The Scripture” refers to the law. The law of God, or the Scripture, is conclusive: all men are lawbreakers—all men are under sin.

2. “Under sin” (hupo hamartian) means to be shut up as a prisoner in the solitary hopeless depths or solitary confinement of a dungeon.

**“What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:9-20).**

**“For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all” (Ro.11:32).**

3. The great purpose of the law is stated again: to drive men to seek the promise of Jesus Christ, that is, righteousness by faith. When men look at the law and see that they are sinners, they are driven to seek a Savior, even Jesus Christ. Man can seek and trust the righteousness which Jesus Christ has secured. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ judges that man righteous, and that man becomes a “partaker of the divine nature of God” (2 Pt. 1:4).

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

**“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).**

**“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).**

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| <p><b>1 Two pictures of the law</b><br/> a. The law was a prison for man<br/><br/> b. The law was a teacher for man</p> | <p><b>E. The Proof of What Faith Does for Us, 3:23-29</b><br/><br/> 23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.<br/> 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.<br/> 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.</p> | <p>26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.<br/> 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.<br/> 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.<br/> 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.</p> | <p><b>2 Faith makes us children of God</b><br/> a. By causing us to focus upon Christ Jesus<br/> b. By clothing us with the righteousness &amp; Sonship<sup>psl</sup> of Christ<br/> <b>3 Faith in Christ makes us one: Eliminates all distinctions &amp; prejudices</b><br/><br/> <b>4 Faith in Christ makes us heirs of the promise</b></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS, 3:1-4:7**

**E. The Proof of What Faith Does for Us, 3:23-29**

(3:23-29) **Introduction:** some in the churches of Galatia were spreading a false teaching. They were saying that a person is justified by works and law; that is, that a person becomes acceptable to God by subjecting himself to Christ, but he must also subject himself to the law and do the very best he can. Christ is important, yes, but a commitment to live by the law—a commitment to do the very best one can—is also essential in order to be saved and acceptable to God.

The false teaching sounds good, for a person not only should, but he must, do the best he can. Actually a person should not only do the best he can in seeking God, but in everything he undertakes. However, Scripture is very clear: man is not justified by being good and doing good. Man just cannot be good enough nor do enough good to become perfect. God is perfect; therefore, man must become perfect if he is to live with God.

How then can a person become acceptable to God? By faith in Jesus Christ. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, he honors God's Son, and God honors the person who honors His Son. God honors the person by doing the very thing the person believes. Therefore, when a person honors God's Son by believing in Him, God honors the person by doing the very thing for which the person trusted Christ. God counts the person righteous, credits his faith as righteousness. Note, however: belief does not mean *mental assent*, just believing in one's thoughts and mind that Jesus Christ is the Savior. True belief is *spiritual commitment*, the commitment of one's heart and life—all that one is and all that one has to Christ.

How do we know that we are justified by faith, and not by the law and doing the best we can? Because of what faith does for us.

1. Two pictures of the law (v.23-25).
2. Faith makes us children of God (v.26-27).
3. Faith in Christ makes us one: eliminates all distinctions and prejudices (v.28).
4. Faith in Christ makes us heirs of the promise (v.29).

**1** (3:23-25) **Law, The—Schoolmaster:** there are two pictures which clearly illustrate the purpose of the law.

1. The law was a prison for man. Before faith came, that is, before Christ died, man was "kept under the law." The word for "kept under" (ephrouroumetha) means to be guarded, kept in custody, imprisoned, held in bondage. Very simply, the law shuts man up under sin; it imprisons and holds man in bondage to sin. How?

- a. The law shows man exactly where he fails—exactly where he comes short. There is no question about it: the law said to do this, but the man did that. He did not do this. The failure is clearly spelled out, just as clearly as a speed limit sign spells out the violation of the speeder.
- b. The law accuses and condemns man. As soon as a person violates the law, the law charges him. The law is in black and white, written down, so there is no question about it having been broken. Therefore, it preys upon his mind, cuts and convicts his heart. Guilt and conviction take over and the man is troubled and vexed to varying degrees, all dependent on the seriousness of the violation.
- c. The law has no life and no power to deliver man from the punishment due him for his violation. This is the whole point: the law reveals the violation and condemns man; it imprisons him. The law does not deliver man; it condemns man to bondage. It continues and continues to point out man's sins and failures. And the case of the law is endless: its finger of accusation points out the man's failure everytime he violates it. The bondage to the law is perpetual.

The only hope for man is for someone to appear on the scene with the power to release him. That someone has appeared: Jesus Christ has come to set us free. But note: as prisoners we have to accept His deliverance. The choice is ours. We can believe and trust His power to deliver us or not.

2. The law was a schoolmaster or guardian (paidagogos) for man. The law was man's guardian to lead him to see his need for Christ. The *paidagogos* was usually a trusted slave who was in charge of a child's moral welfare, but he had one particular duty to which Paul was referring. Every day the guardian took the child to school and delivered him to the teacher. And then at the end of the day, he returned for the child and brought him safely back home. This was what the law was to do. The law was to lead man to Christ, the true Teacher. The law does this by showing man that he is utterly

unable to secure righteousness by himself. He must look to Christ, the real Teacher, for righteousness and acceptance by God, that is, for justification by faith. And once Christ (faith in Him) has come, there is no need for the law nor for any other guardian, for Jesus Christ brings us face to face with God.

**2** (3:26-27) **Faith—Believers, Position:** How do we know that we are justified by faith and not by the law and by doing the best we can? Because faith makes us children of God. As stated in the previous point, Jesus Christ bring us face to face with God. He stirs God to adopt us as children of God. How? by faith. Note two crucial points.

1. Faith causes us to focus upon God's Son, Jesus Christ. Man can rest upon one thing: God will accept anyone who *focuses* upon His Son Jesus Christ, for God loves His Son to the ultimate degree. God is no less than any normal father who loves his son. In fact, God is much more than man; He is perfect. Therefore, God loves His Son, Jesus Christ, with a perfect love. This simply means that God will honor any person who honors His Son by believing and trusting Him. If a person believes in Jesus Christ for righteousness, then God will honor that man by counting him righteous.

The point is this: the person who tries to become acceptable to God by the law and by doing the best he can—the man who focuses upon the law and good works—that man keeps his mind upon the law and struggles to be good. God is not the center and focus of his thoughts and life; the law and works are.

But the person who has *faith in Jesus Christ* focuses upon Christ. He honors God's Son; therefore, God accepts his faith, the focus of his life, as righteousness. The person becomes acceptable to God. God actually accepts the person as a child of His. How is this possible? The answer is the subject of the following point.

2. Faith clothes us with Christ, with His righteousness and Sonship. This is a most wonderful truth, for it tells us that we can actually "put on" Christ—a glorious revelation! The phrase "put on" is the picture of putting on clothes, of covering oneself. All that Christ is can cover us. Christ is two things that hold great significance for us.

a. Christ is the very embodiment of righteousness. He is the Son of God who came to earth to secure righteousness for us. He lived a sinless and perfect life; He always obeyed God, never violating the law or will of God—not even once. Therefore, He was the Perfect, Ideal Man; He was the Pattern of what every man should be. As the Ideal and Perfect pattern, He could represent all men; and this is exactly what happened. Jesus Christ is our righteousness. When we believe in Him, God clothes us with Christ, with His righteousness. And, because we are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, God sees us in His Son and accepts us.

Picture this illustration. If my left hand wraps itself around the index finger of my right hand, what is seen? My left hand, not my index finger, for my left hand covers my index finger. Now, let my left hand represent Christ, and my index finger me. When Christ covers me, who is seen? Christ, of course, not me; for Christ covers me. So it is with faith. When I believe in Jesus Christ, my faith covers me with Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

**"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor.5:21).**

**"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Ph.3:9).**

**"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb.4:15-16).**

**"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb.7:25-26).**

**"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pt.1:18-19).**

**"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).**

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ro.5:1).**

b. Christ is the Son of God; therefore, to be clothed with Christ means that we are covered with His Sonship. When God looks at the believer, He sees His Son Jesus Christ covering him; therefore, He counts the believer as a son of His. This is the way we become children of God: by faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son. When we believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son, God takes our faith and places us in Christ, and to be in Christ is to be in the Sonship of Christ. God actually sees us in Jesus Christ, in His Son. Therefore, He accepts us as children of His—all because our faith has covered us with Christ. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Adoption*—Gal.4:5-6.)

**"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (Jn.1:12).**

**"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Ro.13:14).**

**"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal.3:27).**

“And that ye put on the new man [Christ], which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).

“And have put on the new man [Christ], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn.1:3).

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not” (1 Jn.3:1).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(3:27) **Baptism:** note the reference to baptism instead of belief:

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (v.27).

Why did Paul switch from using the word believe to the word baptism? Why did he not say:

“For as many of you as have believed in Christ have put on Christ”?

Is Paul saying that a person is *saved by* baptism? Any thinking and honest person knows that there are thousands and thousands of people who have been baptized and yet they live like the devil himself. Therefore, Paul could not mean that it is baptism that causes God to clothe a person with Christ.

Similarly, any honest and thinking person knows that there are thousands and thousands of people who *profess faith* and yet live like the devil himself. Therefore, Paul could not mean what the general public means by faith.

What Paul is saying is what Scripture declares: a true believer fulfills all the righteousness of Christ which includes baptism. The believer lives for Christ and living for Christ includes the ordinance that pictures his faith. Baptism (and repentance) is the *first and immediate* evidence of faith; therefore, faith and baptism are closely linked, so closely that Paul can speak of baptism as faith. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Baptism*—Ro.6:3-5; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Acts 2:38 for detailed discussion.)

**3** (3:28) **Faith—Brotherhood—Unity:** How do we know that we are justified by faith and not by the law and by doing the best we can? Because faith in Christ makes us one, eliminating all distinctions and prejudices.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (v.28).

This is a startling truth: Jesus Christ is the answer to all the prejudice, bitterness, hatred, oppression, and inequalities of earth. How can He solve the divisions among men? Note the phenomenal statement: “Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” What is there about Jesus Christ that makes us one?

1. Every believer stands on an equal footing before Jesus Christ: the footing of faith. No person is accepted for any other reason than faith. All persons who come to Jesus Christ come...

- because they are ever so short of Christ.
- because they are ever so different from Christ.
- because they are ever so imperfect.

Yet, Jesus Christ accepts them. Jesus Christ reaches out and embraces all believers despite their being so much less and so different from Him. Therefore, when we look at another believer and he differs from us, we do just what Jesus Christ did for us. We love, accept, and embrace him; differences do not matter. All that matters is love, acceptance, and brotherhood in Christ.

2. Every true believer loves and stands *in Jesus Christ*. Therefore, when we look at another believer we see him *in Christ*. We do not see the believer, but we see Christ covering the believer. We pay no attention to his color, nationality, sex, social status, or any other differences. Differences just do not matter. All that matters is that we all grow into the image of Christ—love, accept and become more and more the brothers and sisters of God.

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5).

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28).

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:13).

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” (Jas.2:5).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).

“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” (Ps.119:63).

“The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all” (Pr.22:2).

**4** (3:29) **Faith—Inheritance:** How do we know that we are justified by faith and not by the law and by doing the best we can? Because faith in Christ makes us heirs of the promise.

⇒ Remember the promise made to Abraham: the promise of God's blessing, of God's presence and leadership, of being accepted by God and given the privilege of living forever in the land of Canaan (the type and symbol of heaven, of the new heavens and earth). (See outline and notes—Gal.3:15-18 for more discussion.)

The point is this: Jesus Christ is the heir of Abraham; therefore, if a person is *in Christ*, then he inherits the promise made to Abraham. He inherits the promise of God's acceptance, of righteousness, and of living forever in the new heavens and earth as a son of God.

**“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (Jn.14:1-2).**

**“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:15-17).**

**“And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal.3:29).**

**“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Gal.4:7).**

**“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).**

**“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath” (Heb.6:17).**

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).**

| CHAPTER 4   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1 There was a time when the world was in bondage</b></p> <p>a. A child: An illustration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Is under tutors</li> <li>2) Inherits the estate at the appointed time</li> </ol> <p>b. The world: Its elementary education by law</p> | <p><b>F. The Proof of Christ &amp; the Fulness of Time, 4:1-7</b></p> <p>Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;</p> <p>2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.</p> <p>3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:</p> | <p>4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,</p> <p>5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.</p> <p>6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.</p> <p>7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.</p> <p><b>2 There was a fulness of time when God delivered the world<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p>a. How: God sent His own Son as a man, under the law</p> <p>b. Why? To redeem the world</p> <p>c. Results</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) We are adopted as God's sons<sup>DS2</sup></li> <li>2) We receive assurance of acceptance by the Spirit</li> <li>3) We become heirs of God</li> </ol> |

### DIVISION III

#### THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS, 3:1-4:7

#### F. The Proof of Christ and the Fulness of Time, 4:1-7

(4:1-7) **Introduction:** some in the churches of Galatia were teaching that a person is saved by law; that is, he is saved by being good and religious and by doing the best he can. Of course, every person...

- should be good, ever striving to be better and better.
- should be faithful in worshipping God *in church*.
- should do the best he can—always.

However, Scripture is clear and forceful: a person is not saved by these things, for no amount of effort, energy, or work can make a person perfect. And to be acceptable to God—to be given the right to live with God—a person must be perfect.

How then can man be saved—be justified and made acceptable to God? This passage deals with the issue; it gives the answer. It shows how Christ and the fulness of time prove that a man is justified by faith and not by law nor by works.

1. There was a time when the world was in bondage (v.1-3).
2. There was a fulness of time when God delivered the world (v.4-7).

**1** (4:1-3) **Law—World, Elementary Things of—God, Misconceptions of:** there was a time when the world was in bondage. The illustration is brief, yet descriptive: an heir who is a young child is under the care of guardians, trustees, or managers until the time appointed for him to receive his inheritance. Until the appointed time arrives, he has no more right to the inheritance than a slave.

The point is striking: there was a time when man was in bondage under the elementary things of the world. What is meant by the *elements* or *elementary things* of the world? Very simply, it means man's *elementary notions and ideas about God and the various ways he tries to approach God*. Letting Scripture interpret Scripture:

- ⇒ It means the first principles (the ABC's) of the Word of God, that is, the sacrifices, observances, rituals, and ceremonies of the Old Testament (Heb.5:12).
- ⇒ It means philosophy, the traditions of men, and the rudimentary or elementary teachings of men—the ABC approaches of men to God (Col.2:8).
- ⇒ It means the elements, the heavenly bodies of the universe (2 Pt.3:10). (There have always been men who tried to rule their lives by the heavenly bodies or astrology and the signs of the zodiac.)
- ⇒ It means the ordinances, rules, and regulations of men (Col.2:20).
- ⇒ It means the ceremonial laws, the legal yoke placed upon men as they try to approach God (Acts 15:10).
- ⇒ It means the law of the Old Testament, the yoke of bondage (Gal.5:1; cp. 4:3).
- ⇒ It means the observances of religious days, months, and years (Gal.4:9).

Very simply, the elements of the world refers to all the things that men use to get right with God and to secure the favor and approval of God. It refers to anything that man uses to justify himself before God, any approach to God that is taken by man through his own energy and effort...

- law or works
- ritual or ceremony
- church membership or ordinance
- astrology or science
- philosophy or religion

The point is this: before Christ, all approaches to God were only elementary approaches. No approach was the right approach, for man had only little knowledge of God—an elementary knowledge that required the *discipline and guidance of the law*. (See note—Gal.4:9-11 for more discussion.)

However, when everything was ready for the world to come of age and to gain an adult knowledge of God, Christ came to release men from the law and to reveal that man was intended to have a father-son relationship with God. In Christ men are no longer to be slaves to the law, they are to be sons of God. In Christ they are to enter into their inheritance.

“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men” (1 Cor.14:20).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Heb.5:12).

**2** (4:4-7) **Adoption—Redemption:** there was a fulness of time when God delivered the world. This is one of the great passages of Scripture dealing with the mission or work of God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Note several significant points.

1. Note that God had prepared the world for the coming of Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Fulness of Time*—Gal.4:4 for discussion).

2. Note that God sent His own Son into the world to deliver men. It was not an angel or some other creature that God sent—nor was it some great leader from among men. It was God’s very Son that He sent. God cared and loved men so much that He would send no less than His own Son to deliver men from the terrible condemnation of the law: the bondage of sin and death.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (Jn.3:16-17).

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (Jn.6:38).

“But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me” (Jn.7:29).

“Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me” (Jn.8:42).

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him” (Jn.10:36-38).

3. Note that God sent His Son “made of a woman” (genomenon ek gunaikos), that is “born out of [ek] a woman.” He came into the world just as all men do, through a woman. But note the most glorious truth: He was “sent forth” by God. Jesus Christ was “His Son,” the Son of God. God spoke the Word and the woman conceived miraculously. The Virgin Birth did take place: God’s very own Son has been sent into the world *as a man* to save men. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Jesus Christ, Birth*—Mt.1:16; DEEPER STUDY # 8—1:23; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Lk.1:27; note—1:34-35. Especially see Lk.1:27.)

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS” (Lk.1:31).

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

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Ph.2:7).

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim.3:16).

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).

“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” (1 Jn.4:2).

4. Note that God sent His Son born under the law. Jesus Christ had to live under the law in order to secure the perfect righteousness of the law for man. He had to obey the law in every single precept and stand before God as the Perfect and Ideal Man—the Ideal Embodiment of Righteousness. As stated, He had to do what no other person had ever done: secure the Ideal Righteousness and Perfection so that the Ideal and Perfect could stand for all men.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Ro.8:3-4).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb.4:15).

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:25-26).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).

5. Note why God sent His Son: to redeem men (see note, *Redemption*—Gal.3:13-14 for discussion).

6. Note the result of God sending His Son to redeem men.

a. Believers are adopted as sons of God. When a person believes in *Jesus Christ*, God takes his faith and counts the person as being in *Jesus Christ*. Since Christ is God’s Son, the believer is counted as a son of God—all because he is seen as being in *Jesus Christ*. His faith in *Jesus Christ* causes God to cover him with the Sonship of His Son, to adopt him as a son of God. (See notes, *Believers, Position*, pt.2—Gal.3:26-27; DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Adoption* Gal.4:5-6.)

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn.1:12).

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Ro.8:15).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:4-6).

b. Believers receive assurance of being accepted by God through the Spirit of His Son. The Spirit of Christ is sent by God to dwell in our hearts and to give us a personal relationship with God. The Spirit of Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit, gives us a fellowship of communication and communion with God: He stirs our hearts to cry out to God as our Father: “Father, Father.”

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Ro.8:16).

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:6).

“And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1 Jn.3:24).

“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” (1 Jn.4:13).

“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth” (1 Jn.5:6).

c. Believers are made heirs of God. But note: they are heirs because they are sons of God. Both sonship and heirship are “through Christ”—through faith in Him.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal.3:29).

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb.1:14).

“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath” (Heb.6:17).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(4:4) **Fulness of Time:** the coming of Christ upon the world scene was not by chance. His coming was under the strategic timing providentially set aside by God. His coming was not one day before or behind the appointed time (see note—

Mk.1:15). A child who is placed under the control of guardians is under their control until “the date fixed by his father” (Gal.4:2). God and God alone decided the fulness of time for the coming of Christ. Christ was born of a particular person, at a particular time, in a particular way (incarnation), and under a particular system (the law). He shared the frustration and agony of being subjected to the very system from which He came to save men. The world had been wonderfully prepared for His coming.

1. The law had done its educational work. It had shown through the Jewish nation that men are terrible transgressors, and despite all of God’s favor and blessings, men still failed to worship God in love. The world now had a picture of the depraved heart of man. (Cp. Ro.3:10-18 for a clear description of man’s sinfulness.)

2. The world was full of people spiritually starved. The worship of self, pleasure, gods, and philosophical ethics—all had left many empty and barren. The soul was now ready to have its hunger met.

3. The world was at peace under Roman rule. The world was an open door for the spread of the gospel—without any restraint.

4. The world spoke Greek as a basic language, making communication possible with many from all over the world.

5. The world had a system of roads for mass travel which allowed Christian missionaries to reach the farthest parts of the earth. It also brought commercial travelers to metropolitan centers where Christian believers were concentrated.

**“And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mk.1:15).**

**“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal.4:4).**

**“Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:6).**

**“But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:3).**

**“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb.9:26).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(4:5-6) **Adoption:** the word “adoption” (*huiothesia*) means *to place as a son*. The picture of adoption is a beautiful picture of what God does for the Christian. In the ancient world the family was based on a Roman law called “*patria potestas*,” the father’s power. The law gave the father absolute authority over his children so long as the father lived. He could work, enslave, sell, and if he wished, he could pronounce the death penalty. Regardless of the child’s adult age, the father held all power over personal and property rights.

Therefore, adoption was a serious matter. Yet, it was a common practice to ensure that a family would not become extinct by having no male children. And when a child was adopted, three legal steps were taken.

1. The adopted son was adopted permanently. He could not be adopted today and disinherited tomorrow. He became a son of the father—forever. He was eternally secure as a son.

2. The adopted son immediately had all the rights of a legitimate son in the new family.

3. The adopted son completely lost all rights in his old family. The adopted son was looked upon as a new person—so new that old debts and obligations connected with his former family were cancelled out and abolished as if they never existed.

The Bible says several things about the believer’s adoption as a son of God.

1. The believer’s adoption establishes a new relationship with God—forever. He is eternally secure as a child of God. But the new relationship is established only when a person comes to Christ through faith (Gal.3:26; 4:4-5).

2. The believer’s adoption establishes a new relationship with God as father. The believer has all the rights and privileges of a genuine son of God (Ro.8:16-17; 1 Jn.3:1-2).

3. The believer’s adoption establishes a new dynamic experience with God as father, a moment by moment access into His very presence (Ro.8:14, 16; Gal.4:6).

4. The believer’s adoption gives him a very special relationship with other children of God—a family relationship that binds him with others in an unparalleled spiritual union (see notes—Eph.2:11-18; 2:19-22; 3:6; 4:4-6; 4:17-19. Cp. Acts 2:42. See outline and notes—Mt.12:46-50.)

5. The believer’s adoption makes him a new person. The believer has been taken out from under the authority and power of the world and its sin. The believer is *placed as a son* into the family and authority of God. The old life with all of its debts and obligations are cancelled and wiped out (2 Cor.5:17; Gal.3:23-27; 2 Pt.1:4. See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Eph.4:22; DEEPER STUDY # 3—4:24.)

6. The believer’s adoption is to be fully realized in the future at the return of Jesus Christ (Ro.8:19; Eph.1:14; 1 Th.4:14-17; 1 Jn.3:2).

7. The believer’s adoption and its joy will be shared by all creation on a cosmic scale (Ro.8:21). There is to be a new heavens and earth (2 Pt.3:12-14; Rev.21:1-7).

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| <p><b>1 Remember your former life</b><br/> a. You did not know God<br/> b. You served false gods</p> | <p><b>IV. THE FIVEFOLD APPEAL TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE, 4:8-5:12</b></p> <p><b>A. Appeal One: Do Not Turn Back, 4:8-11</b></p> <p>8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.</p> | <p>9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, wherunto ye desire again to be in bondage?</p> <p>10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.</p> <p>11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.</p> | <p><b>2 Look at your present life: You know God &amp; are known of God</b></p> <p><b>3 Consider your turning back</b><br/> a. What you turn to:<br/> Beggary elements<br/> b. What the results of backsliding are:<br/> 1) Bondage (v.9)<br/> 2) A wasted life</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE FIVEFOLD APPEAL TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE, 4:8-5:12**

**A. Appeal One: Do Not Turn Back, 4:8-11**

(4:8-5:12) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Justification:** a person is justified by faith and not by law nor by works. It does not matter how many good works a person does nor how good he may become; he can never secure perfection. Therefore, a man can never earn or win the right to live in God's presence. A man cannot make God accept him—put God in debt—by being good and doing good. God is perfect; therefore, if a man is ever going to live in God's presence, it will be because God loves man enough to provide some way for man to become perfect. Glorious is the news! God has provided the way through His very own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. When a man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, God takes His belief and counts it as righteousness, as perfection. God accepts the man on the basis of faith, the kind of faith that says, "Lord God, I believe that your Son died for me. He took my imperfection, my shame, my sin, and my being short of your glory; then He died for it all. I honor Him. I give my life, *all I am and have*, to serve Him. Save me—accept me in Him."

When a man approaches God in such a spirit, he honors God's Son, Jesus Christ. And God honors any person who honors His Son. He honors the person by doing the very thing the man believes or asks. If a man believes in Jesus Christ for righteousness, then God counts that man's belief (commitment to Christ) as righteousness. This is justification; this is the way a person becomes acceptable to God.

Justification by faith in Jesus Christ has been proven. This has been the point of the last six passages in the Book of Galatians. Now Paul launches a fivefold appeal to the church: a fivefold appeal to be justified by faith.

1. Appeal One: Do Not Turn Back (4:8-11).
2. Appeal Two: Restir Affection for the Minister of God (4:12-20).
3. Appeal Three: Listen to What the Law Really Says (v.4:21-31).
4. Appeal Four: Stand Firm in the Liberty of Christ (v.5:1-6).
5. Appeal Five: Obey the Truth (5:7-12).

(4:8-11) **Introduction:** the first appeal is just what would be expected. A people who have or are about to turn their backs upon God need but one message: do not turn back!

1. Remember your former life (v.8).
2. Look at your present life: you know God and are known of God (v.9).
3. Consider your turning back (v.9-11).

**1** (4:8) **Idolatry—Backsliding:** remember your former Life. Remember what you were when you were an unbeliever, before you ever believed in Jesus Christ and experienced salvation. The unbeliever is characterized by two significant traits.

1. The unbeliever does not know God. This means that he does not know God in a personal way; God's Spirit does not dwell in the unbeliever filling the unbeliever with the fulness of God. The unbeliever does not experience God's...

- divine nature (2 Pt.1:4)
- presence
- assurance
- care
- love
- life
- power
- confidence
- provision

The unbeliever does not have the day by day experience of knowing God, of experiencing the presence and fellowship and communion and care and provision of God—of experiencing the abundance of life with God. And as tragic as any of his shortcomings, the unbeliever does not have the absolute assurance of living forever with God.

2. The unbeliever serves false gods. Even before their conversion, the Galatians had sensed the need for God. They had not been atheists or agnostics. They had been a religious people seeking to become acceptable to God. Their worship had been the worship of *many gods* including both Jupiter (Zeus) and Mercury (Hermes). This, of course, meant that they had been enslaved to heathen gods, religion and worship, rituals and ceremonies, rules and regulations, superstitions and idols.

Note what is said about the unbeliever: he serves gods which *by nature are not gods*. By their very nature, the objects of man's worship are not gods. How could they be, for they are only a creation of the unbeliever's mind. He may count them as gods, but they are no more than ideas in his own mind.

**Thought 1.** What most people worship is only a creation of their own mind. They have an idea of god, who he is and what he is like, and they worship that idea. Few ever seek after God's revelation of Himself, the revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. If men really believed that Jesus Christ was the living revelation of God, then they would study Him and His life and seek to know Him with every ounce of energy they had. But few ever do, and this failure is a clear indication that they do not believe, not really.

The point is this: since the unbeliever does not believe in Jesus Christ, the One who came to reveal God to the world, then whatever it is that he worships is false—a false god. It is a figment of his imagination, only an idea in his mind. Whether a man bows to an idol or not, he is merely worshipping his own idea, thought, concept, and imagination.

**“But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me [Jesus Christ]” (Jn.15:21).**

**“And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me [Jesus Christ]” (Jn.16:3).**

**“For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you” (Acts 17:23).**

**“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim.3:7).**

**“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device [thought, idea, concept, imagination]” (Acts 17:29).**

**“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph.2:12).**

**Thought 2.** Every believer needs to remember where he came from before he came to know God. God has been most merciful to us all; therefore, we must never forget that Jesus Christ has purged us from our sins.

**“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things [God and His blessings] that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pt.1:3).**

**2** (4:9) **Knowledge, of God:** look at your present life. You are given the most wonderful privilege of knowing God, or more accurately stated, you are known of God. Think about the glorious privilege of knowing God and being known of God Himself!

As R.A. Cole points out, when a person accepts Jesus Christ as His Savior, he comes to know God personally not just intellectually—but in a much deeper way, for in the Bible “to know” means far more than just intellectual knowledge. It means an intimate relationship; that is why the Bible uses the word “know” to express the most intimate relation between man and wife: “And Adam *knew* Eve his wife; and she conceived” (Gen.4:1). (*The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*. “Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,” ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965, p.118.)

However, note a critical point. When a person *turns away and separates himself* from the world to know God, the most wonderful thing happens: God accepts him and becomes a Father to him and knows him as his son or daughter. The person becomes known by God. This is exactly what Scripture says:

**“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).**

Again, imagine the glorious privilege of such a precious relationship! Not only to know God as Father, but to be *known by God* as His son or daughter!

**“...I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine” (Is.43:1).**

**“But if any man love God, the same is known of him” (1 Cor.8:3).**

**“To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out” (Jn.10:3).**

**“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine” (Jn.10:14).**

**“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).**

**Thought 1.** Believers should constantly look at their present lives—the glorious salvation God has given them: the privilege of knowing Him and of being known by Him. But note that we must always remember that we do not come to know God by our own efforts or works, not by doing the best we can and obeying the law, as important as all these are. We come to know God through justification, that is, by faith in Jesus Christ and by faith in Him alone.

**3** (4:9-11) **Backsliding—Law:** consider your turning back.

1. Note a critical point: the Galatians were about to turn back to the elementary things or notions about God (see note—Gal.4:1-3). Does this mean they were about to turn back to their pagan idolatrous worship? No, that was not what

they were about to do. What were they turning back to? The false teachers (Judaizers) in Galatia were teaching that a man was to approach God by the law and works—that a man became acceptable to God by his own efforts, by working and doing as much good as he could.

Of course, this is exactly what all religious people do, no matter their religion: they try to please their god, to secure the god's approval by doing what pleases him. This means that all religions (except Christianity) are religions of works and of law. Therefore, if the Galatians subjected themselves to the law and to a religion of works, they would be *returning* to a life of bondage—the bondage of working and working to get God to pay attention to them and to receive and accept them.

The crucial point is this: there is no difference between seeking God through the law and seeking God through pagan worship. The foundation of all religious seeking (except Christianity) is the same: that of working to keep the laws that please a person's god—that of doing good so that a person's *god* will accept him.

Note that Paul calls man's elementary notions of God weak and beggarly.

- a. The law and other approaches to God are weak in that they are helpless in saving man. The law itself could only point out man's sin, but it could never justify and make him acceptable to God.
- b. The law and other approaches to God are beggarly, that is worthless in saving man. The law itself is meaningless, of no use whatsoever in justifying and making man acceptable to God. It is not the law nor man's works and attempts to be good that saves him.

Note also that Paul illustrates his point by referring to special religious holidays. The point is that ritual, ceremony, and the keeping of religious days will not justify and make a person acceptable before God. Christ and Christ alone—faith in Him—saves a person.

2. Note the results of backsliding, of turning back to the world and seeking to please God by self-effort and self-righteousness.

- a. A person becomes enslaved in that he tries and tries to please God by keeping the rules of the law, but he finds he cannot. But he still slavishly tries and tries again. However, it is all to no avail, for the man finds himself still in the bondage of sin and death. He still sins and he still dies, and there is no absolute assurance within of eternal life. And it is the lack of assurance, of knowing that one is acceptable to God, that is so enslaving. The question and doubt of living with God gnaws and gnaws at man—always without the sure knowledge and assurance of God's love. Perfect assurance, confidence, and security come only through faith in Jesus Christ.
- b. A person lives a wasted life. Every approach to God fails except faith in Jesus Christ. Every approach leads to death and condemnation; therefore, every life that approaches God by any other means than faith in Jesus Christ is a wasted life.

**“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk.9:62).**

**“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel” (Gal.1:6).**

**“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal.3:3).**

**“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal.4:9).**

**“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Heb.10:38).**

**“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (Rev.2:4).**

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| <p><b>1 Treat the minister of God as a brother</b><br/> a. Identify with all<br/> b. Hold no grievances</p> <p><b>2 Welcome true ministers of God</b><br/> a. In their witness<br/> b. In their infirmities of the flesh<br/> c. In empathy &amp; identification</p> | <p><b>B. Appeal Two: Restir Affection for the Minister of God, 4:12-20</b></p> <p>12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.</p> <p>13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.</p> <p>14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.</p> <p>15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have</p> | <p>plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.</p> <p>16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?</p> <p>17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.</p> <p>18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.</p> <p>19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,</p> <p>20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.</p> | <p>d. In the truth they proclaim</p> <p><b>3 Guard against and reject false ministers</b></p> <p><b>4 Receive true ministers always</b><br/> a. They seek after believers for good<br/> b. They hold to believers as <i>dear children</i><br/> c. They agonize over the believer's growth<br/> d. They watch over error</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE FIVEFOLD APPEAL TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE, 4:8-5:12**

**B. Appeal Two: Restir Affection for the Minister of God, 4:12-20**

(4:12-20) **Introduction:** a backsliding people need appeal after appeal, for they are walking a dangerous course when they turn their backs upon God. Also, a backsliding person is usually alienated from his minister: he wants little to do with the minister when he is turning away from God. The Galatian churches went even further. False teachers and critics of Paul had begun to attack Paul personally, both his person and his ministry. They were tearing down his character every way they could (see outlines and notes—Gal.1:10-16; 2:3-5; etc. for more discussion). There was great danger that the churches would reject his ministry; therefore, Paul had to do all he could to stop the chaos and to save the churches from destruction and apostasy. The present passage is an appeal for the believers to *remember and restir their* affection for the minister of God.

1. Treat the minister of God as a brother (v.12).
2. Welcome true ministers of God (v.13-16).
3. Guard against and reject false ministers (v.17).
4. Receive true ministers—always (v.18-20).

**1** (4:12) **Ministers, Duty Toward:** treat the minister of God as a brother. Remember that some in the churches of Galatia were criticizing and attacking Paul. But note several significant facts.

1. Paul called them brothers: he did not treat them as enemies, not even as antagonists. He did not murmur, gripe, complain, or even attack them. The very opposite is true: he sensed and expressed deep brotherly affection for them.
2. Paul *beseeched* them; that is, he was not commanding or instructing, but he was begging and pleading from the heart of a true minister of God.

3. Paul begged them to be as he was, for he had become one of them. He had always loved and cared and shown affection for them, and he wanted them to do the same for him—not to abandon and turn against him and his ministry.

It should be noted that many commentators understand Paul to be saying that he had become as they were, that is, a Gentile; therefore, he wanted them to remain as he was, a Gentile who trusted Christ, and not to turn to Jewish law in seeking God's approval.

4. Paul assured them that what they had done had not injured him: he held no bitterness, anger, or malice against them.

**Thought 1.** The heart of a true minister is clearly seen in verse twelve: love, affection, kindness, and care for a people who had become critics of the minister of God.

**Thought 2.** Believers must heed the appeal of the minister of God: "Be as I am in affection and love—do not abandon and turn away from me."

**2** (4:13-16) **Ministers:** welcome true ministers of God. There are three areas in which true ministers should be welcomed.

1. True ministers should be welcomed in their witness. Note: the Galatians had welcomed Paul when he first preached the gospel to them, and they had readily responded to his message. They did not question his call to preach nor the message he preached. There was no criticism nor censoring of his person or preaching. Their arms were wide open and their hearts were receptive.

Note that Paul was appealing for the same spirit of welcome and receptivity now. No other spirit should ever characterize God's people—not toward the minister of God—not toward any child of God.

2. True ministers should be welcomed even in the infirmities and weaknesses of their flesh. Too often, this is not true. Churches and believers sometimes abandon and ignore the minister of God when he is stricken in body or spirit. When Paul first went to the Galatian churches, he was stricken with some infirmity. Just what the infirmity was is not known, although the best guess seems to be some serious eye problem (v.15. See note—2 Cor.12:7-10 for full discussion. Also cp. Gal.6:11.) The point is that the Galatians...

- did not despise him
- did not reject him
- received him as an angel or messenger from God Himself.

This last fact stresses just how wide open the welcome to Paul was. There was no lack in receiving and caring for the minister of God. They would have even plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul if they had been able.

3. True ministers should be welcomed in the truth they proclaim. Paul had been proclaiming the truth: a person is justified by faith and not by law nor by works—not by trying to earn God’s acceptance by doing good deeds here and there. Was the church going to treat Paul as an enemy because he had told them the truth?

**Thought 1.** How many churches turn against the minister of God because he preaches and tells the truth? The church must always welcome the minister who speaks and proclaims the truth.

“Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation” (Ph.2:29).

“And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves” (1 Th.5:13).

“Let the elders [ministers] that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim.5:17).

“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation [behavior]” (Heb.13:7).

**3** (4:17) **Ministers:** guard against and reject false ministers. Note that the false teachers (Judaizers, religionists) were zealous in their teaching and they were out to secure as large a following as possible. And note how they went about it: by excluding the people, trying to cut them off from the minister of God. They not only sought people through the merits of their own teaching, but they attacked and tore down the minister in order to alienate the people from him.

Note the difference between what the Christian minister (Paul) was doing and what the false teachers were doing. Or, to put it in the form of a question: What is the difference between the evangelistic efforts of the true minister of God and false teachers?

- ⇒ False teachers seek to focus people upon law, works, effort, ritual, ceremony, observances, sacrifice, rules, and regulations—upon something that requires man to work at being good or doing good in order to become acceptable to God.
- ⇒ The true minister of God seeks to focus people upon God Himself: His love, honor, and praise—upon the fact that God Himself has provided the way for man to become acceptable to Him, and that way is through His Son Jesus Christ. (See outline, notes, and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.2:15-16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:16; notes—2:19-21; 3:1-5; 3:6-14 for more discussion.)

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mt.7:15).

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:19).

“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mt.15:9).

“Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30).

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Ro.10:3).

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Ro.16:18).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim.4:1-2).

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision [the doctrine of the law and of works]: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” (Tit.1:10-11).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily [secretly] shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (1 Jn.2:18-19).

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” (1 Jn.2:22).

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 Jn.7).

**4** (4:18-20) **Ministers:** Paul said that the church should always welcome ministers who seek to do well, ministers who labor for the church’s welfare. Note that he was encouraging the church not only to accept his ministry but the ministry of other true ministers. They must reject false ministers and have nothing to do with them, but they must receive the ministry of true ministers in order to grow in Christ. Paul himself demonstrated three reasons why the church is to receive true ministers of God.

**Thought 1.** No believer or church should ever reject the ministry of a minister who seeks to help him and to help him grow in Christ.

1. True ministers hold believers within their hearts as *dear children*. The minister’s heart is ever so tender, warm, caring, protecting, and providing toward the church.
2. True ministers agonize over the growth of believers. They seek “Christ to be formed” in the believers. They want them living as Christ lived and conformed into the image of Christ.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not” (Mt.23:37).

“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31).

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor.3:18).

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).

“But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord’s flock is carried away captive” (Jer.13:17).

3. True ministers guard the church against error. Note: if there is any doubt about the matter, he warns the church.

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ” (Ph.3:18).

“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (Jn.14:20).

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor.3:18).

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| <p><b>1 Hearing the law is absolutely essential for the legalist or religionist</b></p> <p><b>2 Hear 1: Abraham had two sons</b></p> <p>a. One was born a slave</p> <p>b. One was born free</p> <p>c. The first was born naturally—by man’s efforts</p> <p>d. The second was born by promise</p> <p><b>3 Hear 2: The two mothers represent two covenants</b></p> <p>a. Hagar: A type of the law</p> <p>1) It enslaves</p> <p>2) It represents the very center of legal religion—Jerusalem of that day</p> | <p><b>C. Appeal Three: Listen to What the Law Really Says, 4:21-31</b></p> <p>21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?</p> <p>22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.</p> <p>23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.</p> <p>24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.</p> <p>25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.</p> | <p>26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.</p> <p>27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.</p> <p>28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.</p> <p>29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.</p> <p>30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.</p> <p>31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.</p> | <p>b. Sarah: A type of grace</p> <p>1) It represents heavenly Jerusalem—the spiritual</p> <p>2) It sets men free, v.26</p> <p>3) It results in joy &amp; far more children</p> <p>c. The point: Believers are children of promise</p> <p><b>4 Hear 3: Legalism persecutes &amp; enslaves believers</b></p> <p><b>5 Hear 4: Legalism is to be cast out—have no inheritance</b></p> <p><b>6 Hear 5: Legalism has no claim upon the children of grace</b></p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE FIVEFOLD APPEAL TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE, 4:8-5:12**

**C. Appeal Three: Listen to What the Law Really Says, 4:21-31**

(4:21-31) **Introduction:** the way to heaven is not by works nor by the law. A person cannot do enough works nor keep enough laws to become *perfectly good*. And for a person to live in God’s presence he has to be perfect. What then is the way to heaven? If a person cannot be good enough nor do enough works to make it to heaven, how can he get there? By faith in the promise of God. God has promised heaven to those who believe on His Son—to those who genuinely trust Jesus Christ to save them.

However, most people in the world do not believe the promise of God. They still think they have to earn and work their way into the favor of God—that they have to build up a long list of *good works* that will force God to accept them. They think that they have to make themselves righteous by being good and doing religious things in order to enter heaven. Therefore, they place themselves under the rules and regulations of the law and of religion, and they do the best they can to make it to heaven. This is the appeal of this passage; the person who approaches God through the works of religion and law must listen to *what the law really says*.

1. Hearing the law is absolutely essential for the legalist or religionist (v.21).
2. Hear 1: Abraham had two sons (v.22-23).
3. Hear 2: the two mothers represent two covenants (v.24-28).
4. Hear 3: legalism persecutes and enslaves believers (v.29).
5. Hear 4: legalism is to be cast out—have no inheritance (v.30).
6. Hear 5: legalism has no claim upon the children of grace (v.31).

**1** (4:21) **Law—Religion;** hearing the law is absolutely essential for the legalist or religionist. The legalist or religionist is the person who approaches God by the law or by the works of goodness or religion. The legalist and religionist need to hear and really understand what they are doing, just how they are approaching God. They need to understand the implication of what they are doing.

**2** (4:22-23) **Abraham—Sarah—Isaac—Hagar—Ishmael:** first, hear that Abraham had two sons. Remember that the way to become acceptable to God and to enter heaven is not by law nor by the works of goodness, but by the promise of God. Paul uses the illustration of Abraham to prove the point (cp. Genesis Chapters 16, 17, and 21). Briefly and simply, Abraham had two sons. One son had been promised by God to Abraham through his wife Sarah; however, many years passed without Sarah ever having a child. She seemed incapable. She became discouraged, so she sent a slave girl, Hagar, in to Abraham. Hagar bore a son, Ishmael. Sometime later, however, God kept His promise and the impossible happened: Sarah, well beyond childbearing years, bore a son and his name was Isaac (Ro.4:10).

1. Note the facts about Ishmael. He was...
  - born after the order and process of nature.
  - born into slavery, being born of a slave girl.
  - born because of the work, effort, and will of Sarah.
  - born because of the fleshly impulses, urges, and attraction of Abraham.

2. Note the facts about Isaac. He was...

- born as a free man, born of a free woman, Sarah.
- born by the promise of God alone. God had promised Abraham that Sarah would bear a son, and when Isaac was born, Abraham and Sarah were both well beyond the years of childbearing—one hundred years old. Isaac was a miracle-child, born miraculously by the working of God—all because God had promised Abraham a son. Isaac was, therefore, a promised child.

The point is this and it must be remembered: Ishmael, the child born by human ingenuity, energy, and effort, was born into slavery. But Isaac, the child promised by God, was born miraculously by the promise of God—by His love and power alone—all because He alone had made the promise.

**3** (4:24-28) **Covenants—Law—Grace:** second, hear that the two mothers represent two covenants. Note: Paul says that these things are an allegory, that is, an illustration of truth can be seen and drawn from the event. When looking closely at the story, we can see how the mothers, Hagar and Sarah, represent the two covenants—the covenant of law and the covenant of God's grace or promise.

1. Hagar was a type of the old covenant between God and man—the law. Two things are said about the law.

- a. Hagar, that is, the law, bears children in slavery. The law says do this and don't do that. It demands and insists on obedience. It enslaves a person to do exactly what it says. Therefore, if a person hopes to approach God in his own goodness, merit, virtue, morality, and righteousness, he is in bondage to the law. He must keep it in order to be good and moral and righteous and to earn the favor of God. The law, the rules, and, regulations of goodness and righteousness, enslaves him. (Keep in mind, Paul is not saying the law is not good. We are to live righteously and morally, but we are not acceptable to God because of our goodness and self-efforts. We do not save ourselves; we are not to be praised because of our works and goodness. Praise belongs to God. God is the One who saves us. This is what is being discussed.)
- b. Hagar, the law, represents the very center of a religion of law and works which was Jerusalem of that day (v.25). Note that Paul makes two connections to stress the point:
  - ⇒ Hagar stands for Mt. Sinai, the Mount in Arabia where the law was given.
  - ⇒ Hagar and Mt. Sinai both picture the very center of a religion of law and works, the Jerusalem of that day. Of course, Hagar also pictures any religion, church, people, or person who seeks to be righteous and acceptable to God and heaven through works and law.

2. Sarah was a type of the new covenant between God and man, the covenant of grace or of promise. Two things are said about the grace and promise of God to man.

- a. Sarah, that is, grace, is seen in the Jerusalem which is above, the heavenly Jerusalem. Heavenly Jerusalem is the spiritual and eternal city which God has promised to those who approach Him through faith.
- b. Grace and the promise of a heavenly city are both free. Any person who accepts God's promise of a heavenly city which is eternal—who accepts His promise enough to believe it with all his heart, basing all he is and has upon that promise—is acceptable to God. God takes the man's sheer faith—the faith that has cast itself totally upon the promise of God—and counts it as the man's righteousness. Therefore, the man becomes acceptable to God: he is given the promise of God freely—without price—without having to work for it by keeping rules and laws.
- c. Note a second result as well: the covenant of grace ends up with more children than the Jewish legalist. This is a prophecy which simply predicted that more Gentiles would believe the grace of God than Jews (Is.55:1).

3. The point is forcefully stated: "Now we, brothers, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Believers—all those who have believed in Jesus Christ—have been given birth by God—a spiritual birth. We receive the promise of God. God freely takes our faith and counts it as righteousness.

⇒ Our faith is credited, imputed, and counted as the righteousness which we lack within ourselves.

This is the glorious promise of God's grace, the covenant of grace which God has now made with man. Man can now inherit the promised land (Canaan, the heavenly Jerusalem or city of God) and live eternally with God. (See outline and notes—Heb.12:18-24 for more discussion.)

**"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect" (Ro.4:13-14).**

**"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb.11:8-10).**

**"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country....But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb.11:13-14, 16).**

**"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb.12:22-23).**

“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb.13:14-15).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev.21:1-2).

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev.21:10-11).

“And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev.22:19).

**4** (4:29) **Law—Legalism—Persecution:** third, hear that those who are born of the flesh persecute those who are born after the Spirit. Ishmael ridiculed, mocked, and persecuted Isaac. Paul draws upon this fact to show why believers are persecuted. It is because men try and try to approach God in the flesh, that is, by their own energy and effort in trying to be good and righteous.

1. The person in the flesh consciously or subconsciously is trying to secure credit, recognition, esteem, approval, acceptance, and praise from God—all by his own energy and effort. Therefore, he mocks, ridicules, and persecutes the believer who says that self-effort and self-righteousness are not enough and will not make a person acceptable to God.

2. The person in the flesh has to confess human weakness and inadequacy—that he cannot make himself acceptable to God because he is...

- too sinful
- too short of God’s glory
- too unrighteous
- too unholy
- too polluted
- too hopeless
- too helpless
- too undeserving

The person in the flesh refuses to accept this fact. He wants to think highly of himself and place himself on a level close to God. Therefore, when a believer comes along and says that a person has to be born again by the Spirit of God, the natural man reacts. He refuses to accept the fact that his flesh, his own energy and effort, is unable to earn, win, and merit God’s approval.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt.10:22).

“And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Mt.10:38-39).

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim.3:12-13).

**5** (4:30) **Law—Legalism:** fourth, hear that legalism is to be cast out and have no inheritance with God. The law cannot coexist with the grace of God. The son of Hagar, the law, shall not be heir with the son of Sarah, that is, grace. The fact of coming judgment could not be illustrated any clearer: Ishmael was cast out so that he would not share in the inheritance with Isaac (Gen.21:10f).

God never will accept anyone who approaches Him by law or by works. Why? Because the person has to stand before God saying, “God, here are *my* works, *my* goodness, *my* righteousness, a list of laws *I* have kept, a list of *my* contributions.” Such a claim is merely deceptive boasting. Such a profession presents to God only human effort and energy, works and deeds. God is perfect; therefore, only perfection can exist with Him. No matter how much good and how many good works a person presents to God, they are not enough, for they do not make him perfect. Therefore, he must be cast from God’s presence. But not the person of promise. The person of promise approaches God saying:

“Father, you are my Savior and Lord. You have loved me so much that you sent your Son to die for me. I believe with all my heart that Christ did die for me, and I surrender all I am and have into His keeping. I cast myself totally upon His righteousness and His death for my sins.”

God has promised that the person who sincerely believes in His Son shall never perish but shall have everlasting life. He shall inherit the promise of God. God will accept his belief and count it as righteousness, and the man shall inherit the promise.

“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Ro.4:13).

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:15-17).

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal.3:29).

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:4-7).

**6** (4:31) **Law—Legalism:** believers are the children of grace, not of law. The fact is clearly seen in all that has been stated above. Believers—yea, all men if they would only accept the fact—have so much for which to thank God. God has so loved the world and demonstrated His love beyond anything any person could ever ask.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph.2:4-10).

| CHAPTER 5  |  |  |
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| <p><b>1 Stand fast because Christ has freed the believer</b></p> <p><b>2 Stand fast because the law is not God's way for man to be justified</b><br/>a. If <i>ritualized</i>, Christ</p> | <p><b>D. Appeal Four: Stand Fast in the Liberty of Christ, 5:1-6</b></p> <p>Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.</p> <p>2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.</p> | <p>3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.</p> <p>4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.</p> <p>5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.</p> <p>6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.</p> <p>profits nothing<br/>b. If <i>ritualized</i>, a person is bound to do the whole law<br/>c. If a person seeks to be justified by law, Christ can have no effect upon him: He is cut off, fallen from grace</p> <p><b>3 Stand fast because the hope of rgt. is by faith</b><br/>a. Comes through the Spirit<br/>b. Comes through Jesus Christ alone—not by law<br/>c. Comes by faith wrought by the love of God</p> |

### DIVISION IV

#### THE FIVEFOLD APPEAL TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE, 4:8-5:12

#### D. Appeal Four: Stand Fast in the Liberty of Christ, 5:1-6

(5:1-6) **Introduction:** straightforward and direct, a much needed appeal is given to backsliding churches and their people—stand fast in the liberty of Christ.

1. Stand fast because Christ has freed the believer (v.1).
2. Stand fast because the law is not God's way for man to be justified (v.2-4).
3. Stand fast because the hope of righteousness is by faith (v.5-6).

**I** (5:1) **Jesus Christ, Work—Liberty, Spiritual:** stand fast because Christ has freed the believer. Note two points.

1. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, he is freed from the law and its enslaving power. He no longer has to worry if he is good enough, if he has done enough good works, or if he has kept enough laws to be acceptable to God. Why? Because Christ has fulfilled the law for him. When Christ was on earth He was sinless; He obeyed the law perfectly, never violating it a single time. Therefore, He secured the Ideal Righteousness and stood before God as the Perfect Man. But Christ did something else much more wonderful. It was not enough for the Ideal Righteousness to be secured for man. There was also the problem of the penalty of the law; once the law had been broken, the penalty had been enacted; it had to be paid. This is the glorious message of the cross—what the death of Jesus Christ is all about. Jesus Christ not only secured the ideal righteousness for us, He took the penalty for our trespassing upon Himself and bore it. Jesus Christ bore our judgment and punishment for having broken the law which was death.

If righteousness has been secured for us and if the punishment for our transgressions has been paid, then we stand before God perfect—absolutely righteous and free from transgression—and acceptable to Him. Does this mean everyone is accepted by God and covered by the life and death of Jesus Christ? No! And the reason is easily seen: not everyone accepts what Jesus Christ has done for him—not everyone *believes* in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has set us free; we do stand in liberty free from the bondage of sin and death wrought by the law—but only if we believe it. Naturally—it is as obvious as can be—if we do not believe and accept a gift freely given, then the Giver still possesses it. We do not receive the gift; therefore, we do not have it.

The point is this: Christ has freed the believer from the bondage of the law. Therefore, we must stand fast in the liberty He has provided for us.

2. The Galatians were about to become entangled again with the yoke of bondage. False teachers had arisen who were teaching that the basic work of Christ was to live as a great example and to bring us the great teachings of God. That is, they accepted Jesus Christ as the Son of God, but they did not accept the message of salvation by grace (the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ). They taught that Jesus Christ had not come to give us a new approach to God; He came to add new teachings to the law. Therefore, a person was still to approach God...

- by undergoing the basic ritual of Jewish religion (circumcision, baptism, church membership, etc.).
- by committing himself to the law.
- by observing all the rituals and ceremonies of Jewish religion.

All of this of course sounds familiar to every generation, for if we simply omit the word *Jewish*, the three stipulations are seen to be present in so many teachings, religions, and churches of society.

Again, the exhortation is that a person must not become entangled with approaching God by law or works, for no person can do enough good to ever become perfect before God. Our perfection and acceptance before God has already been secured for us—in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, let us stand fast in the liberty of Christ. For the only person who will ever be acceptable to God is the person who stands before God *free of sin and condemnation*, a person who has been set free by God's very own Son. (See note—Gal.4:4-7.)

**“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:2-3).**

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Gal.4:4-7).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).

**2** (5:2-4) **Circumcision—Law—Apostasy:** stand fast because law is not God’s way for man to be justified. Three significant warnings are strongly issued.

1. If a person is *ritualized*, Christ shall profit him nothing. *Ritualized* means a person is depending upon some religious thing to make him acceptable to God. In the case of the Galatians, it was the ritual of circumcision; but it can apply to anything: ritual, ceremony, works, law, goodness, church membership, baptism, last rites, prayer, religious services, ministry, or even religion itself. If a person approaches God and tries to secure God’s acceptance by any means other than Christ, then Christ shall profit him nothing. What Christ has done for man will have no effect upon the man whatsoever. The righteousness and death of Jesus Christ will be of no avail to the man, for the man is trusting his own works and goodness, not the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ.

2. If a person is ritualized, he has to do the whole law. Think for a moment: if a person trusts a ritual to save him, really depends upon a ritual to make him acceptable to God, then he had better keep the whole law. Why? Because he is accepting the law (works, religion) as the way to approach God. He is subjecting himself to ritual, walking the way of law in order to approach God. Therefore, he must continue to approach God by law. He must keep the *whole* law.

In a summary statement: if a person approaches God by ritual, any ritual, he assumes responsibility for doing the whole law.

3. If a person seeks to be justified by law, Christ can have no effect upon him—he is fallen from grace. What does this mean?

Remember: Paul is warning the Galatian believers by issuing a strong warning. False teachers were saying this: a person could be saved only by obeying the law and by doing as much good as possible. They were teaching that the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ was not what it took to approach God and to receive eternal life. They said more than Christ was needed: one’s own righteousness, goodness, works, and efforts, were also needed.

Keep this in mind: we can readily see why Paul issued such a severe warning to the Galatian believers. They must not follow the false teachers, must not turn away from Christ and become apostates.

The point is this: not only the Galatians, but we also, must heed the warning lest we begin to deny Christ. To deny Christ, His righteousness and death, is bound to lead to the doom of the apostate. We must always remember: Paul himself said that he was to be accused if he ever preached any other gospel than that of God’s glorious love in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Eternal security is not the issue here, as it is so often made to be. The issue is God’s own dear Son, His righteousness and death—His very life and work—His honor and Person. No person is living or ever will live who will be allowed to tamper with the righteousness and death of God’s dear Son. We are *fools* to think so, even if we are trying to defend and explain a doctrinal position. This was certainly the thought and position of Paul when he said he was to be cursed if he became apostate.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:22-23).

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).

“But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone” (Ro.9:31-32).

“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them” (Ro.10:2-5).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph.2:8-10).

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:4-5).

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:10).

**“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal.1:8-9).**

**3** (5:5-6) **Faith—Righteousness—Law—Ritual:** stand fast because the hope of righteousness is by faith. The hope of the believer is for righteousness. *Hope* does not mean the uncertainty of worldly hope, that the believer might—but then again he might not—secure righteousness before God. The believer’s hope is in Jesus Christ, and it is as assured as God exists. Hope in the Bible means the focus, the concentration, the longing, the craving, and the desire for righteousness—the privilege of being redeemed and spending eternity with God. Note the source of such an assurance and secured hope.

1. The hope for righteousness comes through the Spirit of God. It is the presence of the Spirit who dwells within the believer that stirs the hope. The Holy Spirit stirs hope and gives *absolute assurance* that God will take His faith and count it for righteousness.

2. The hope for righteousness comes through Jesus Christ alone, not by a ritual (circumcision, law) nor by the lack of a ritual. Note exactly what this is saying:

⇒ neither undergoing a ritual (circumcision) nor being without a ritual brings hope.

⇒ neither having and keeping the law nor being without law brings hope.

⇒ neither working for righteousness nor not working for righteousness brings hope.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, can provide the sure hope of righteousness within a person except Jesus Christ: His righteousness and His death alone can offer hope to man.

3. The hope for righteousness comes by faith wrought by love. It was God’s love that sent His Son to secure our righteousness to die for us. When a person *really sees* this, it breaks him; and he bows and surrenders his own love, faith, life, and loyalty to Christ. The love of God stirs us to love Him and to believe Him. We love Him because He has loved us.

**“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Ro.8:24).**

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).**

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

**“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 Jn.4:16).**

**“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God” (2 Cor.4:14-15).**

**“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

**“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:4-5).**

**“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).**

**“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb.6:18).**

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| <p><b>1 Obey the truth, for the Christian life is a race</b></p> <p><b>2 Obey the truth, for God called you to freedom</b></p> <p><b>3 Obey the truth, for a little untruth corrupts the whole</b></p> | <p><b>E. Appeal Five: Obey the Truth, 5:7-12</b></p> <p>7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?</p> <p>8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.</p> <p>9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.</p> <p>10 I have confidence in you</p> | <p>through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.</p> <p>11 And I, brethren, If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.</p> <p>12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.</p> | <p><b>4 Obey the truth, for the minister of God has confidence in you</b></p> <p><b>5 Obey the truth, for false teachers will be judged</b></p> <p>a. Bc. they trouble believers</p> <p>b. Bc. they spread falsehood about the minister of Christ</p> <p>c. Bc. they stumble over the cross</p> <p>d. Bc. they deserve condemnation</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE FIVEFOLD APPEAL TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE, 4:8-5:12**

**E. Appeal Five: Obey the Truth, 5:7-12**

(5:7-12) **Introduction:** the Galatian churches had backslidden. They were turning away from the truth, from Jesus Christ Himself. In this passage, Paul makes one last appeal to them: obey the truth. The only hope for the backslider is to turn back to Christ and obey the truth.

1. Obey the truth because the Christian life is a race (v.7).
2. Obey the truth because God called you to freedom (v.8).
3. Obey the truth because a little untruth corrupts the whole (v.9).
4. Obey the truth because of the confidence others have in you (v.10).
5. Obey the truth because false teachers will be judged (v.10-12).

**1** (5:7) **Obedience—Christian Race:** obey the truth, for the Christian life is a race. The phrase “you did run well” is a picture of athletes running in a race.

1. The Galatians had been running and running well. When they first heard the gospel, they believed...
  - in God’s love—that God loved the world so much that He sent His Son into the world to save it.
  - in the righteousness of Christ—that Jesus Christ lived a perfect and righteous life, securing righteousness for them.
  - in the death of Christ—that Jesus Christ died for their sins—that He actually bore the punishment for their transgressions.

As stated, the Galatians had been running the Christian race *well*. Having believed in Christ, they had been living for Christ: living clean and pure lives and bearing testimony for Him. They had been worshipping and serving Him with zeal. They had been living what they were professing. There had been no false profession about them: no counterfeit and no hypocrisy. They had not been *Sunday only Christians*; they had been busy for Christ seven days a week, and people from all over the city were coming to know Christ.

But note: some person had stepped in and had begun to hinder their running the Christian race. We know from the previous four chapters that some false teachers had arisen in the churches of Galatia. However, the present reference is to a single individual. Apparently one person had taken charge and become a ringleader of the trouble and false teaching. The word “hinder” (enekopsen) means to cut in, to edge in, to interfere, to obstruct. The picture is still that of the running track. While the Galatians had been running the Christian race, some had edged in on them and begun to hinder and interfere with their running. They were no longer obeying the truth. They were now trying to approach God by some other way than Christ. They were now thinking...

- that God accepted them because they had been *ritualized*: circumcised and baptized.
- that God accepted them because they tried to keep the law: tried to be as good as they could and did good deeds as opportunity arose.
- that God approved them because they were faithful to the church: its rituals, ceremonies, services, rules and regulations.

They were no longer running well. They had allowed some false teacher to hinder them and to turn them from the truth. They had a need to think about the matter, a desperate need...

- to think about the race they had been running.
- to think about who it was that was now hindering their running.

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Cor.9:24).

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Gal.5:7).

“Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain” (Ph.2:16).

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Ph.3:14).

“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb.12:1).

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim.4:7).

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim.4:8).

**2** (5:8) **God, Call:** obey the truth, for God does not call you to error. Note how concise and forceful this statement is; it is direct and to the point: “This persuasion does not come from him who calls you!” The Greek word *is persuasion* (peismone). Any persuasion, any position, any teaching that leads away from the truth of Jesus Christ is not of God. God and God alone determines how He can be approached, and He has determined it. A person approaches Him through the righteousness and death of His Son Jesus Christ. There is no other way to be justified and saved other than by His Son. There is absolutely no other way to approach God. Therefore, any person who teaches otherwise is teaching a false doctrine; the person’s persuasion or teaching is not the persuasion of God.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn.6:68).

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2).

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:5).

**3** (5:9) **Leaven:** obey the truth, for a little leaven (untruth) corrupts the whole. Leaven stands for evil and corruption, fermentation and infection. It takes only a little leaven to permeate and influence the whole lump of dough. So it is with false teachers. (Remember, Paul was referring only to the ringleader in this present passage.) One false teacher can inject his false teaching into the church and it will soon permeate and influence the whole church. This is what Paul and Scripture are proclaiming. If the Galatians did not root out the false teaching, the whole church would soon be corrupted and the truth would be destroyed. Jesus Christ would no longer be the focus of attention. The church and its people would be focusing upon their rituals, ceremonies, and good works instead of Christ.

They would be trying to approach God through their own goodness and merit. Jesus Christ would soon be placed on the back burner, deemphasized, and lost sight of by many. His prominence and the absolute necessity of His righteousness and death would be diminished and downplayed. This always happens when false teaching is allowed in a church. The only answer to false teaching is what has been stated: root it out.

“Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Mt.16:12).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col.2:8).

“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein” (Heb.13:9).

“For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practice hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail” (Is.32:6).

**4** (5:10) **Minister:** obey the truth, for the minister of God has confidence in you. What an amazing statement! When you think about all that has been written in the Book of Galatians (the terrible attacks against Paul himself and the seriousness of the false teaching that had threatened the church), Paul’s confidence in the Galatians is shocking.

However, note exactly what he said: his confidence is “through the Lord;” that is, the Galatians could overcome the false teaching only through the Lord. Through Christ they could conquer the situation and come out victorious. In fact, Paul had confidence that the churches would heed his warnings and turn back to the Lord and begin to obey the truth.

**Thought 1.** The only way false teaching or any other difficulty in the church can be handled is “through the Lord.”

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (Jn.15:5).

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Ro.16:25).

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Ph.1:6).

**“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever” (Jude 24-25).**

**5** (5:10-12) **False Teachers:** obey the truth, for false teachers shall be judged. The fact is stated in no uncertain terms: the false teacher who was troubling the church would bear the judgment of God. Paul gave four reasons why false teachers will be judged.

1. False teachers shall be judged because they trouble the church and its believers. By *trouble* is meant to unsettle and disturb. The false teachers were loosening the cords of faith in Christ, disturbing the security and lives of the believers and the ministry of the churches. They were misleading believers and defiling the church of God with false teaching.

**“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor.3:17).**

2. False teachers shall be judged because they spread falsehood about the minister of Christ. Paul did not preach that ritual was necessary for salvation (circumcision, baptism, church membership, etc.); but the false teachers were saying that he did. However, the fact that Paul did not preach circumcision was the main reason the Jews persecuted him so much. That is the reason Paul simply asks: Why am I persecuted by the Jews so much if I preach salvation by ritual (circumcision, baptism, church membership, etc.)?

The point is this: the false teachers had attacked Paul, attempting to discredit him and his ministry among the believers. And one thing God does not tolerate is an attack of His anointed.

**“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand” (Ro.14:4).**

**“There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?” (Jas.4:12).**

3. False teachers shall be judged because they are offended by the cross. Paul preached the cross, that a person was justified and acceptable to God *only by the cross of Jesus Christ*. The false teachers (Judaizers) were offended by this. The word “offense” means stumbling or staggering. It was the cross that had caused the false teachers to stumble in their approach to God. They had taught that the death of Jesus Christ was not enough to make a person acceptable to God. The cross was not sufficient by itself; more was needed. A person had to be *ritualized* (circumcised, baptized) and subject himself to the law of God and keep all the rituals, ceremonies, and rules of the church. If he did, then he was a true Christian.

Salvation by works and law, of course, is false. Salvation is through God’s Son, Jesus Christ, and through Him alone. Scripture is clear: anyone who follows or teaches any other salvation shall be severely judged by God.

4. False teachers shall be judged because they deserve condemnation. Paul is gripped with intense emotion here: he wishes the false teachers would just go and castrate themselves—cut themselves completely off. This is a repulsive thought to some and rightly so, for false teaching is the most serious offense. Nothing surpasses it, in particular when it adds or takes away from the cross of Christ. God gave His Son to die for men, and if men miss Him, they miss the righteousness necessary to live in God’s presence. There is no other righteousness than the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and there is no other death that can stand as the Ideal substitute for man’s death—not to God. God will not accept any death other than Christ’s death—not to cover the death of man. If a man wishes to approach God, he must come through the cross, through the death of Jesus Christ. God accepts no other way. Therefore, if a person takes any other way to God, it would be best if he just went ahead and went all the way with whatever he teaches—better if he just went all the way and cut himself off and got out of the way—much better than to continue destroying the people of God.

The point is this: a false teacher deserves to be judged. There is no punishment too good for him. As stated above, “He shall bear his judgment.”

**“For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Mt.16:27).**

**“The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes” (Lk.12:46-47).**

**“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10).**

**“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).**

**“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).**

**“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Pt.3:7).**

**“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14-15).**

**“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev.22:12).**

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|  | <b>V. THE BELIEVER'S LIFE &amp; WALK: FREE &amp; SPIRITUAL, 5:13-6:18</b>   |
|  | <b>A. The Believer's Great Law of Life: Love, 5:13-15</b>   |
| <b>1 Liberty vs. license</b><br>a. License is the danger<br>b. The restraint: love | 13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. |
| <b>2 Love is serving others</b>  |   |
| <b>3 Love is not offending, but caring for one's neighbor</b>                      | 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.                                  |
| <b>4 Love is not biting &amp; devouring one another</b>                            | 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.   |

## DIVISION V

### THE BELIEVER'S LIFE AND WALK: FREE AND SPIRITUAL, 5:13-6:18

#### A. The Believers Great Law of Life: Love, 5:13-15

(5:13-6:18) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Believer, Walk:** this passage begins the last section of Galatians. Up until now everything has dealt with doctrine; now Paul begins to deal with the practical day to day affairs of the believer. Paul has six very practical subjects to discuss. Bunching all six subjects together, a simple title would be: "The Believer's Life and Walk: Free and Spiritual."

1. The Believer's Great Law of Life: Love (5:13-15)
2. A Walk Combating the Great Enemy in Life: The Lusts of the Flesh (5:16-21).
3. A Walk Bearing God's Nature: The Fruit of the Spirit (5:22-26).
4. A Walk Restoring the Man Who Slips (6:1-5).
5. A Walk Doing Good to One's Teacher (6:6-10).
6. A Walk Boasting in the Cross of Christ (6:11-18).

(5:13-15) **Introduction:** Jesus Christ has set the believer free. The believer no longer has to work and work in order to secure God's approval and acceptance. The believer is accepted by God through the work of Jesus Christ. However, there is a critical fact that must always be remembered: Christian liberty is not license, that is, being free to sin, to do as a person likes. Christian liberty is being free *not to sin*. It is being free to overcome the passions and urges of the flesh that unceasingly wage war against the better judgment of man. The believer is a person who is so conscious of the indwelling Holy Spirit and His power that he is able to purge himself and to love his neighbor as himself. (See note—Ro.6:1-2.)

The point is this: the believer does not walk in sin, for he loves God and loves his neighbor. The believer walks and lives under the greatest of laws—the law of love. Love is the guiding law of the believer's life and walk.

1. Liberty vs. license (v.13).
2. Love is serving others (v.14).
3. Love is not offending, but caring for one's neighbor (v.14).
4. Love is not biting and devouring one another (v.15).

**1** (5:13) **Liberty vs. License—Law vs. Faith—Love:** there is liberty vs. license. It has been well established that the believer does not live by the law nor by some work or act of goodness. The believer knows that he can never become perfect, no matter how much good he does. He knows that he cannot keep enough laws nor can he work to make himself like God. He knows that he is short, far short, of God. If he is ever to be acceptable to God, it has to be because God loves him enough...

- to provide an Ideal Righteousness for him.
- to provide Someone to bear his punishment for having violated the law.

The believer knows that God has loved him and everyone else that much. He knows that God has loved the world so much that he sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to do both things for him and for all the people of the earth. He knows...

- that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and secured the Ideal Righteousness for him.
- that Jesus Christ died for him—died bearing the judgment of the law for him.

The point is this: when a person believes this about Christ—that Christ is His Savior—God takes that man's belief and counts it as righteousness. The man becomes acceptable to God. This is what the believer knows: he is not acceptable to God because he works and becomes better and better by keeping some law or rule or ritual. He is acceptable to God because Christ has set him free from having to struggle to be good enough to be saved and always wondering if he has done enough good. Man no longer has to work and keep laws to be saved. Living by law was always a hopeless task that left

man lost and helpless (see notes—Gal.3:10-12; 3:19). Man is saved by the grace of God in giving His Son for the world: by believing that Jesus Christ is his Savior—that Jesus Christ died for him. However, having said this, note two things.

1. There is the danger of license. A question needs to be asked: if Christ sets us free from the law, does this mean that a person can *believe in Christ* and then go out and live like he wants, doing his own thing? Can he use his liberty as an occasion to go out and satisfy the flesh knowing that God will forgive him? Can a person continue to seek the things of the world and give way to the desires and lusts of his flesh? Can he believe in Christ and still live in worldliness? No! A thousand times no, Scripture declares!

A person who thinks and declares such an idea fails to understand belief—true belief. In the Bible belief does not mean intellectual belief, to just believe something in the mind. Belief means a *committed belief*, to believe something with one's life. To believe Christ is to commit one's life to Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Believe*—Jn.2:24 for more discussion). Just think about it for a moment and it becomes perfectly clear: if a person is not willing to commit his life to Christ, he does not believe in Christ. He could not believe, not really; for if he really believed, he would beyond all question give all he is and has to the Son of God. (Cp. Ro.6:16; Heb.5:9.)

2. There is the restraint of love. A person who thinks that belief in Christ frees him and gives him license to sin does not understand what love is. This is the subject of the present passage. The true believer is freed from having to secure God's approval by law, but love is the one restraint that is placed upon him. The believer needs no restraint but love. There are at least two reasons for this.

⇒ God has loved him, so the person who truly sees the love of God is drawn to love God and to love all God's creatures.

**“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).**

⇒ Love embraces all the commandments of God. Jesus Himself said so, and the fact is clearly seen in the points of this passage.

**“Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mt.22:36-40).**

**2** (5:13) **Love—Service:** love is serving one another. A believer is *free* in Christ: he is set free of all law, restraints, and works. He is under nothing, absolutely nothing but Christ. He lives in Christ, moves and has his being in Christ. The love of Christ is his law and restraint. Why? Because Christ loved the believer, served and gave Himself for the believer, and the believer knows it. Therefore, the believer loves Christ with all his heart and life. He wants to please Christ and do all he can to serve Him. And this is just the point: how can the believer serve Christ? By doing exactly what Christ did: loving and serving others.

“By love serve one another.”

A person who loves does not act like a *lord over people*; he...

- serves and helps
- shows kindness and gentleness
- expresses concern and care
- demonstrates sympathy and empathy

The person who truly loves identifies with a person, gets down where they are, even below where they are, and ministers to them. Love serves—always reaches out to do whatever it can for the other person. It never withdraws from the other person, feeling that he or she...

- does not deserve the effort or help.
- is not worth the effort or help.
- is less than what he should be.
- is too derelict, immoral, uneducated, unrecognized, below others.

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all” (Mk.10:43-44).**

**“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He [the good Samaritan] that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Lk.10:36-37).**

**“For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth” (Lk.22:27).**

**“He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded....If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet” (Jn.13:4-5, 14).**

“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:16).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Ph.2:7).

**3** (5:14) **Love:** love is not offending but caring for one’s neighbor—caring as much as one cares for oneself. It must be admitted:

⇒ If a person cared for everyone else as much as he cared for himself, he would need no law. He would be living and doing exactly what he should.

This is the reason love fulfills all the law. Love does not take advantage of other people. Love will not use other people to fulfill one’s own purpose, greed, or lust. Love will not hurt someone else any more than we would want someone to hurt us.

Love involves some very practical acts that are clearly spelled out in Scripture (1 Cor.13:4-7).

- ⇒ Love suffereth long (endures long and is patient).
- ⇒ Love is kind.
- ⇒ Love envies not (is not jealous).
- ⇒ Love vaunts not itself (does not brag; does not boast).
- ⇒ Love is not puffed up (vainglorious, arrogant, prideful).
- ⇒ Love does not behave itself unseemingly (unbecomingly, rudely, indecently, unmannerly).
- ⇒ Love seeks not her own (is not selfish or self-seeking; does not insist on its own right and way).
- ⇒ Love is not easily provoked (not touchy, angry, fretful, resentful).
- ⇒ Love thinks no evil (harbors and plans no evil thought; takes no account of a wrong done it).
- ⇒ Love rejoices not in iniquity (wrong, sin, evil, injustice), but rejoices in the truth (justice and righteousness).
- ⇒ Love bears all things.
- ⇒ Love believes all things (exercises faith in everything; is ready to believe the best in everyone).
- ⇒ Love hopes all things (keeps up hope in everything and under all circumstances).
- ⇒ Love endures all things (without weakening; it gives power to endure).

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Ro.13:8-10).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Ro.15:1-2).

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal.5:14).

“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well” (Jas.2:8).

**4** (5:15) **Love:** love is not biting and devouring one another. A.T. Robertson says that the picture is that of a fight between a dog and cat or a fight between wild animals (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.311). Biting and devouring refers to much more than just feuding and fighting. Men bite and devour each other when they violate each other. For example, nothing takes a hunk out a person any more than the biting or devouring that takes place between a wife or husband. However, love respects the other person—no matter who he is or what he has done. Love does not bite or devour others in any way whatsoever. Love does not...

- |           |           |             |           |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| • snap    | • slander | • criticize | • gossip  |
| • condemn | • censor  | • accuse    | • exploit |
| • expose  | • covet   | • misuse    | • take    |
| • hurt    | • abuse   |             |           |

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not” (Jas.4:1-2).

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now” (1 Jn.2:9).

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 Jn.3:15).

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also” (1 Jn.4:20-21).

“Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins” (Pr.10:12).

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 The answer to conquering the lusts of the flesh: The Holy Spirit</b></p> <p>a. The flesh fights for dominance</p> <p>b. The flesh is contrary to the Spirit</p> <p>c. The flesh keeps a person from doing what he would</p> <p>d. The flesh fails to keep</p> | <p><b>B. A Walk Combating the Great Enemy In Life: Lusts of the Flesh, 5:16-21</b></p> <p>16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.</p> <p>17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.</p> <p>18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the</p> | <p>law.</p> <p>19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,</p> <p>20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,</p> <p>21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.</p> | <p>the law</p> <p><b>2 The works or acts of the flesh</b></p> <p><b>3 The judgment of those who live by the flesh</b></p> |
|---|---|---|---|

**DIVISION V**

**THE BELIEVER'S LIFE AND WALK: FREE AND SPIRITUAL, 5:13-6:18**

**B. A Walk Combating the Great Enemy in Life: Lusts of the Flesh, 5:16-21**

(5:16-21) **Introduction:** this and the next passage are two critical passages for the believer's walk. They deal with walking in the Spirit of God and conquering the flesh. The lessons being taught need to be diligently followed by the believer.

1. The answer to conquering the lusts of the flesh: the Holy Spirit (v.16-18).
2. The works or acts of the flesh (v.19-21).
3. The judgment of those who live by the flesh (v.21).

**1** (5:16-18) **Holy Spirit—Flesh:** the answer to conquering the lusts of the flesh is the Holy Spirit of God. The believer is to walk in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It is the only conceivable way he can keep from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. No person has the power to control the lusts of his flesh—not within himself. Why is clearly seen in the four reasons given by Scripture.

1. The flesh fights for dominance. It lusts against the Spirit, struggles and fights to control the man. The picture is that of a tug of war (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.311). The flesh stands contrary to the Spirit—toe to toe, face to face—and it seeks to control man.

The word "lusts" (epithumei kata) means *a yearning passion for*. Every person has experienced the flesh...

- |            |             |            |
|------------|-------------|------------|
| • yearning | • craving   | • grasping |
| • pulling  | • hungering | • grabbing |
| • desiring | • thirsting | • taking   |
| • wanting  | • longing   |            |

Every person knows what it is to have his flesh lusting after something, to have it yearning and yearning to lay hold of something. The flesh is very strong and difficult to control. This is the first reason why a believer's only hope to control the flesh is the Spirit of God.

**"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Ro.7:23).**

**"Because the carnal [fleshly] mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Ro.8:7).**

**"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not" (Jas.4:1-2).**

2. The flesh is contrary to the Spirit. The flesh has within itself base and unregulated urges and passions. A man desires the desire to do what he likes, to lift the restraints and follow his own inclinations, desires, passions, and emotions. This is what the Bible means when it speaks of the "lust of the flesh."

However, the genuine believer has another force within his life—the force of the Holy Spirit. When the believer feels *the constraint* and *the pressure* between the flesh and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is giving the power to overcome the flesh. The constraint is *the power*. The believer who listens to the constraint and walks away from the object of the pressure, and calls upon God for the courage to stay away is the believer who walks in the Spirit. The believer is to know no such thing as peaceful coexistence between the flesh and the Spirit. (See notes—Ro.7:14-25; 8:18; 8:28-39.)

3. The flesh keeps a person from doing what he would. Every person has experienced the power of the flesh; everyone has caved in to the flesh and done something that he did not want to do. He fought against doing it—knew it was harmful or hurtful—yet he did not resist the flesh. He gave in to the power of the flesh and did it. He...

- |                 |                   |                           |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| • overate       | • did evil things | • acted selfishly         |
| • became angry  | • lusted          | • committed immorality    |
| • began smoking | • became prideful | • cheated, lied, or stole |
| • got drunk     | • cursed          |                           |

Note another fact as well. All of us have been tempted, and we have known how to combat and overcome the temptation. However, the flesh was so strong we did not overcome it. The struggle we experienced involved that of...

- |                |                 |                    |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| • controlling  | • sacrificing   | • showing kindness |
| • reaching out | • giving in     | • giving           |
| • loving       | • being patient | • helping          |

The point is this: the flesh is so strong that it often keeps us from doing what we would. The only hope of ever controlling the flesh is to walk in the Spirit of God—in His presence and power.

**“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; for what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me” (Ro.7:15-20).**

**“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [fleshly], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds” (2 Cor.10:4).**

4. The flesh fails to keep the law. This has been clearly shown in the previous point. No person keeps the law all the time: the flesh causes us to fail, and no matter how much we try, we cannot do everything the law says—not all the time. What then is the answer? It is essential to know the answer, for every time we fail to keep the law, the law is broken and we stand condemned. We cannot satisfy the demands of the law, not perfectly. Therefore, we are guilty and must pay the penalty. Note another fact: our consciences condemn us. They bother and bug us if we are trying to live for Christ and yet continue failing time after time. Again, what is the answer?

The Spirit of God is the answer; being led by the Holy Spirit will free us from the flesh and from the condemnation of the law. What does this mean? (See note, *Holy Spirit, Life*—Ro.8:2-4 for more discussion.) It means that the Holy Spirit frees us to live as Christ lived, to actually live out the life which Christ lived. The *active energy* of life, the dynamic force and being of life—all that is in Christ Jesus—is given to the believer. The believer actually lives *in* Christ Jesus. And the Spirit of life which is in Christ frees the believer from the fate (law) of sin and death. This simply means that the believer lives in a *consciousness of being free*. He breathes and senses a depth of life, a richness, a fulness of life that is indescribable. He lives with power—power over the pressure, strain, impediments, and bondages of life—even the bondages of sin and death. He lives now and shall live forever. He senses this and knows this. Life to him is a *spirit, a breath, a consciousness* of being set free through Christ. Even when he sins and guilt sets in, there is a tug, a power (Holy Spirit) that draws him back to God. He asks forgiveness and removal of the guilt (1 Jn.1:9), and immediately upon asking, the same power (the Holy Spirit) instills an instantaneous assurance of cleansing. The spirit of life, the consciousness of living instantaneously, takes up its abode within him once again. He feels free again, and he feels full of life in all its liberating power and freedom. He bubbles over with all the depth of the richness and fulness of life itself. He is full of the “Spirit of life.” Life itself becomes once again a *spirit, a consciousness of living*. He lives now and forever.

**“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:2-4).**

**“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Ro.8:14).**

**“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (Jn.16:13).**

**2** (5:19-21) **Flesh:** the works or acts of the flesh show just how strong the flesh is. Note a fact of extreme importance: the flesh in itself is not sinful. The flesh or human body is given by God; it is for God’s use. In fact, when a person is converted to Christ, his body becomes a temple for God to dwell in through the Holy Spirit. The Christian is not told to cleanse himself from the flesh but from “the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16), “the filthiness of the flesh” (2 Cor.7:1), and from “the works of the flesh” (Ro.13:12; Gal.5:19). The works of the flesh are the fruit of indwelling sin, and sin originates in the heart not in the flesh. The sins of the flesh listed in this passage are clearly seen all throughout society; and tragically they are not only seen on the daily newscasts of every city, but within every community, home, and life on planet earth. The very presence of such fleshly sins shows just how strong the flesh is and how helpless man is to control his flesh.

1. *Adultery* (moicheia): sexual unfaithfulness to husband or wife. It is also looking on a woman or a man to lust after her or him. Looking at and lusting after the opposite sex whether in person, magazines, books, on beaches or anywhere else is adultery. Imagining and lusting within the heart is the very same as committing the act.

**“But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:28).**

**“Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Ex.20:14; cp. Lev.20:10).**

**“The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face. In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light. For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death. He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards. Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned” (Job 24:15-19).**

2. *Fornication* (porneia): a broad word including all forms of immoral and sexual acts. It is premarital sex and adultery; it is abnormal sex, all kinds of sexual vice.

“Flee fornication. Every sin that man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Cor.6:18).

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Th.4:3).

3. *Uncleanness* (akatharsia): moral impurity; doing things that dirty, pollute, and soil life.

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:28).

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves” (Ro.1:24).

“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Ro.6:19).

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

4. *Lasciviousness* (aselgeia): filthiness, indecency, shamelessness. A chief characteristic of the behavior is open and shameless indecency. It means unrestrained evil thoughts and behavior. It is giving in to brutish and lustful desires, a readiness for any pleasure. It is a man who knows no restraint, a man who has sinned so much that he no longer cares what people say or think. It is something far more distasteful than just doing wrong. The man who misbehaves usually tries to hide his wrong, but a lascivious man does not care who knows about his exploits or shame. He wants; therefore, he seeks to take and gratify. Decency and opinion do not matter. Initially when he began to sin, he did as all men do: he misbehaved in secret. But eventually, the sin got the best of him—to the point that he no longer cared who saw or knew. He became the subject of a master—the master of habit, of the thing itself. Men become the slaves of such things as unbridled lust, wantonness, licentiousness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence (Mk.7:22), wanton manners, filthy words, indecent body movements, immoral handling of males and females (Ro.13:13), public display of affection, carnality, gluttony, and sexual immorality (1 Pt.4:3; 2 Pt.2:2, 18). (Cp. 2 Cor.12:21; Gal.5:19; Eph.4:19; 2 Pt.2:7.)

“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet” (Ro.1:27).

“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:19).

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ....Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 4, 7).

“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pt.4:3).

5. *Idolatry* (eidololatreia): the worship of idols, whether mental or made by man’s hands; the worship of some idea of what God is like, of an image of God within a person’s mind; the giving of one’s primary devotion (time and energy) to something other than God. (See note, *Sin*, pt.2—1 Cor.6:9 for detailed discussion.)

“Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry” (1 Cor.10:14).

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry....they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:19-21).

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph.5:5).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience” (Col.3:5-6).

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).

**“For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev.22:15).**

6. *Witchcraft* (pharmakeia): sorcery; the use of drugs or of evil spirits to gain control over the lives of others or over one’s own life. In the present context it would include all forms of seeking the control of one’s fate including astrology, palm reading, seances, fortune telling, crystals, and other forms of witchcraft.

**“So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it” (1 Chron.10:13).**

**“And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Is.8:19-20).**

**“And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers” (Mic.5:12).**

**“Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:20-21).**

7. *Hatred* (echthrai): enmity, hostility, animosity. It is the hatred that lingers and is held for a long, long time; a hatred that is deep within.

**“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now” (1 Jn.2:9).**

**“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 Jn.3:15).**

**“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 Jn.4:20).**

**“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him” (Lev.19:17).**

**“Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins” (Pr.10:12).**

8. *Variance* (ereis): strife, discord, contention, fighting, struggling, quarreling, dissension, wrangling. It means that a man fights against another person in order to get something: position, promotion, property, honor, recognition. He deceives, doing whatever has to be done to get what he is after.

**“He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings” (1 Tim.6:4).**

**“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Tim.2:14).**

**“The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with” (Pr.17:14).**

**“As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife” (Pr.26:21).**

9. *Emulations* (zeloi): jealousy, wanting and desiring to have what someone else has. It may be material things, recognition, honor, or position.

**“And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him” (Gen.37:4).**

**“For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance” (Pr.6:34).**

**“And he [the elder son] answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends; but as soon as thy son [the prodigal son] was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf” (Lk.15:29-30).**

10. *Wrath* (thumoi): bursts of anger; indignation; a violent, explosive temper; quick-tempered explosive reactions that arise from stirred and boiling emotions. But it is anger which fades away just as quickly as it arose. It is not anger that lasts.

**“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (Jas.1:19-20).**

**“An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression” (Pr.29:22).**

11. *Strife* (eritheiai): conflict, struggle, fight, contention, faction, dissension; a party spirit, a cliquish spirit.

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Ph.2:3).**

“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Tim.2:14).

“It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling” (Pr.20:3).

12. *Seditious* (dichostasiai): division, rebellion, standing against others, splitting off from others.

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (1 Sam.15:23).

“Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin” (Is.30:1).

“I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts” (Is.65:2).

“But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. presumptuous are they, selfwilled, and they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities” (2 Pt.2:10).

13. *Heresies* (aireseis): rejecting the fundamental beliefs of God, Christ, the Scriptures, and the church; believing and holding to some teaching other than the truth.

“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mt.15:9).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim.4:1).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily [quietly, secretly] shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).

14. *Envyings* (phthonoi): this word goes beyond jealousy. It is the spirit...

- that wants not only the things that another person has, but begrudges the fact that the person has them.
- that wants not only the things to be taken away from the person, but wants him to suffer through the loss of them.

“A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones” (Pr.14:30).

“Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long” (Pr.23:17).

“Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them” (Pr.24:1).

“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying” (Ro.13:13).

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up” (1 Cor.13:4).

“Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another” (Gal.5:26).

15. *Murders* (phonois): to kill, to take the life of another person. Murder is sin against the sixth commandment.

“He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness” (Mt.19:18).

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Ro.13:8-9).

“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters” (1 Pt.4:15).

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 Jn.3:15).

16. *Drunkenness* (methai): taking drink or drugs to affect one’s senses for lust or pleasure; becoming tipsy or intoxicated; partaking of drugs; seeking to loosen moral restraint for bodily pleasure.

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lk.21:34).

“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying” (Ro.13:13).

“Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor.6:10).

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess” (Eph.5:18).

“For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night” (1 Th.5:7).

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Pr.20:1).

“Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine” (Pr.23:29-30).

“Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!” (Is.5:11).

“For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry” (Nah.1:10).

17. *Revellings* (komoi): carousing; uncontrolled license, indulgence, and pleasure; taking part in wild parties or in drinking parties; lying around indulging in feeding the lusts of the flesh; orgies.

“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pt.4:3).

“And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children” (2 Pt.2:13-14).

“Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:21).

“And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play” (Ex.32:6; cp. Judges 9:27; 1 Sam.30:16).

**3** (5:21) **Flesh—Judgment:** the judgment of those who live by the flesh. Very simply, they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. This can be clearly seen: if God is righteous, then people must live righteous lives in order to be accepted by Him. However, people ignore the fact of God’s righteousness and His demand for righteousness. People divorce their behavior from religion. People...

- profess religion.
- practice religion.
- talk religion.
- defend their beliefs about religion.

However, they go ahead and live like they want regardless of their religion. If they want to do something, they do it feeling that God will forgive them. There are few people who really think that God will reject them. They feel that they will have done enough good to be acceptable to God...

- enough kindness
- enough religion
- enough works
- enough service

In the final analysis, most people just think that God will accept them. This attitude comes from a false concept of God, a concept that looks upon God as a father who is indulgent and who gives his children the license to do *some wrong*.

This is a fatal mistake. It was the mistake that some of the Galatian church members were making, and it is the same mistake that teeming multitudes of religious people have made down through the centuries.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Cor.6:9).

Believers are to inherit a kingdom, a new heavens and earth where God will rule and reign. They are to be given eternal life and given the glorious privilege of being citizens in God’s kingdom and world. They are to live with Him and serve Him in *perfection* for all eternity. (See note, *Reward*—1 Cor.6:2-3; Lk.16:10-12 for more discussion.) But this glorious privilege is to be given only to genuine believers, those men and women who have truly given their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ—given their lives to live as Jesus Christ says to live. No matter how religious a person is—no matter how much zeal a person may have in keeping religious rituals and in attending services and in giving to charity—if he does not live a pure and righteous life, he “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Cor.6:9).

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:20).

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit corruption” (1 Cor.15:50).

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph.5:5).

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev.21:27).

“For without [the Kingdom of God] are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev.22:15).

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|---|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1 The believer is to walk bearing God's nature</b><br/> a. Source: The Holy Spirit<br/> b. Purpose: To stand strongly against fleshly works</p> | <p><b>C. A Walk Bearing God's Nature: The Fruit of the Spirit, 5:22-26</b><br/><br/> 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,<br/> 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.</p> | <p>24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.<br/> 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.<br/> 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.</p> | <p><b>2 The believer is to walk bearing a crucified flesh</b><br/><br/> <b>3 The believer is to walk consistently with his position in Christ</b><br/> <b>4 The believer is to walk free from super-spirituality &amp; envy</b></p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE BELIEVER'S LIFE AND WALK: FREE AND SPIRITUAL, 5:13-6:18**

**C. A Walk Bearing God's Nature: The Fruit of the Spirit, 5:22-26**

(5:22-26) **Introduction:** a genuine believer stands before God approved and acceptable. He is embraced and loved by God, looked after and cared for by God. And he is the recipient of eternal life and of the absolute assurance of eternal life.

But note: the believer has not been accepted by God because he deserves it, not because he kept enough laws to win the approval of God. The believer has been accepted by God because of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for man's transgressions of the law. He died to free men from the law, from its judgment and condemnation. Therefore, standing before God, the believer is not there because he has kept laws and has earned the right to stand there. He is there because of his faith in Jesus Christ. His faith honors God's Son, and God loves His Son so much that He honors anyone who believes in His Son. He honors the person by doing exactly what the person believes. Therefore, the man who believes that Jesus Christ makes him acceptable to God becomes acceptable to God.

The point is this: since the believer has to approach God through Jesus Christ and not through the law, he is freed from the law. He is under Jesus Christ, not the law. Does this mean then that the believer has no restraint upon his life and behavior—that he is free to live like he wants? Is he free to follow the desires and lusts of his flesh—to seek the things of the world and give in to the urges to look, think, touch, taste, and do?

The answer is no! A thousand times no! For the believer has been given God's nature; he walks through life bearing God's nature (2 Pt.1:4; Eph.4:24; Col.3:10; 1 Cor.6:19-20). God has absolutely nothing to do with sin, not within His nature. Therefore, the believer is not to cave in to the lusts of the flesh; he is to walk bearing the fruit of God's nature, that is, the fruit of God's Spirit.

1. The believer is to walk bearing God's nature (v.22-23).
2. The believer is to walk bearing a crucified flesh (v.24).
3. The believer is to walk consistently with his position in Christ (v.25).
4. The believer is to walk free from selfishness, super-spirituality and envy (v.26).

**1** (5:22-23) **Holy Spirit—Believer, Walk:** the believer is to walk bearing God's nature, that is, the fruit of God's Spirit. Note that the word "fruit" is singular, not plural. The Holy Spirit has only *one fruit*. It is broken down into a list of traits in order to help us understand His nature. However, the Spirit has only one nature, one fruit. Therefore, when He lives within a person, all these traits are present. The genuine believer does not experience and bear just some of them: the Spirit of God produces them all in the life of the believer.

1. There is the fruit of *love* (agape). Agape love is the love of the mind, of the reason, of the will. It is the love that goes so far...
  - that it loves regardless of feelings—whether a person feels like loving or not.
  - that it loves a person even if the person does not deserve to be loved.
  - that it actually loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.

Note four significant points about agape love.

- a. Selfless or agape love is the love of God, the very love possessed by God Himself. It is the love demonstrated in the cross of Christ.
  - ⇒ It is the love of God for the *ungodly*.

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

⇒ It is the love of God for *unworthy sinners*.

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

⇒ It is the love of God for *undeserving enemies*.

**“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:10).**

- b. Selfless or agape love is a gift of God. It can be experienced only if a person knows God *personally*—only if a person has received the love of God, that is, Christ Jesus, into his heart and life. Agape love has to be shed abroad (poured out, flooded, spread about) by the Spirit of God within the heart of a person.

**“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Ro.5:5).**

- c. Selfless or agape love is the greatest thing in all of life according to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mk.12:29-31).**

- d. Selfless or agape love is the greatest possession and gift in human life according to the Scripture (1 Cor.13:1-13).

**“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Cor.13:13).**

2. There is the fruit of *joy* (chara): an inner gladness; a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behavior. (See note, *Joy*—Ph.1:4 for full discussion.)

3. There is the fruit of *peace* (eirene): it means to bind together, to join, to weave together. It means that a person is bound, woven and joined together with himself and with God and others.

The Hebrew word is *shalom*. It means freedom from trouble and much more. It means experiencing the highest good, enjoying the very best possible, possessing all the inner good possible. It means wholeness and soundness. It means prosperity in the widest sense, especially prosperity in the spiritual sense of having a soul that blossoms and flourishes. (See note, *Peace*—Eph.2:14-15 for more discussion.)

- a. There is the peace of the world. This is a peace of escapism, of avoiding trouble, of refusing to face things, of unreality. It is a peace that is sought through pleasure, satisfaction, contentment, the absence of trouble, positive thinking, or the denial of problems.
- b. There is the peace of Christ and of God.
- ⇒ The peace of God is, first, a *bosom peace*, a peace deep within. It is a tranquility of mind, a composure, and a restfulness that is undisturbed by circumstances and situations. It is more than feelings—even more than attitude and thought.
- ⇒ The peace of God is, second, the *peace of conquest* (cp. Jn.16:33). It is the peace that is independent of conditions and environment; the peace which no sorrow, danger, suffering, or experience can take away.

**“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).**

- ⇒ The peace of God is, third, the *peace of assurance* (cp. Ro.8:28). It is the peace of unquestionable confidence; the peace with a sure knowledge that one’s life is in the hands of God and that all things will work out for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

**“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Ro.8:28).**

- ⇒ The peace of God is, fourth, the *peace of intimacy with God* (cp. Ph.4:6-7). It is the peace of the highest good. It is the peace that settles the mind, strengthens the will, and establishes the heart.

- c. There is the source of peace. Peace is always born out of reconciliation. Its source is found only in the reconciliation wrought by Jesus Christ. Peace always has to do with personal relationships: a man’s relationship to himself, to God, and to his fellow men.

- ⇒ A man must be bound, woven, and joined together with himself in order to have peace.
- ⇒ A man must be bound, woven, and joined together with God in order to have peace.
- ⇒ A man must be bound, woven, and joined together with his fellow man to have peace.

**“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one [both Jew and Gentile, all men], and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph.2:13-14).**

**“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col.1:20-21).**

4. There is the fruit of *longsuffering* (makrothumia): patience, bearing and suffering a long time, perseverance, being constant, steadfast, and enduring. Longsuffering never gives in; it is never broken no matter what attacks it.
- ⇒ Pressure and hard work may fall upon us, but the Spirit of God helps us suffer long under it all.
  - ⇒ Disease or accident or old age may afflict us, but the Spirit of God helps us to suffer long under it.
  - ⇒ Discouragement and disappointment may attack us, but the Spirit of God helps us to suffer long under it.
  - ⇒ Men may do us wrong, abuse, slander, and injure us; but the Spirit of God helps us to suffer long under it all.

Two significant things need to be noted about longsuffering.

- a. Longsuffering never strikes back. Common sense tells us that a person who is attacked by others could strike back and retaliate. *But* the Christian believer is given the power of longsuffering—the power to suffer the situation or person for a long, long time.
- b. Longsuffering is one of the great traits of God. As pointed out in this verse, it is a fruit of God’s very own Spirit, a fruit that is to be in the life of the believer.
  - ⇒ God and Christ are longsuffering toward sinners.

**“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Ro.2:4).**

⇒ God saves believers so that they may be examples of longsuffering.

**“Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1 Tim.1:16).**

⇒ God withholds His judgment from the world because He is longsuffering, waiting for more and more to be saved.

**“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you” (2 Pt.3:9; cp. 1 Pt.3:20).**

**“For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off” (Is.48:9).**

William Barclay says that if God had been a man, He would have long ago wiped man off the face of the earth because of his terrible disobedience (*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.56). But God loves and cares for man; therefore, God is longsuffering toward man. God is suffering a long, long time with man, allowing more and more men to be saved.

**“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness” (Col.1:11).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

5. There is the fruit of *gentleness* (chrestotes): it is being kind and good, useful and helpful, gentle and sweet, considerate and gracious through all situations no matter the circumstances. A person who is gentle does not act...

- hard
- indifferent
- harsh
- unconcerned
- too busy
- bitter

Gentleness cares for the feelings of others and feels with them. It experiences the full depth of sympathy and empathy. It shows care and gets right into the situation with a person. Gentleness suffers with those who suffer, and struggles with those who struggle, and works with those who work.

⇒ God is kind.

**“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Lk.6:35).**

**“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:4-7).**

⇒ Believers are to be kind to one another.

**“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Ro.12:10).**

**“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).**

**“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Col.3:12).**

**“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity “ (2 Pt.1:5-7).**

6. There is the fruit of *goodness* (agathosune): it is being full of virtue and excellence, kindness and helpfulness, peace and consideration. It means that a person is full of all good and he does all good. It means...

- that he has a good heart and good behavior.
- that he is good and does good.
- that he is a quality person.

Note that a good person lives and treats everyone just as they should be treated. He does not take advantage of any person nor does he stand by and let others take advantage. He stands up and lives for what is right, good, and just. This means that goodness involves discipline and rebuke, correction and instruction as well as love and care, peace and conciliation. A good person will not give license to evil, will not let evil run rampant. He will not allow evil to indulge itself and treat others unjustly. He will not allow others to suffer evil. Goodness steps forward and does what it can to stop and control evil.

**“And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another” (Ro.15:14).**

⇒ God is full of goodness.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

**“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (Eph.5:9).**

**“Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power” (2 Th.1:11).**

**“He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD” (Ps.33:5).**

**“O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Ps.34:8).**

**“And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me” (Is.63:5).**

⇒ Believers are to be full of all goodness.

**“And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another” (Ro.15:14).**

**“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph.3:19).**

7. There is the fruit of *faith* or faithfulness (pistis): it means to be faithful and trustworthy; to be loyal and steadfast in devotion and allegiance. It means to be constant, staunch, and enduring. A faithful person denies and sacrifices himself—all he is and has—and trusts God. He believes God and knows that God will work all things out for good. Therefore, he casts himself totally upon God and becomes faithful to God.

- ⇒ Faithfulness does not doubt God—not His salvation, provision, or strength to help.
- ⇒ Faithfulness does not begin with God then back off and give up.
- ⇒ Faithfulness does not walk with God then give in to the lusts of the flesh.

Faithfulness begins with God and continues with God. Faithfulness continues on and on; it never slackens or surrenders.

⇒ God is faithful.

**“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor.1:9).**

**“Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (1 Pt.4:19).**

**“Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations” (Dt.7:9).**

**“Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant” (1 Ki.8:56).**

**“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations” (Ps.89:1).**

⇒ Believers are to be faithful.

**“And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities” (Lk.19:17).**

**“Moreover it is required in stewards [believers], that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:2).**

**“And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after” (Heb.3:5).**

**“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine” (Ex.19:5).**

8. There is the fruit of *meekness* (prautes): it means to be gentle, tender, humble, mild, and considerate, but strongly so. Meekness has the strength to control and discipline, and it does so at the right time.

- a. Meekness has a *humble state of mind*. But this does not mean the person is weak, cowardly, and bowing. The meek person simply loves people and loves peace; therefore, he walks humbly among men regardless of their status and circumstance in life. Associating with the poor and lowly of this earth does not bother the meek person. He desires to be a friend to all and to help all as much as possible.
- b. Meekness has a *strong state of mind*. It looks at situations and wants justice and right to be done. It is not a weak mind that ignores and neglects evil and wrong-doing, abuse and suffering.
  - ⇒ If someone is suffering, meekness steps in and does what it can to help.
  - ⇒ If evil is being done, meekness does what it can to stop and correct it.
  - ⇒ If evil is running rampant and indulging itself, meekness actually strikes out in anger. However, note a crucial point: the anger is always at the right time and against the right thing.
- c. Meekness has *strong self-control*. The meek person controls his spirit and mind. He controls the lusts of his flesh. He does not give way to ill-temper, retaliation, passion, indulgence, or license. The meek person dies to himself, to what his flesh would like to do, and he does the right thing—exactly what God wants done.

In summary, the meek man walks in a humble, tender, but strong state of mind; he denies himself, giving utmost consideration to others. He shows a control and righteous anger against injustice and evil. A meek man forgets and lives for others because of what Christ has done for him.

⇒ God is meek.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

⇒ Jesus Christ was meek.

**“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Mt.11:29).**

⇒ Believers are to be meek.

**“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal.6:1).**

**“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:1-3).**

**“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim.2:25).**

**“To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men” (Tit.3:2).**

**“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jas.1:21).**

**“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation [behavior] his works with meekness of wisdom” (Jas.3:13).**

**“But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pt.3:4).**

9. There is the fruit of *temperance* (egkrateia): to master and control the body or the flesh with all of its lusts. It means self-control, the master of desire, appetite and passion, especially sensual urges and cravings. It means to be strong, controlled, and restrained. It means to stand against the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (1 Jn.2:15-16).

⇒ Self-control is of God, a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

⇒ The believer is to proclaim self-control to the lost.

“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25).

⇒ The believer is to control his sexual desires.

“But if they cannot contain [control], let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn” (1 Cor.7:9).

⇒ The believer is to strenuously exercise self-control, just as an athlete controls himself.

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor.9:25).

⇒ The believer is to grow in self-control.

“And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness” (2 Pt.1:6).

⇒ The aged believer is especially to be on guard to control himself.

“That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience” (Tit.2:2).

In concluding our discussion we should remember that the fruit of the Spirit is the very nature of God (Gal.2:20; Eph.5:18). The believer is to walk in the Spirit; that is, he is to walk in such a consciousness of God and in such open confession that he is kept constantly clean from sin. God keeps him clean and pure and acceptable as though he were perfect. As the believer so walks in such an awareness of God, he assimilates the very nature of God and the Holy Spirit’s fruit is produced. No law can stand against such things. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.15:1-8.)

**2** (5:24) **Believer, Position—Old Man—Flesh:** the believer is to walk bearing a crucified flesh. This is a striking verse. Note several points.

1. Note the words, “they that are Christ’s.” A person becomes the *property and the possession* of Christ when he first trusts Christ as his Savior. When a person comes to Jesus Christ to save him, he is coming because he wants to be delivered from the enslavement and bondage of sin, death, and judgment. He wants to live forever with God. He does not want to continue being the slave of the flesh, subjected to its lusts, death and sure judgment. He wants to be saved from the flesh of a corruptible world. Therefore, when a person comes to Christ, he is turning away from the flesh to God; he is turning his back upon the mastery of the flesh and all that it stands for. He is turning to Jesus Christ as his new master. Consequently...

- the believer no longer belongs to the flesh; he belongs to Jesus Christ.
- the flesh no longer possesses the believer; Jesus Christ possesses him.
- the believer no longer serves the flesh; he serves the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Note that the believer has crucified the flesh with the affections (passions) and lusts. How? By dying with Jesus Christ. How can a person die with Jesus Christ? By an act of God. Only God can count a person to have died with Jesus Christ and *it be true, an actual occurrence*. This is exactly what God does. When a person genuinely believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that person’s belief and counts it as his death with Jesus Christ. God honors his faith by identifying him with Christ. God counts and considers the person...

- to have died in Christ’s death.
- to be placed into Christ’s death.
- to be identified with Christ’s death.
- to be a partaker of Christ’s death.
- to be in union with Christ’s death.
- to be bound in Christ’s death.

Now, note the point: if the believer is counted by God as having been crucified with Christ, then the believer...

- has died to the flesh.
- has died to the passions of the flesh.
- has died to the lusts of the flesh.
- is freed from the flesh.
- is freed from the passions of the flesh.
- is freed from the lusts of the flesh.

Once a person has died, he is dead. The rule, reign, the habits, and desires of the flesh no longer have control over him. The flesh ceases to have a place or a position in his life. He is free from the flesh, free from...

- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| • fleshly habits   | • fleshly enslavement  |
| • fleshly control  | • fleshly condemnation |
| • fleshly bondage  | • fleshly death        |
| • fleshly judgment |                        |

To be crucified with Christ means that we no longer live *in the flesh*, in the place and position of the flesh. We cannot live *apart* from the flesh, for we are in this body upon this earth. But we are free from living *after* the flesh. We no longer follow the passions and lusts of the flesh. We desire and follow righteousness, seeking to please God in all that we do.

**“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Ro.6:2).**

**“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:11).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:24).**

**“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col.3:3).**

**“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him” (2 Tim.2:11).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**3** (5:25) **Believer—Holy Spirit:** the believer is to walk consistently with his position in Christ. To be in Christ is to be in God’s Spirit. When the believer trusts Jesus Christ as his Savior, God places His Spirit in the heart of the believer. The Spirit is placed there to guide and direct the believer day by day. Therefore, the believer is to walk in the Spirit; he is to live just as the Spirit of God directs. This is the point of this verse. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. The Spirit gives us life, the life of God; therefore, let us *walk and live out* the life He gives us.

**“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:4).**

**“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Ro.8:1).**

**“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:5-6).**

**“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).**

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Ro.8:13-14).**

**“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Gal.5:6).**

**4** (5:26) **Believer, Walk:** the believer is to walk free from super-spirituality and envy. When believer’s are challenged to live spiritual lives, there is always the danger that some will become super-spiritual and others will begin to envy the spiritual gifts of those who are genuinely spiritual and greatly blessed by God.

1. There is the danger of super-spirituality. There is the temptation of pride and of showing superiority. It is the attitude that says, “I have it, and you don’t.” This attitude, of course, irritates and provokes people. It causes division within the church.

**“Woe unto you that are full [who say they are full]! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep” (Lk.6:25).**

**“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev.3:17).**

**“They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly” (Ps.17:10).**

2. There is the danger of envy (see note, *Flesh*, pt.14—Gal.5:19-21 for discussion).

| CHAPTER 6   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1 First, let the spiritual believers handle the matter</b></p> <p><b>2 Second, approach the brother in a spirit of meekness</b></p> <p><b>3 Third, consider yourself</b></p>                          | <p><b>D. A Walk Restoring the Man Who Slips, 6:1-5</b></p> <p>Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.</p>  |
| <p><b>4 Fourth, bear one another's burden</b></p> <p><b>5 Fifth, confess your own nothingness</b></p> <p><b>6 Sixth, examine your own work</b></p> <p><b>7 Seventh, realize your own responsibility</b></p> | <p>2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.</p> <p>3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.</p> <p>4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.</p> <p>5 For every man shall bear his own burden.</p> |

**DIVISION V**

**THE BELIEVER'S LIFE AND WALK: FREE AND SPIRITUAL, 5:13-6:18**

**D. A Walk Restoring the Man Who Slips, 6:1-5**

(6:1-5) **Introduction:** note the word “man.” This means a person who is just like the rest of us; that is, he has desires, passions, and urges just like us. He walks and lives in the flesh just like we do. Therefore, he faces the very same temptations we do, for *all temptation* is common to all men (1 Cor.10:13).

What is to be done when a Christian brother has succumbed to temptation, stumbled, or fallen? What is to be the spirit and attitude of the church? How are we to approach the problem? Are we to...

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| • ignore him?        | • dismiss him?             |
| • criticize him?     | • isolate him?             |
| • withdraw from him? | • spread rumors about him? |
| • shame him?         | • slander him?             |
| • censor him?        |                            |

Note a fact: no sin is specified. The sin may be large or small, black or gray, despicable or acceptable (to man), serious or innocent, harmful or harmless. The point to note is this: a true Christian brother can be overtaken by sin. The word “overtaken” is interesting; it means to be taken beforehand, by surprise, or unexpectedly. A true Christian is *surprised* when he is overtaken by sin; he *never suspected* it. In fact, being overtaken by serious sin was seldom, if ever, a concern; for he belonged to Christ and lived in Christ.

However, when a brother is caught in sin and slips and falls, what should be done? Scripture is clear: Christian brothers are to restore him. The word “restore” (katartizete) is a word that is used for setting a broken arm or leg or for mending nets or for cutting some growth out of a body (William Barclay. *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.58). Believers are to help the brother:

- |                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| • set him right        | • mend him      |
| • restore him          | • lead him back |
| • help cut the sin out |                 |

However, there is a right way and a wrong way to help the fallen brother. This is the point that is being stressed and that is desperately needed by believers and the church. All believers are mere men of like passions with all other men, and there are always some being overtaken by sin. This, of course, means that we need to constantly stay alert and available to fallen brothers.

But again, how we approach a fallen brother is of utmost importance. It is a very delicate matter. The brother will be very sensitive, perhaps embarrassed, and easily shamed. He could become so ashamed that he would be too embarrassed to return to the fellowship of believers. He could also feel that he would be unwelcomed, for what he has done is just not acceptable among believers. He has failed and failed publicly, and he has damaged the name of Christ and hurt the image of the church. He knows the attitude of the church and its believers about the matter.

Therefore, unless he is approached in the right spirit, he could be lost to the kingdom forever. This, of course, means that the ministry of restoration is of paramount importance, for the life of a dear brother is at stake. What the church needs to realize is this: the ministry of restoration, is the ministry of God. It is the ministry to which God has called us. We are to walk restoring men to the Kingdom of God and the fellowship of His church.

1. First, let the spiritual believers handle the matter (v.1).
2. Second, approach the brother in a spirit of meekness (v.1).
3. Third, consider yourself (v.1).
4. Fourth, bear one another's burden (v.2).
5. Fifth, confess your own nothingness (v.3).
6. Sixth, examine your own work (v.4).
7. Seventh, realize your own responsibility (v.5).

**1** (6:1) **Restoration—Backsliders—Believers, Duty:** first, let the *spiritual believers* handle sinning brothers. Spiritual believers are those who walk in the Spirit. How can the church tell if a believer is spiritual, if he is truly walking in the Spirit? The former passage spells out how.

1. Does the believer bear the fruit of the Spirit? (Gal.5:22-23).
  - love
  - joy
  - peace
  - longsuffering
  - gentleness
  - goodness
  - faith
  - meekness
  - self-control
2. Does the believer live a crucified life with Christ, that is, a sacrificial, self-denying life? Has the believer crucified his flesh with the passions and lusts? (Gal.5:24).
3. Does the believer walk in the Spirit—live a life that is consistent with his position in Christ? (Gal.5:25).
4. Does the believer walk free from super-spirituality, envy, pride, jealousy, arrogance, and selfishness? (Gal.5:26).

- 2** (6:1) **Backsliders—Restoration:** second, approach the brother in a *spirit of meekness*. How desperately this charge is needed! Too often what is displayed is a spirit of...
- hardness
  - indifference
  - harshness
  - rejection
- criticism
  - censorship
  - rumor
  - slander
- reproof
  - super-spirituality
  - “holier-than-thou”
  - ostracism

This approach, of course, is not ever concerned with restoring a brother. It is bent more on downing or destroying him. And the great tragedy is that it forces him to turn more and more to the world, to those who are more understanding of his weaknesses because they, too, are weak.

However, the spirit of rejection is not what Scripture is telling believers to show. Scripture is saying to approach the brother in meekness: to be gentle, tender, warm, loving, and caring. Discuss his sinning, yes, but with him not with others! Approach and love him, reach out to him, minister to him, help him, show care and concern and *above all else*, stay after him. Open your arms and welcome him back. Restore him into your fellowship. Let him know that he is forgiven, forgiven by all and accepted by all, warmly and tenderly.

**“But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another” (Gal.6:4).**

**“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation [calling] wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (Eph.4:1-2).**

**“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim.2:25).**

- 3** (6:1) **Restoration—Backsliders:** third, consider yourself, for you, too, can be tempted and overtaken by sin. This is a crucial point, for all believers are tempted with all kinds of sin (1 Cor.10:13). There is a real possibility that we may be overtaken by sin; therefore, we are to love and help our fallen brothers just like we would want to be loved and helped. The word “consider” (skoapon) means to look to oneself, to think about oneself and to give attention to oneself. It means to keep an attentive eye on oneself. If we really consider the matter, then we will reach out in love and meekness to help our fallen brothers. We have to help them, for we are all ever so subject to being overtaken by sin.

**“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).**

**“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).**

- 4** (6:2) **Burdens—Restoration—Backsliding:** fourth, bear one another’s burden. The law of Christ is the law of ministry and love.

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).**

Christ gave and sacrificed Himself to reach out to man. He bore the sins of man *for man*. We, of course, cannot bear the sins of men; but we can bear the burdens of each other, for we all suffer under the weight of sin—whether the sins are known or not. We can...

- be compassionate
  - encourage
  - pray
  - forgive
- be warm and tender
  - share the promises of God
  - sympathize
  - empathize

**“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more” (Acts 20:25).**

**“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Ro.12:15).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

**5** (6:3) **Pride—Conceit—Super-Spirituality:** fifth, confess your own nothingness. This is the reason so many fallen brothers are locked out of the fellowship of believers and churches. They are looked upon as being...

- unfit
- less capable
- weaker
- less spiritual
- too tarnished
- insufficient

This attitude, of course, is contrary to the Spirit of Christ. Note the words, “When he is nothing.” Christ came to save “nothings,” that is, sinners. All men are sinners whether they know it or not. Even believers, after they are saved, are sinners. This is too often forgotten, yet believers are both *saved and kept* by the righteousness of Christ and not by their own righteousness. We must always remember this, for the only acceptable approach to God is through the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The point is this: no person is better than any other person, not in righteousness and godliness. All men stand before God as sinners; in fact, they stand as totally depraved sinners. There is not a single man who is righteous, no, not one—not today, not tomorrow, not ever. If a man, believer or unbeliever, wants to stand in God’s presence, he has to come by Jesus Christ and his righteousness alone. Therefore, there is absolutely no place among God’s people for...

- super-spirituality
- spiritual snobbishness
- spiritual pride

There is absolutely no place for feeling superior or spiritually better than others. Only one person can make that claim: Jesus Christ. Within the church and its believers there is to be only one attitude: that of confessing our nothingness before God—that of confessing our total dependency upon the grace of God—that of confessing the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Note that any other confession is a deception. If we think otherwise, we only deceive ourselves.

When a believer understands this truth, then he is ready to reach out and help restore the erring brother. He knows he is no better; he has to approach Christ just like the erring brother—as nothing, for he is nothing. Righteously and godly, he stands on the same footing as the fallen brother: neither one of them has any righteousness or godliness to offer God. Therefore, they both must approach God through His Son Jesus Christ. Knowing this truth is what will stir love, concern, and care within the hearts of believers for fallen brothers.

“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Mt.23:12).

“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Ro.12:16).

“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor.8:2).

“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Cor.10:12).

“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal.6:3).

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev.3:17).

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican” (Lk.18:11).

“Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth” (Jn.9:41).

“I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me” (Job 33:9).

“Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Pr.16:18).

“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).

**6** (6:4) **Self-Examination:** sixth, examine your own work and conduct. The word “work” refers more to conduct and behavior than to employment. Of course, employment or work is involved, but the point of this verse deals with *all our behavior*. We are to be examining and judging our own lives, not the life of a fallen brother. Scripture is forceful on this point: *every man* is to keep busy examining *his own* work and life, and no man is exempt. There is so much evil flying around the world and the flesh is so weak that it is difficult for a person to remain unsoiled and clean. The flesh lusts...

- for acceptance
- for recognition
- for position
- for honor
- for compensation
- for approval
- to look
- to taste
- to feel
- to do
- to have
- to experience

Of course, every one of these desires is needful and beneficial until they cross over into the forbidden or are taken too far. Tasting food is good; tasting too much food is bad. Wanting recognition is good; loving recognition is sin.

The point is that temptation just swirls around us—all of us. Therefore, we must be busy examining and judging ourselves and not others. In fact, so much temptation swirls around us, if we lower our guard to examine and judge others, we are immediately overcome by sin ourselves. Remember: criticizing and judging others is sin; therefore, by turning away from examining ourselves to judging others, we have sinned.

We must measure ourselves against the Word of God, not against others. Our attitude toward others is to be that of love, care, ministry and restoration—not criticism and judgment.

Note that the believer who constantly examines himself has reason to rejoice in himself and not only in others. It is when our hearts and lives are pure that joy fills us. Nothing fills us with joy as much as a pure conscience. True, we do joy when we see others walking as they should, but deep joy comes from knowing that we ourselves are pleasing God by the way we walk.

**“Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Mt.7:5).**

**“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor.13:5).**

**“But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another” (Gal.6:4).**

**“Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord” (Lam.3:40).**

**7** (6:5) **Judgment—Responsibility:** seventh, realize your own duty and responsibility. The point of this verse is to warn the believer: he is personally responsible to the Lord for his own behavior and shall be judged for what he has done. Every believer has his own burdens, his own weight of faults and sins to bear. It is these that he is to be carrying, looking after, examining, and judging. He can never overcome them unless he gets his eyes off the failure of others and concentrates on the burden of his own failure.

**“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Mt.12:36).**

**“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants” (Mt.18:23).**

**“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Ro.14:12).**

**“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10).**

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| <p><b>1 How to do good to a teacher: By sharing in the ministry of the teacher</b></p> <p><b>2 Why do good to a teacher</b></p> <p>a. Because a person can be deceived about facing the judgment of God</p> <p>1) If one sows selfishly, he reaps corruption</p> <p>2) If one sows spiritually he reaps life</p> <p>b. Because a person shall reap—if he faints not</p> <p><b>3 When to serve with a teacher: As we have opportunity</b></p> <p>a. Do good to all men</p> <p>b. Do good to believers especially</p> | <p><b>E. A Walk Doing Good to One's Teacher: Sowing &amp; Reaping, 6:6-10</b></p> <p>6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.</p> <p>7 Be not mocked; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.</p> <p>8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.</p> <p>9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.</p> <p>10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.</p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE BELIEVER'S LIFE AND WALK: FREE AND SPIRITUAL, 5:13-6:18**

**E. A Walk Doing Good to One's Teacher, Sowing and Reaping, 6:6-10**

(6:6-10) **Introduction:** few people are as important to a society as are teachers. The relationship between teacher and student is a subject that is never stressed enough within the church. The present passage deals with this subject, in particular with the student's responsibilities to the teacher. Keep in mind that every believer is a student who sits at the feet of God's teachers whether they be ministers or Bible teachers.

1. How to do good to a teacher: by sharing in the ministry of the teacher (v.6).
2. Why do good to a teacher (v.7-9).
3. When to serve with a teacher: as we have opportunity (v.10).

**1** (6:6) **Teacher:** How does a believer do good to a teacher? Very simply, by communicating and sharing in the ministry of the teacher. This means much more than just giving financial support. Of course it means financial support, but as stated, it means much more. Note that Scripture is speaking directly to the *learner*, that is, to a believer in the church, to the person who is *taught in the Word of God*. The learner has a responsibility to the teacher just as the teacher has a responsibility to the learner. What is that responsibility? To share with the teacher in all good things and to participate in the ministry of the teacher. The learner shares in the ministry of the teacher by...

- *being present* when the teacher teaches.
- *being attentive and learning* what the teacher teaches.
- *sharing in discussions* of what the teacher teaches.
- *passing on* what the teacher teaches.
- *participating* with the teacher in his or her full ministry.
- *supporting* the teacher financially.
- *encouraging others* to come and learn from the teacher.

Note another point: the reference to the "Word" means the *Word of God*. A teacher should *always* be teaching the Word of God, and a learner should always be sure that he is sitting under a teacher who is teaching the Word of God.

**"Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat" (Mt.10:9-10).**

**"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor.9:14).**

**"Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction" (Ph.4:14).**

**"Let the elders [ministers] that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward" (1 Tim.5:17-18).**

**2** (6:7-9) **Sowing—Reaping—Ministers—Teachers:** Why should believers do good to their teachers? Two very strong reasons are given.

1. A person can be deceived about facing the judgment of God. The word "deceived" (planasthe) means to be led astray. Some Galatians were being led astray in this matter. They were failing to share in the ministry of Paul, becoming critics instead of supporters. (See note—Gal.1:1 for more discussion.) And note what attacking the teacher of God equals:

it equals mocking God. The word “mocked” (mukterizetai) means to turn one’s nose up at God. By rejecting God’s minister, the teacher whom God had sent to them, the Galatians were rejecting God. They were not only mocking and turning their noses up at the teacher of God, but they were mocking God. However, Scripture declares in no uncertain terms: “God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” If a man sows a life...

- that is not present when the teacher teaches
- that is not attentive and learning what the teacher teaches
- that does not pass on what the teacher teaches
- that does not participate with the teacher in his ministry
- that does not encourage others to learn from the teacher

...if a man sows this rejection, this turning up of the nose, he rejects and turns his nose up at God. And if he rejects God, he shall be rejected by God. Whatever a man sows toward his teacher, he reaps. He shall bear the judgment of his behavior toward God’s teacher.

- a. If a believer sows corruption to his flesh, he shall reap corruption (v.8). If he does not listen to the teacher’s warnings about the lusts of the flesh, he shall reap the lusts of the flesh. He will be overtaken by the appeal, pull, cravings, passion, and lust...
- to worship as he desires
  - to seek his destiny from astrology and sorcery instead of prayer
  - to live as he pleases
  - to seek earthly position, power, and honor
  - to strive against others as he pleases
  - to party as he likes
  - to have illicit sex
  - to hoard
  - to seek the things of this world

The list could go on and on, but the point is well understood. The flesh perishes. It ages, dies, and decays. If a person sows to the flesh, he shall go the way of all flesh: die and face the judgment of God. God will not be mocked. His teachers must be heard and their lessons learned, for they teach His Word. If a man rejects God’s messenger and chooses to sow to his flesh, he shall reap the flesh and its destiny: death and judgment. God is not mocked; there is no escape.

**“For to be carnally [fleshly] minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Ro.8:6-8).**

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).**

**“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb.9:27)**

**“Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same” (Job 4:8).**

**“He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity” (Pr.22:8).**

**“For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind” (Hos.8:7).**

- b. If a believer sows to the Spirit, he shall reap life everlasting. If he listens to the teacher’s exhortations about the salvation that is in God’s Son and the life God expects him to live, he shall reap the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God will actually enter his life and take up residence there. The Spirit will implant the divine nature of God within the heart of the believer, the divine nature that shall live now and forever. The believer shall be enabled (given the strength and power) to live a life of...

- |         |                 |                |
|---------|-----------------|----------------|
| • love  | • longsuffering | • faithfulness |
| • joy   | • gentleness    | • meekness     |
| • peace | • goodness      | • self-control |

And most important, as stated, he shall live forever with God in the new heavens and earth.

**“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn.3:14-15).**

**“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (Jn.12:25).**

**“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal.6:8).**

**“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:13-14).**

**“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Rev.21:1).**

**“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you” (Hos.10:12).**

2. A person shall reap if he does not faint in serving with his teacher. The believer or pupil must join with his teacher in the ministry if he wishes to reap the reward. He must not...

- withdraw
- fall back
- slack off
- allow weariness
- allow routineness
- give into pressure
- allow interruptions
- cave into persecution
- give into temptation

The pupil must be constant, steadfast, and persevering—just as he is taught to be by his teacher. He must join right in with his teacher in serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not” (2 Cor.4:1).**

**“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them” (2 Tim.3:14).**

**“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb.12:1).**

**“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.1:13).**

**“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).**

**“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev.3:11).**

Note the motive for not fainting: the student shall reap in due season. The day of reaping is coming. God is going to reward the pupil (believer) who serves and works by the side of his teacher.

**“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Mt.10:42).**

**“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt.25:23).**

**“And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (Jn.4:36).**

**“Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Eph.6:8).**

**3** (6:10) **Teacher—Pupil—Ministry:** When is a believer to serve with his teacher? Very simply, at every opportunity. He is to join right in and do good every chance he can. The idea is that he is...

- to stay alert to opportunity.
- to keep his eyes open to make opportunities.
- to rush to all opportunities.

When a teacher goes to meet a need, the believer must not miss the opportunity to join his teacher and minister with him. No chance to minister should ever be missed. Opportunity can be missed, and a believer can miss the privilege of ministering and of being more greatly rewarded in the glorious day of redemption. Therefore, he must stay alert and not be weary if he wants a full reward.

Note to whom he is to minister: to all men (unbelievers), but especially to believers. A person is responsible for his own family first; then he adds on the burden of the world. God has placed us all within a family and we are the ones who are first responsible for that family. Others may help us, but we are the ones who are primarily responsible. The same is true with the family of God. A Christian brother is the one who is responsible for the family of God. Therefore, we must always meet the needs of our Christian family before moving on out among unbelievers.

**“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Lk.6:35).**

**“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim.6:17-18).**

**“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).**

**“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas.4:17).**

**“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it” (Ps.34:14).**

**“Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed” (Ps.37:3).**

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| <p><b>1 An important section—Paul himself writes</b></p>   | <p><b>F. A Walk Boasting in the Cross of Christ, 6:11-18</b></p> <p>11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.</p>   | <p>cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.</p>  | <p>a. The cross crucifies the world to men &amp; men to the world</p>   |
| <p><b>2 False ministers make a good showing in the flesh—seeking popularity</b></p> <p>a. To gain approval &amp; to escape persecution</p> <p>b. To make a good showing by adding to their statistical numbers</p> | <p>12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.</p> <p>13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.</p> | <p>15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.</p> <p>16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.</p> <p>17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.</p> | <p>b. The cross creates a new man</p> <p>c. The cross brings peace &amp; mercy</p> <p>d. The cross gives purpose to the scars of life</p> |
| <p><b>3 True ministers boast in the cross of Christ</b></p>  | <p>14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the</p>  | <p>18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.</p>   | <p><b>4 Conclusion: A benediction of grace</b></p>  |

**DIVISION V**

**THE BELIEVER'S LIFE AND WALK: FREE AND SPIRITUAL, 5:13-6:18**

**F. A Walk Boasting in the Cross of Christ, 6:11-18**

(6:11-18) **Introduction:** this passage concludes Paul's letter to the Galatians. Paul's heart was pounding with concern over the Galatian believers and their churches. They had allowed false teachers to enter their ranks, and many of them had begun to listen and follow the false teachers. The churches were on the precipice of deserting God and destroying their witness for Christ and world missions. Usually Paul dictated his letters to a scribe, and when he was through dictating the letter, he closed the letter with a brief blessing and his signature. But note what he did as he closed this letter to the Galatians: he took the pen himself and closed the letter, closed it with a strong exhortation and with a defense of his ministry and of the gospel. He declared in no uncertain terms: believers—minister and layman alike—are to walk boasting in nothing but the cross of Christ.

1. An important section—Paul himself writes (v.11).
2. False ministers make a good showing in the flesh—seeking popularity (v.12-13).
3. True ministers boast in the cross of Christ (v.14-17).
4. Conclusion: a benediction of grace (v.18).

**1** (6:11) **Paul—Scripture:** this is an important passage of Galatians, so important that Paul took the pen from his scribe and wrote it himself. The reference to writing a *large letter* means large print. Why did Paul write with large print? Several explanations are given.

1. Because Paul wanted to boldly emphasize the points of what he was saying. It should be noted that this is possible, but the scribe could have done this as well as Paul.
2. Because Paul could not write well, so he had to write in bold print in order for it to be read. This too is unlikely, for Paul was a well educated man.
3. Because Paul had some kind of eye problem or blurred vision. Of all explanations, this seems most likely. (See note—2 Cor.12:7-10 for more discussion. Cp. Gal.4:14-15.)

There is no question that Paul chose to personally write this section because he wanted to emphasize its message and to verify that he was the true author of the letter. Why he wrote in large print is unknown.

The lesson for us is this: the message of this passage is important enough for Paul to take the pen from the scribe and write it himself. Therefore, we need to give utmost attention to what is said.

**2** (6:12-13) **False Teachers—Flesh:** false ministers seek to make a good showing in the flesh, that is, they seek worldly popularity; they want to be accepted and approved by the world. Remember: false teachers had infiltrated the churches of Galatia (see note, *False Teachers*—Gal.1:6-7 for what they taught). They opposed both Paul and the gospel he preached. Their major stress was that a person had to undergo the basic ritual of religion, that of circumcision (baptism, church membership, etc.). They made circumcision necessary for salvation. If a person was circumcised, he was well on his way to being saved. Paul attacked this position and made a strong charge against false teachers. He charged them with being driven by worldly motives. Keep in mind that he was dealing with false teachers and ministers *within the church*. What he had to say is a strong lesson for teachers of every generation.

1. The false teachers sought to gain the approval of their peers and to escape persecution. They sought the favor of men over the favor of God. Many of the earliest ministers of the gospel were priests who saw Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. However, they accepted Him only as an addition to the law. They said that Jesus Christ came primarily to show how God wants us to live; therefore, He only added to the law. The law was still important in approaching God: we were to approach God through both the law and Jesus Christ. Therefore, it was unpopular in the ministry of that day to proclaim that Christ alone was the way to God. The ministers who proclaimed Christ alone were persecuted through ridicule, mockery, abuse, and rejection. A minister who preached salvation through the cross of Christ alone was thought to be destroying both the law and established religion. Therefore, the ministers of established religion persecuted the ministers of the

cross. As a result, it took real courage to stand up and proclaim the truth. Most chose the easy way out and went along with the established ministry in order to avoid the persecution.

**Thought 1.** How many go along with the *established and popular religion of the world* instead of proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ and His Word? How many fear the ridicule, rejection, and abuse of the cross? How often is a minister tempted to tone down the message of the cross to keep from offending some in the congregation? How many ministers have to fear reaction if they proclaim the simple message of salvation by faith in the cross of Christ *alone*? How many have to fear reaction from their peers and denominational leaders?

2. The false teachers sought to make a good showing by adding to their statistical numbers (v.13). Note exactly what Scripture says: they wanted to have people circumcised so that they could boast in their numbers. Their interest was not so much in teaching people to obey the Lord and the law as it was in building up their own security. They wanted recognition through the appearance of a growing ministry. They sought the approval and acceptance of people more than the welfare of the people. Of course, keeping the law and leading the people to obey God was important, just as every man's teaching is important to him. But their primary concern was the appearance of a growing ministry so that they could secure their own livelihood and position with the people.

**Thought 1.** People are impressed with increased numbers on statistical growth. Everyone knows this, both religious and lay leaders. As a result ministers are often drawn into the temptation to stress growth in baptism, church attendance, Bible study, programs, or activities. Increased numbers...

- |                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • build image          | • point to gifts and abilities |
| • boost egos           | • stress charisma              |
| • convey success       | • open doors                   |
| • enlarge reputation   | • help to increase income      |
| • secure position      | • attract attention            |
| • increase opportunity |                                |

**3** (6:14-17) **Ministers:** true ministers boast in the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is the *only boast* of a true minister of God, for there is no other approach to God. God accepts a person only if he comes to Him by way of the cross. There is no other way to become acceptable to God. Therefore, the true minister has no other message, no other truth of which to boast. Paul gave four reasons why the cross is the minister's only boast.

1. The cross crucifies the world to men and men to the world. What does this mean?
  - a. First, the cross crucifies the world to men. The world has all kinds of attractions that appeal to men, and men lust after the attractions. There are such attractions as...
 

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| • position    | • sex         |
| • power       | • pleasure    |
| • acceptance  | • honor       |
| • recognition | • food        |
| • money       | • possessions |

The list could go on and on to include every appealing attraction on earth, but what is the end of it all? Deterioration, decay, death, and a sense of judgment. Even man himself ages, dies, and decays. There is nothing on earth that lasts and lives eternally. If man wishes to live forever, someone with unlimited power has to re-structure this world. Someone has to destroy the world and remake it, everything in it, including the flesh of man. The glorious news is that God has done this very thing. God has shown that He loves this world, and He has demonstrated His love in the most perfect way possible. How?

God sent His Son into the world to *die for men* and to free them from the world. When Jesus Christ died upon the cross, He bore the penalty of our transgressions. He took the law's condemnation of death against us and bore the condemnation for us. Therefore, any person who believes that Jesus Christ died for him shall be saved from this world of death. God declares that he will count that person as having been crucified with Christ. The person never has to die. When the moment comes for the person to pass from this world into the next, God will transfer the person right into His presence to live eternally. It will all happen within the blinking of an eye. The person who believes in Christ will never die, never taste or experience death.

This is what is meant by the world being crucified to the believer. *The believer never has to go the way of the world*, that is, the way of sin, corruption, death, and judgment.

- ⇒ Jesus Christ died to deliver the believer from the world, all its bondages including the bondage of death.
- ⇒ The Spirit of Jesus Christ (the Holy Spirit) lives within the believer to give him the power to overcome the world in all its corruptible attractions. Through the Spirit of God, the believer has the power to conquer the lusts of the flesh.

- b. Second, the cross crucified men (believers) to the world. What does this mean? When the believer dies to the world, he turns away from the attractions and pleasures of the world; therefore, the believer becomes unattractive to the world. Worldly men do not like what they see, for the believer is rejecting the lifestyle and pleasures of the world. Consequently, the worldly want nothing to do with the believer. They want him out of their way. They want him as non-existent, as a dead person to them. Therefore, when a person comes to the cross of Christ, the cross crucifies him to the world and its ways. He is no longer attractive to the world.

**“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Ro.6:6).**

**“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).**

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

**“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him” (2 Tim.2:11).**

2. The cross creates a new man. Nothing makes a person acceptable to God except God’s very own Son, Jesus Christ. No religion, no law, no ritual—nothing can avail anything with God except Jesus Christ. Therefore, if any man wishes to live with God, he has to *believe in Jesus Christ and approach God in the name of Jesus Christ*.

Now a very practical question arises: How does using the name of Jesus Christ make a person live forever? Does a person become acceptable to God by just approaching God and saying, “God, I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ”? No! And there is one good reason. God knows who is really sincere and who is not. God cannot be deceived. *Words and false profession*—just using the words “in the name of Jesus Christ”—will not save anyone. A person has to be genuinely sincere.

The point is this: when a person is sincere in his belief, God gives the person a new spirit—a recreated spirit. God actually places His divine nature, the presence of His own Spirit, into the person’s life. The person is “born again” spiritually. He becomes what Scripture calls a *new creature, a new man*.

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn.3:3-6).**

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

**“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal.6:15).**

**“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).**

**“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).**

**“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pt.1:23).**

**“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).**

**“Beloved, let us love one other: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1 Jn.4:7).**

**“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten [born again] of him” (1 Jn.5:1).**

3. The cross brings peace and mercy (v.16). Note who it is that experiences peace and mercy: those who walk by the *rule of the cross and of the new creature*. A person who walks after the cross, seeking to live as a new creature in Christ Jesus will be given...

- the peace of God (see note, *Peace*—Gal.1:3 for discussion).
- the mercy of God. He will experience both the forgiveness of sins and the acceptance of God. And most wonderfully, he will be given the *perfect assurance* of eternal life and of God’s care. (See note, *Mercy*—Eph.2:4-5 for more discussion.)

Note that the church and believers are called “the Israel of God.” This simply means that the church and believers are the true Israel of God, the ones in whom God fulfills His promises. (See outlines and notes—Romans, Chapters 9-11 for a full discussion of Israel and its place in God’s world-wide plan.)

4. The cross gives purpose to the scars of life. Christ had suffered for Paul; therefore, Paul was willing to suffer for Christ. And suffer he did. He bore as much as any man has had to bear for Christ (see note, *Paul, Suffering*—2 Cor.1:8-10 for a list of Paul’s sufferings). The word for marks (stigmata) means the branding marks that masters put upon their slaves. The marks identified the slaves as belonging to them.

The point is clear: Paul had subjected his body so much and suffered so much persecution for Christ that his body bore the marks of such subjection and suffering. He could say that the marks upon his body were the branding marks of Christ—the marks that proved his slavery and service to Christ. Therefore, let no man deny his call and ministry for the Lord. He had strong evidence that he was a true minister of the Lord Jesus: the very marks upon his body. The cross of Jesus Christ drove Paul to serve Christ, even to the point of suffering beyond imagination.

**Thought 1.** The believer who suffers reproach, ridicule, mockery, and other persecutions because of his stand for Christ—that believer bears the marks of Christ in his body.

**4** (6:18) **Conclusion:** Paul ends the letter to the Galatians abruptly. He will have no more attacks upon his ministry nor upon the gospel of Christ. The churches and their people need to repent and get rid of the false teachers. Until then:

**“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen” (v.18. See note, *Grace*—Gal.1:3.)**



**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE**

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**EPHESIANS**



# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS INTRODUCTION

**AUTHOR:** Paul. Few critics deny this. His ministry at Ephesus is covered in Acts 18:18-21; 19:2-41; 20:17-35.

**DATE:** Probably between A.D. 60-63. The letter was written while Paul was in prison in Rome (Eph.3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Paul probably arrived in Rome in the spring of A.D. 60 or 61. He was under house arrest for two years (Acts 28:30). During his two year imprisonment (either A.D. 60-62 or A.D. 61-63) he wrote the letters that are usually called “The Prison Epistles”: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** Uncertain. There are strong reasons why the words “to the Ephesians” are questioned.

1. The words “to the Ephesians” are not in the oldest and best manuscripts of the Greek New Testament (The Chester Beatty Papyrus, about A.D. 200; the great fourth century Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus). The third century writer Origen states that the words “to the Ephesians was not in the original text.” Basil and Jerome, of the fourth century, said that the best manuscripts did not have the words in their texts (Francis Foulkes. *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, no date listed, p.17).

2. The letter is the most impersonal of Paul’s letters. There is no affection or warm touch in it—no personal greeting—no personal message. This is strange, for Paul spent at least three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:17-35).

3. The indication is that Paul and the recipients of the letter did not know one another. The word “heard” is used instead of the word “know” (Eph.1:15; 3:2).

4. The letters to the Ephesians and Colossians have much the same message. This points toward Paul writing both letters about the same time. In fact, Paul mentions another letter saying it too was being circulated among the churches about the same time that Colossians was being circulated (Col.4:16).

The evidence points to a wonderful truth! The letter is from “Paul...to all those who are saints and faithful in Christ Jesus.” It is written to saints everywhere, to all generations. It is written to the believers and the churches of today.

**PURPOSE:** Paul writes Ephesians for at least two reasons.

1. To reveal the purpose of God for the whole universe. God has shown His purpose through His Son, Jesus Christ, and He is working out His purpose through the church, which is His body on earth.

2. To encourage the church to walk in a spirit of oneness and unity: to “be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).

Note the word “together” (Eph.1:10; 2:5, 6, 22) and the word “one” (Eph.2:15, 16, 18; 4:4, 5, 6).

**SPECIAL FEATURES:**

1. The City of Ephesus. At its height Ephesus was the most important city along the coast of Asia Minor. Two hundred and thirty cities dotted the coast line of Asia Minor. Many had ideal harbors, but Ephesus was the queen among these coast communities. The city had been founded to command one of the main highways of Asia Minor. Its attraction was not only its natural harbor, but the rich, fertile land that covered the inland area.

Ephesus was, of course, a great commercial city. Its natural harbor and strategic location on one of the main roads of the world made it such. However, in the middle of the first century, the harbor had silted up so badly that trade had declined astronomically from the days of Ephesian glory. There had been attempts to drag the silt out, but the efforts were half-hearted and finally abandoned. The people’s hearts were just not in the effort. Part of the reason for this attitude was the successful and profitable trade Ephesus enjoyed from its religious cult. The great temple of Diana, or Artemis, was there. Diana was the goddess who had a grotesque head and many breasts and focused upon the sensual pleasure of the flesh. The worshipping pilgrims found their satisfaction in prostitution with a host of priestesses who promoted the cult of the goddess. A great trade of silversmiths had developed over the years, and tourist commercialism boomed year-round. This accounts for the guild of silversmiths finding the crowds an easy mark for arousing opposition against Paul (Acts 19:24). As the years went by, the great harbor silted up more and more, and the Ephesians depended more and more upon the trade that came from their religion and superstition. The natural harbor of Smyrna, which lay close by, became a more suitable port and began to take away more and more of the commercial traffic of Ephesus. As a result Ephesus became a dying city, living on its past reputation as a religious and philosophical center. The great city of Ephesus had a disease, the disease of sensual unrighteousness, and the disease did its work: it corrupted the people. The people, sensual and self-centered, lost their will and willingness to ply a commendable trade. Thus, the disease of Ephesus proved mortal. The “lampstand” of Ephesus crumbled, and the light of Ephesus died out (see Rev.2:1-7, esp. 5).

2. The Church at Ephesus. The church in Ephesus had a small beginning. When Paul visited Ephesus, he found only twelve believers in the city. They had been won to the Lord by the immature but impressive preacher Apollos. As a result they had been misinformed on the presence of the Holy Spirit; they seemed to lack a consciousness of the Spirit in the life of the believer and the awareness that He had already been sent into the world (Acts 19:1-7). After Paul’s instruction to these twelve, he began to teach in the synagogue. He taught for three months, but the Jews were hardened and refused to believe the gospel. They murmured against the message. Therefore, Paul moved the church into the school of a philosopher, Tyrannus. There he preached Christ for two whole years. During this time it is said that the church was instrumental in sounding forth the Word throughout all Asia: “So all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks (Acts 19:10).

The Lord worked special miracles by Paul in Ephesus and the church witnessed some amazing things. From all evidence, the spectacular was necessary in order to get through to the people. As always, God did everything He could to

reach a people. These experiences show the great love and movement of God toward man (see Acts 19:11-20). In viewing these accounts, we must keep the background of the city in mind. Ephesus was a hot bed of Oriental magic and superstition. The people were an emotional and sensual lot, easily moved to feelings. They were a devoted people, an expressive people, a loving people, and equally a lovable people (Rev.2:1-7, esp. 4).

As Paul preached and God worked miracles, many believed and the church grew mightily. The believers gave great evidence of changed lives by living for Christ right in the middle of an immoral and pagan society. On one occasion, the church demonstrated its new found faith by building a great bonfire and setting aflame all of its pagan and magical literature.

3. The Great Message of Ephesians is “Reconciliation.” Paul deals with the major problem of man—the problem of division, disunity, and disharmony. He deals with the major divisions and dissensions throughout the universe.

- a. Man is seen divided against God (Eph.2:1f).
- b. Man is seen divided against man (Eph.2:11f).
- c. Christians are seen out of harmony with Christians (Eph.4:1f).
- d. Christians are seen out of harmony with God (Eph.5:1f).
- e. Family members are seen divided against family members (Eph.5:22f).
- f. Slaves (employees) are seen divided against masters (employers) (Eph.6:5f).
- g. Man is seen out of harmony with cosmic powers (Eph.2:2; 6:10, 11-12; 3:10, 15; cp. 1:10, 20-21. See also Ro.8:18 for man’s division against nature).

This terrible and terrifying division is said to hound and haunt man and to demand his constant attention and struggle. Paul’s answer is onefold. And it should be noted, his answer is one of the great revelations of Scripture. “[God] having made known unto us the mystery of his will...that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might *gather together in one all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are *on earth*” (Eph.1:9-10).

Christ is the answer to division, to disunity, and to disharmony. He is the One who breaks down all barriers; He is the One who reconciles all things.

- a. He reconciles man to God by the blood of the cross (Eph.2:4-13, esp. 13).
- b. He reconciles man to man by bringing all men together into one body, His church (Eph.2:13-22; cp. 1:22-23).
- c. He reconciles Christians to Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit and by giving individual gifts and functions for each member to perform (Eph.4:1-32).
- d. He reconciles believers to God by the power and fruit of the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:1-21).
- e. He reconciles family members to family members by giving the example of Christ’s love for the church (Eph.5:22-24).
- f. He reconciles slaves (employees) to masters (employers) by putting both on an equal footing before Christ (Eph.5:5-9).
- g. He enables man to overcome the cosmic and spiritual powers and the evil forces of the universe by the armor of God (Eph.6:10-18).

4. The Great Picture of Ephesians is “God’s Redemptive Purpose.” His redemptive purpose reads like a theological picture of four scenes.

- a. Scene 1: God’s Election (Eph.1:3-14). Before the earth was ever founded, God chose (the literal word is “elected”) believers in Christ. He chose all who would trust and commit themselves to Christ.
- b. Scene 2: God’s Reconciliation (Eph.2:1-18). All things are out of harmony; all is presently out of order. Division, disunity, and disharmony reign now. But the day is coming when God is to gather all things together, as one, and place them before Jesus Christ in His Kingdom—all things that are in heaven and earth (Eph.1:9-10). Christ is the center and the cord that binds all things together. He is the great Reconciler, the One to whom all things can look for salvation and peace—eternally.
- c. Scene 3: God’s Body, His Church (Eph.2:19-3:13; cp. 1:22-23). God has a body, a body of people that He is supernaturally *recreating*. He is *recreating* them to experience the great truth of reconciliation and peace and to carry the message to all other men. Christ is God’s instrument of reconciliation, and the church is Christ’s instrument of reconciliation.
- d. Scene 4: The Church, the Followers of Christ (Eph.4:1-6:20). The followers of Christ are to walk worthy of such a glorious life by being reconciled as one. They are to live together in unity and harmony, and they are to carry the message of reconciliation to a world swallowed up in division.

5. The Great Similarity to Colossians. There are more than fifty-five verses that are exactly the same, and twenty-five verses that are very similar. This means that of the one hundred and fifty-five verses in Ephesians, seventy-five are closely connected with Colossians. Both Ephesians and Colossians begin with a doctrinal section and end with a practical section, and both were apparently delivered by the same man, Tychicus (Eph.6:20; cp. Col.4:7).

Such similarity is to be expected. Paul wrote both while in prison in Rome, probably one right after the other.

6. Ephesians has been called “The Queen of the Epistles.” It is a book greatly loved; it is probably loved more than any other book by most people. With strong wings it soars among the heights of theological thought and glides upon the winds of the greatest of truths.

It is like the delivery of a great sermon that holds a person spellbound. It is like the greatest of prayers that draws a person into the very presence of God. It is like a great doxology that leaves a person with a deep sense of worship.

## OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

**THE PREACHER'S OUTLINE & SERMON BIBLE™** is *unique*. It differs from all other Study Bibles & Sermon Resource Materials in that every Passage and Subject is outlined right beside the Scripture. When you choose any *Subject* below and turn to the reference, you have not only the Scripture, but you discover the Scripture and Subject *already outlined for you—verse by verse*.

For a *quick example*, choose one of the subjects below and turn over to the Scripture, and you will find this marvelous help for faster, easier, and more accurate use.

In addition, every point of the Scripture and Subject is *fully developed in a Commentary with supporting Scripture* at the bottom of the page. Again, this arrangement makes sermon preparation much easier and faster.

Note something else: The Subjects of Ephesians have titles that are both Biblical and *practical*. The practical titles sometimes have more appeal to people. This *benefit* is clearly seen for use on billboards, bulletins, church newsletters, etc.

A *suggestion*: For the quickest overview of Ephesians, first read *all the major titles* (I, II, III, etc.), then come back and read the subtitles.

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## OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

### GREETING: THE CALL OF GOD, 1:1-2

#### I. THE ETERNAL PLAN OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 1:3-23

- A. The Blessings of God, 1:3-14
- B. The Knowledge of God, 1:15-18
- C. The Power of God: Demonstrated in Christ's Exaltation, 1:19-23

#### II. THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 2:1-22

- A. The Believer's Life Before Conversion: Life Without Christ, 2:1-3
- B. The Believer's Conversion (Part I): The Work of God's Mercy, 2:4-7
- C. The Believer's Conversion (Part II): The Work of God's Grace—Salvation, 2:8-10
- D. Remember What Life Is Like Since Christ Came: Reconciliation & Peace, 2:11-18
- E. Remember Who You Are: Six Pictures of the Church, 2:19-22

#### III. THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 3:1-21

- A. A New Body of People: The Great Mystery of Christ, 3:1-13
- B. A Mature Believer in Christ: The Great Prayer, 3:14-21

#### IV. THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9

- A. The Believer is to Walk Worthy of His Calling, 4:1-6
- B. The Believer is to Walk by Using His Gifts, 4:7-16
- C. The Believer is to Walk Differently From the Gentiles, 4:17-24
- D. The Believer is to Walk Putting Off the Garments of the Old Man, 4:25-32
- E. The Believer is to Walk Following God, 5:1-7
- F. The Believer is to Walk as a Child of Light, 5:8-14
- G. The Believer is to Walk Carefully and Strictly, 5:15-21
- H. The Believing Wife & Husband are to Walk in a Spirit of Submission & Love, 5:22-24
- I. Believing Children & Parents are to Walk Under God's Authority, 6:1-4
- J. Believing Slaves & Master (Employers-Employees) are to Walk Under God's Authority, 6:5-9

#### V. THE WARFARE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 6:10-24

- A. The Armor of the Christian Soldier, 6:10-20
- B. The Examples of Faithful Christian Soldiers, 6:21-24



**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE  
EPHESIANS**

**CHAPTER 1**

**GREETING: THE CALL  
OF GOD, 1:1-2**

- 1 God's call to Paul**
  - a. To be an apostle
  - b. By God's will
- 2 God's call to the church & its believers**
  - a. To be saints & faithful
  - b. To receive grace<sup>grace</sup> and peace

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the the faithful in Christ Jesus:  
2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

**GREETING: THE CALL OF GOD, 1:1-2**

(1:1-2) **Introduction:** Paul begins the letter to the Ephesians with one of the greatest subjects imaginable—the call of God. Nothing could be any more meaningful to a person than to be called by God.

- 1. God's call to Paul (v.1).
- 2. God's call to the church and its believers (v.1-2).

**1** (1:1) **Call—Paul—Apostle—God's Will:** there was God's call to Paul. Paul says that he was “an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.” Note four significant points.

1. Paul was greatly privileged. There is no greater privilege in all the world than the privilege of serving Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the very Son of God Himself, the Supreme Lord of the universe in all its enormity. No matter how far out the universe reaches and no matter how many universes there are, Jesus Christ is the *Majestic Lord* of all. He rules and reigns as God Almighty. There could be no greater privilege than serving the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe.

2. The word “apostle” (apostolos) means one called and sent forth on a very special mission (see *DEEPER STUDY # 5, Apostle—Mt.10:2* for more discussion). The mission given to Paul was that of a messenger. The Lord Jesus Christ called Paul to proclaim the glorious message of salvation to the world.

The point is this: Jesus Christ is not only the Sovereign Lord of the universe, He is the Savior of the world. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to save the world. Any person who believes on Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life (Jn.3:16). *Christ needs messengers*—messengers who will take the glorious news of salvation to the world. This was the call of God to Paul: to be a messenger of Jesus Christ to the world. (See note, *Minister, Call—Gal.1:1* for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** Christ needs messengers. Many hundreds of years have passed and the world still has not been reached with the glorious news of Jesus Christ, God's very own Son. Woe to the man who has been called and does not go! If God calls us, we must go or else face a terrible day of accountability.

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16).**

**“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:18-21).**

**“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).**

3. Paul was possessed by Jesus Christ. The supreme Lord and Majesty of the universe had condescended and humbled Himself to come to this earth and to save it. God's very own Son has given man the privilege of knowing Him in the most personal way—as his Savior and Lord. Paul knew Christ—knew Him personally—knew Him as his Savior. Imagine knowing the Son of God personally! No greater privilege could exist. Paul knew this; therefore, he surrendered his life completely to Christ. All he was and all he had, Paul turned over to Christ. He was possessed and obsessed with Christ. He lived for Christ and for Christ alone. Christ was Paul's Savior, but He was also his Lord and Master. He was possessed totally by Christ. He was not his own to do as he willed; he was Christ's, to do only as Christ willed.

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mt.16:24).

“Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee” (Mk.10:28).

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:33).

“And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting” (Lk.18:29-30).

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Ro.6:13).

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Ph.3:7-8).

“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways” (Pr.23:26).

4. Paul was called by the will of God. Who he was and what he was doing was God’s will. His work and employment were chosen by God, not him. He had not chosen the ministry because it was a good profession to enter nor because some friends thought he would make a good preacher. He was a minister because God had called him to be a minister.

**Thought 1.** How many of us can say that what we are doing is God’s will? How many of us are sure that our work and profession are of God—that we are right where God wants us? Are we working and serving where God wants us or where we want to be? Are we in God’s will or out of God’s will?

“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Mt.12:50).

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).

“[Serve] not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph.6:6).

“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (Jas.4:15).

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jn.2:17).

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Ps.40:8).

**2** (1:1-2) **Church—Believers, Call—Saints—Faithful:** there was God’s call to the church. This is Paul’s greeting to the church, and it is very similar to the usual greeting he gave to all churches. Note the depth of meaning in what he says: he is actually covering the scope of God’s call to a church and its believers.

1. God calls believers to be *saints and faithful*.

a. In the Bible the word “saint” does not refer to just a few people who have done great works for God. It refers to all people. The word “saint” (*hagioi*) means set apart, consecrated, sacred, and holy. A saint is a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ who has been set apart to live for God. The saint has given himself to live a consecrated, sacred, and holy life—all for the glory of God. Note that believers are *saints* in both senses:

⇒ Believers are *saints* in the sense that they have been given a new heart by God: a heart that is renewed and recreated in righteousness and true holiness.

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).

⇒ Believers are *saints* in the sense that they are set apart to live consecrated and holy lives in this world.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing

of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]” (1 Pt.1:14-15).

- b. The word “faithful” (pistois) means a person who has placed his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The faithful person is a person who has looked upon the Lord Jesus Christ and...
- believed that Christ could and would save him.
  - counted Christ worthy of his trust.
  - placed his confidence in Christ and His Word.
  - entrusted his salvation into the hands of Christ.
  - committed his life to Christ.

Very simply, the faithful are those who have surrendered and set their lives apart to Jesus Christ, trusting Him to save them. This is the very first call God gives to people: to be the saints and the faithful of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Thought 1.** Every human being should make absolutely sure that God counts him among the saints and the faithful of the world. Unless he is so counted, there is no escape from the enslavements and corruptions of this world; and most tragic of all, his end is death, eternal death.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:14-15).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn.11:25).

“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (Jn.12:46).

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Ro.10:9).

2. God calls believers to grace and peace (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Grace*—Eph.1:2; Gal.1:3; *Peace*—Gal.1:3; 5:22-23 for discussion).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(1:2) **Grace** (charis): probably the most meaningful word in the language of men. The Bible means something far more than men mean by grace. To men the word “grace” means three things.

- ⇒ Grace is that something, that quality within a thing, that is beautiful or joyful. It may be the fragrance of a flower, the rich green of the grass, the beauty of a lovely person.
- ⇒ Grace is anything that has loveliness. It may be a thought, an act, a word, a person.
- ⇒ Grace is a gift, a favor that someone might extend to a friend. The favor is always freely done, expecting nothing in return, and the favor is always done for a friend.

In light of this, grace means two very significant things.

1. Grace means all the favors and gifts of God. It means all the good and perfect gifts of God, all the good and beneficial things He gives us and does for us, whether physical, material, or spiritual (Jas.1:17).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).

“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:7).

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).

“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.1:14).

2. Grace means the favor of God showered upon men—men who did not deserve His favor. When the early Christians looked at what God had done for men, they had to add a deeper and much richer meaning to the word *grace*. For

God had saved sinners, those who had acted against Him. Grace became the kindness and love that God freely gives to His *enemies*—men who are...

- “without strength” (Ro.5:6).
- “ungodly” (Ro.5:6).
- “sinners” (Ro.5:8).
- “enemies” (Ro.5:10).

No other word so expresses the depth and richness of the heart and mind of God. This is the distinctive difference between God’s grace and man’s grace. Whereas man sometimes does favors for his friends and thereby can be said to be gracious, God has done a thing unheard of among men: He has given His very own Son to die for His enemies (Ro.5:8-10). (See notes—Jn.21:15-17; Eph.2:8-10.)

- a. God’s grace is not earned. It is something completely undeserved and unmerited.

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

**“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:4-5).**

- b. God’s grace is the free gift of God. God extends His grace out toward man.

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).**

**“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph.2:4-5).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit.2:11-14).**

- c. God’s grace is the only way man can be saved.

**“If through the offence of one [Adam] many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many” (Ro.5:15).**

**“I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.1:4).**

**“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor.8:9).**

**“[Salvation] which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:6-7).**

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| <p><b>1 God's blessings are heavenly blessings, not material</b></p> <p><b>2 God has chosen us to be holy &amp; blameless</b><br/>a. How: In Christ<br/>b. Purpose: To live "before Him in love"—forever &amp; ever</p> <p><b>3 God has adopted us as children</b><br/>a. Predestinated—Fore-ordained: Was His will<br/>b. How: By Christ<br/>c. Why: To praise His grace</p> <p><b>4 God has redeemed us—forgiven our sins<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/>a. How: By Christ's blood<br/>b. Source: His grace</p> <p><b>5 God has given us wisdom &amp; understanding</b></p> | <p><b>I. THE ETERNAL PLAN OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 1:3-23</b></p> <p><b>A. The Blessings of God, 1:3-14</b></p> <p>3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:</p> <p>4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:</p> <p>5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,</p> <p>6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.</p> <p>7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;</p> <p>8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom</p> | <p>and prudence;</p> <p>9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:</p> <p>10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:</p> <p>11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:</p> <p>12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.</p> <p>13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,</p> <p>14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.</p> | <p><b>6 God has revealed the mystery of His will to us</b><br/>a. Source: His purpose</p> <p>b. To climax the ages<br/>c. To gather all things together in heaven &amp; earth<br/>d. To put all under Christ</p> <p><b>7 God has given us an inheritance: He has made us the heritage of God</b><br/>a. Predestinated—His will</p> <p>b. The inheritance: "That we should be," that is, exist eternally<br/>c. Why: That we should exist to His glory, v.12<br/>d. How to receive the inheritance<br/>1) By hearing the Word<br/>2) By trusting in Christ</p> <p><b>8 God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit</b><br/>a. He is the guarantee of our inheritance<br/>b. Why: To praise His glory</p> |
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**DIVISION I**

**THE ETERNAL PLAN OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 1:3-23**

**A. The Blessings of God, 1:3-14**

(1:3-14) **Introduction:** among all the great passages of Scripture, this is one of the greatest. Its importance can never be overstated. It deals with God's plan for the world, His eternal plan; it deals with the great blessings of God which He pours out upon those who trust His Son Jesus Christ as their Savior.

1. God's blessings are heavenly blessings, not material (v.3).
2. God has chosen us to be holy and blameless (v.4).
3. God has adopted us as children (v.5-6).
4. God has redeemed us—forgiven our sins (v.7).
5. God has given us wisdom and understanding (v.8).
6. God has revealed the mystery of His will to us (v.9-10).
7. God has given us an inheritance, that is, made us the heritage of God (v.11-13).
8. God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit (v.14).

**1** (1:3) **Blessings:** God's blessings are spiritual and heavenly, not material blessings. Throughout history God has used two methods of blessings to deal with man. Before Christ, God dealt with man by blessing him with material blessings. He promised Abraham and Israel land, wealth, and fame. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ro.4:1-25. Cp. Gen.12:1f; 13:14-17; 15:1-7, 15-19; 22:16-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 31:13; 35:9-12.) But Israel misused and hoarded the material blessings. Instead of sharing its blessings with other nations, Israel isolated itself and claimed superiority and God-given rights over other nations of the earth. However, since Christ, God deals with man spiritually, blessing him with spiritual blessings.

Five things should be noted about this.

1. Spiritual blessings *are of the Spirit*. It is the Spirit that controls man and the circumstances that surround him. A man may feel bad; he may be down, depressed and oppressed; but if his spirit is strong, he arises and conquers his feelings. He controls and overcomes the oppressing circumstances, and he lives a victorious day. But if his spirit is weak, whether at work or at play, he often wallows around in self-pity, grumbling and griping and living a defeated day. And too often the days stretch into weeks and months until a person's life is down more than it is up—all because the spirit is too weak to conquer. Thus, the major blessings of God are bound to be blessings that are spiritual—that enable a person to control his life.

2. Spiritual blessings are the very opposite of temporal blessings. They are the *blessings of the inner man*, the blessings of the immortal. But of all blessings, they are the most glorious and satisfying. They are the blessings that erase the loneliness, alienation, and purposelessness of man. They are the blessings that give man an over-abundance of life.

3. Spiritual blessings are vastly superior to material blessings. They are *permanent and perfect and eternal*, lasting forever. They are of the very same nature as God Himself. Spiritual blessings exist and can be experienced both upon earth (the physical dimension of being) and in heaven (the spiritual dimension of being).

4. Spiritual blessings are found only *in Christ*. Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God the Father. He is in heaven, surrounded by all the heavenly atmosphere and blessings. All heavenly blessings are His; He is Lord and Possessor of all blessings. Therefore, if a person is to experience the spiritual blessings, he must be *in Christ*. If a person is *in Christ*, then he sits *in heaven* with Christ. How is this possible? When a person *believes in Christ*, truly believes, God takes his faith and counts it as righteousness. God counts the person to be the same as Christ, righteous and acceptable. In God's mind *faith in Christ* makes a person just like Christ: holy and righteous and acceptable for heaven. Therefore, when a person believes in Christ, God's mind sees the person in Christ; God sees the person identified with Christ, seated in heaven. And being seated in heaven, the person can experience all the blessings of heaven. Simply stated, to be *in Christ* means to believe in God's Son so much that God becomes elated—elated so much that He counts the person to be just like Christ: acceptable and worthy to be blessed with all the blessings of heaven. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—*Justification*—Gal.2:15-16 for more discussion.)

5. God dealt with man in material blessings first because man had to learn several things.

- a. An earthly inheritance does not last. It is subject to being lost or stolen. We either watch our material possessions deteriorate or else we leave our material possessions behind for others.
- b. An earthly nation and material inheritance cannot bring peace and security. Peace and security are of the spirit. Earthly nations and material things are of the earth, of a corruptible nature. Thus nations and material things do not solve the spiritual struggle that man senses within his own being. Neither can nations and material things erase the spiritual divisions between men and between man and God.
- c. Man has within his *inner being* a basic selfishness and greed. Man finds a tendency, an unregulated urge, that desires and seeks the material and hoards the corruptible to the neglect of the spiritual.
- d. Man must undergo a basic change of character to be freed of this urge, this tendency that causes so much bondage, disruption, and division within one's self and between men. Man must be *born again*, made into a *new creation*, created into a *new man*—spiritually, permanently, perfectly, eternally. And such a spiritual creation must be performed by Someone much greater than himself. Man must be recreated by the hand of God Himself.

**2** (1:4) **Holy—Blameless:** the first blessing—God has chosen us to be holy and blameless. This is a wonderful verse. Just imagine! God determined before the world was ever created that He would have a people...

- who would be “in Him,” that is, in His Son, Jesus Christ.
- who would be “holy and without blame.”
- who would live “before Him in love”—forever and ever.

This means a most wonderful thing; God wants us to be with Him. God does not want us separated from Him, gripped by sin and shame, sorrow and pain, death and hell. God wants us to live forever and ever with Him. In fact, note that God has determined that some will live with Him and Christ. He has “chosen us”—chosen believers—to live with Him. No amount of rebellion and rejection, cursing and denial of Him will stop His purpose and plan. God will have a people who will live with Him, and He will continue to choose us until He has the number He has purposed.

Now, note the great blessing of God: that we should be holy and without blame before Him.

1. The word “holy” (hagios) means to be set apart and consecrated to God. It is the same word that is used for “saint” in verse one (see note, *Saint*—Eph.1:1-2 for discussion).

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor.7:1).

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb.12:14).

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pt.1:15-16).

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [behavior] and godliness” (2 Pt.3:11).

2. The word “blameless” (amomous) means to be free from sin, dirt, and filth; to be above reproach and without blemish; to be without fault and defilement.

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Ph.2:15).

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight” (Col.1:21-22).

“To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints” (1 Th.3:13).

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th.5:23).

**“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:14).**

Simply stated, the great blessing of God is perfection; God has chosen the believer to be perfect. But note: the believer's perfection is *in Christ and in Christ alone*. No man—not even a believer—can live a perfect and sinless life. No man is righteous or ever will be. Jesus Christ is the only Person who has ever lived a sinless and perfect life; therefore, He is the only Person who has the right to live with God. Our only hope of ever living with God is to *believe in Jesus Christ*—believe so much that God will take our faith and count it as the righteousness of Christ. This is the glorious gospel: God loves us so much that He has accepted us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He has taken our *faith in Christ* and counted it as the righteousness of Christ. Therefore, we are acceptable to God because we trust in Christ and in His righteousness—accepted as being perfect in the perfection of Jesus Christ. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Justification*—Gal.2:15-16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:16; note—2:19-21 for more discussion.)

**3** (1:5-6) **Adoption—Predestination—Foreordained:** the second blessing—God has adopted us as children. How unbelievable—what a glorious privilege to be adopted as a child of God! And note:

⇒ It was predestinated, that is, foreordained (proorisas).

⇒ It was the pleasure of God to adopt us—the good pleasure of His will. And it was His purpose to adopt us, and His purpose and His pleasure and His will were all good.

This is most striking when we consider how sinful and depraved we are and how much we have cursed, rebelled, and rejected God. The fact that God wills and finds pleasure in adopting us and that He counts it as good is too much to believe. Yet, it is exactly what He says. Now note two significant things.

1. The word “foreordained” does not mean that God chooses some persons for salvation and everyone else for eternal punishment. Scripture teaches the exact opposite.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ro.10:13).**

**“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:3-4).**

**“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:5-6).**

**“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pt.3:9).**

**“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn.2:2).**

The word “predestination” (proorisas) means to destine or appoint before, to foreordain, to predetermine. The basic Greek word (proorizo) means to *mark off or to set off* the boundaries of something. The idea is a glorious picture of what God is doing for the believer. The boundary is marked and set off for the believer: the boundary of being adopted as a child of God. The believer shall be adopted, made just like Christ and conformed to His very likeness and image. Nothing can stop God's purpose for the believer. It is predestinated, set and marked off. The believer may struggle and suffer through the sin and shame of this world; he may even stumble and fall or become discouraged and down-hearted. But if he is a genuine child of God, he will not be defeated, not totally. He will soon arise from his fall and begin to follow Christ again. He is predestinated to be a brother of Christ, to worship and serve Christ throughout all eternity. And Christ will not be disappointed. God loves His Son too much to allow Him to be disappointed by losing a single brother. Jesus Christ will have His joy fulfilled; He will see every brother of His adopted and conformed perfectly to His image. He will have the worship and service of every person chosen to be His by God the Father. The believer's eternal destiny, that of being an adopted brother to the Lord Jesus Christ, is determined. The believer can rest assured of this glorious truth. God has predestinated him to be delivered from the suffering and struggling of this sinful world. (See notes, *Predestination*—Jn.6:37; 6:39; 6:44-46 for God's part and man's part in salvation. See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Acts 2:23; Ro.8:28-39; 9:11-13; 9:14-33 for more discussion.)

**“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph.1:4-5).**

**“According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom [Christ] we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Eph.3:11-12).**

2. The word “adoption” means *place as a son* (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Adoption*—Gal.4:5-6 for discussion).

3. Adoption is by Jesus Christ and by Him alone. God accepts us because we believe and trust His Son Jesus Christ. He tells us plainly that He wants His Son to have many brothers and sisters who will love, worship, and serve Him both now and forever. Therefore, when a person wants to live for Jesus Christ—wants to live for Him so much that he *entrusts all he is and has to Christ*—God takes that person's trust and adopts him, makes him a brother or sister to Jesus Christ (see note—Ro.8:29).

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Ro.8:28)**

4. God's purpose in adoption is that we might live forever—live to the praise of the glory of His grace.

**“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:7; cp. Eph.1:18).**

**4** (1:7) **Redemption—Ransom:** the third blessing—God has redeemed us and forgiven our sins. The word “redemption” (apolutrosin) is one of the great words of the Bible. It conveys the idea of deliverance or setting a man free by paying a ransom. For example, a prisoner of war or a kidnapped person is ransomed or redeemed; or a convicted criminal is freed from the penalty of death. In every case the man is powerless to free himself. He cannot pay the penalty demanded to liberate himself from his situation or bondage. Note several significant facts.

1. Man has been captivated or kidnapped by several forces.
  - a. The force of sin. All men sin and cannot help but sin. Man is sold under sin. Sin has captivated him (Ro.3:23; 7:14).
  - b. The force of corruption and death. The whole creation is corrupt (Ro.8:21). Everything wastes away; it deteriorates, decays, ages, and eventually dies. Corruption and death have captivated man. (Cp. 1 Cor.15:42, 50; Gal.6:8; 2 Pt.1:4; 2:12, 19.)
  - c. The force of Satan. All unbelievers are under the power and influence of Satan. He has blinded their minds to the gospel (2 Cor.4:4). He works in the children of disobedience (Eph.2:2). They are captivated by him (1 Jn.5:19).
2. Three key ideas are included in the concept of redemption.
  - a. Man needs to be liberated, delivered, and set free.
  - b. Man is unable to liberate himself. He has no energy, no power, no ability to free himself.
  - c. God has redeemed man by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ. God Himself has paid the ransom for man's release—the ransom of a life for a life. God gave His own Son so that man might be set free. Man has been redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ (cp. Lev.17:11; Mt.20:28; Ro.3:24; 1 Cor.6:20; 7:23; Col.1:14; 1 Tim.2:5-6; Heb.9:15; 1 Pt.1:18f; 2 Pt.2:1; Rev.5:9; 14:3-4). This is extremely important to note: when a man *truly* calls upon the Lord to save him, God buys him right out of the marketplace of this corruptible life (Ro.10:13). God redeems him once for all, purchases and removes him from further sale. He is redeemed eternally (cp. Gal.3:13; 4:5; Col.4:5).
3. God redeems man because of the riches of His grace (see note, *Grace*—Eph.2:8-9 for discussion). He loves man with an unbelievable love—a love so great that it spurs Him to do whatever is necessary to save man.

**“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev.17:11).**

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).**

**“For ye are bought [redeemed] with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“Ye are bought [redeemed] with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (1 Cor.7:23).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col.1:14).**

**“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:5-6).**

**“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb.9:15).**

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).**

**“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought [redeemed] them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).**

**“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev.5:9).**

**“And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb withersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Rev.14:3-4).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(1:7) **Forgiveness:** the word “forgiveness” (aphesin) means to send off, to send away, to release, to let go. The word for “sin” (paraptomaton) means transgression, trespass, a falling by the way, or deviating from the way. All men...

- have transgressed the law of God.
- have deviated from God.
- have fallen from the way of God.

Therefore, all men stand guilty of having broken the law of God, and the penalty for breaking the law is death. However, the blood of Jesus Christ brings forgiveness to men. How? Jesus Christ died *for man*. He took the penalty of sins and bore the punishment Himself. He was able to do this because He was the Perfect and Ideal Man, and as the Ideal Man, He could stand for and represent all men. When He died, He died as the Ideal Man, as the Representative for all men. Any person who really believes that Jesus Christ died for him is forgiven his sins. God takes his faith and counts it as the death of Jesus Christ. God sees the man as being *in Jesus Christ*, as being in the death of Jesus Christ. God counts the death of Jesus Christ for the death of the man. Therefore, the guilt and penalty for breaking God's laws are completely removed. The man's sins and guilt are sent away or washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ.

**"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).**

**"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 13:38).**

**"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me [Christ Jesus]" (Acts 26:18).**

**"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph.1:7).**

**5** (1:8) **Wisdom—Prudence—Understanding:** the fourth blessing—God has given us wisdom and understanding. Again, note that both blessings come to us through Jesus Christ. Common sense tells us that God will give His wisdom and understanding only to those who honor Him and His Son.

1. The word "wisdom" (*sophia*) means seeing and knowing the truth. It is seeing and knowing what to do. It grasps the great truths of life. It sees the answers to the problems of life and death, God and man, time and eternity, good and evil—the deep things of God and of the universe.

This wisdom is found only in Jesus Christ and is promised only to those who search after Him with all their heart (1 Cor.1:30; 2:10-16; Eph.1:8; Ph.2:5f; Jas.1:5).

**"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Ro.11:33).**

**"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greek, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor.1:24).**

**"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor.1:30).**

**"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor.2:9-16).**

**"Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (Eph.1:8).**

**"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col.2:3).**

2. The word "prudence" (*phronesei*) means seeing how to use and do the truth. It is seeing the direction to take. It is understanding, insight, the ability to solve day to day problems. It is a down-to-earth practical understanding of things.

**"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (Eph.1:17-18).**

**"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col.1:9).**

**"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ" (Col.2:2).**

**"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (2 Tim.2:7).**

**"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 Jn.5:20).**

**“For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Pr.2:6).**

**“Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength” (Pr.8:14).**

**6** (1:9-10) **Mystery, of God’s Will:** the fifth blessing—God has revealed the mystery of His will to us. This is the key thought and great theme of Ephesians. (William Barclay has an excellent description of this point and he should be consulted by the person who wishes to study the point in depth. *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.96f.) Remember: in the Bible a mystery is not something mysterious and difficult to understand. Rather, it is a truth that has been locked up in God’s plan for ages until He was ready to reveal it to man. When the time came, He unlocked the truth and opened it up to man. A mystery is a truth revealed by God that had never before been known. (See 1 Cor.2:7 for a list of all the mysteries of the Bible.) The mystery of God’s will can be simply stated: God is to gather together and unify all things in a spirit of peace and harmony—all things, both visible and invisible. All things are to be brought to a peaceful and eternal state under the authority and glorification of Jesus Christ. God is moving history toward that climactic consummation.

Paul’s great thought in verses 9-10 says several things. (It is impossible to list all the points beside the Scripture in the outline.)

1. God has an eternal purpose and plan for the world, and it is His pleasure to bring it about. He joys and rejoices to bring it about, and what He does is good. It is all good.

2. There is terrible division throughout the universe. The need for God “to gather all things in heaven and earth” indicates division (cp. Eph.6:12). And the fact that God’s primary concern through all the ages has been to harmonize the divisions shows how devastating and horrible the division really is. (See Introductory Material, Special Features, point 3, *The Great Message of Ephesians is Reconciliation.*)

3. There is to be a consummation, a climax of history—a *fulness of time*, a new order—in which all things will be unified and harmonized and brought to a peaceful state under the authority of Jesus Christ. History is in the hands of God. The word Paul uses is dispensation (oikonomia) which literally means, “household arrangement.” The idea is that the universe is a house under the management of God. God is handling, planning, arranging, and administering all things toward a climactic consummation for Christ and His followers. In that climactic day all disharmony and division and evil will be subjected and harmonized (anakephalaioo) under Christ. A new and perfect and eternal creation will be established for the Lord and His followers throughout the universe.

**“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:4-6).**

**“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Eph.1:4).**

**“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph.3:9-11).**

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

**“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (Jas.1:18).**

4. Jesus Christ is God’s appointed Head over the new creation and new order. He is God’s *Head over the church*, which is God’s new creation in the present world and order of things (Eph.1:22-23). And He is to be God’s *Head over the new creation* in the future world and order of things (Jas.1:18).

**“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph.1:22-23).**

**“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph.4:15).**

**“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body” (Eph.5:23).**

**“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col.1:18).**

**“And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col.2:19).**

5. The church is the Lord’s instrument of reconciliation and peace, His representative body upon the earth. As the instrument of the Lord, the church is to do two things.

a. The church is to take Christ and His message of reconciliation and peace to the world. Through “His body, the church,” all division and disorder among men are to be condemned, and His message of harmony and peace is to be proclaimed.

- b. The church is to practice reconciliation upon the earth. "In the church" all laws, barriers, and divisions are to be done away with. They are to be nonexistent. The church is to be a speck, an embryo of heaven upon the earth.

**"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor.5:19-21).**

**"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph.4:11-12).**

**7** (1:11-13) **Inheritance:** the sixth blessing—God has given us an inheritance, that is, made us the heritage of God Himself. Note several significant points.

1. The inheritance or heritage was predestinated, that is, foreordained. God works all things out after the counsel of His own will. He must, for only God knows what is best. And nothing could be better than to be given the greatest inheritance possible: that of being made the very heritage of God, the very possession of God. (See note, *Foreordain*—Eph.1:5-6.)

2. The inheritance is clearly stated in the words "that we *should be*," that is, that we should exist eternally. God gives the believer an eternal *state of being*—an eternal existence. In fact, the word "inheritance" (eklerothemen) means *heritage*. God takes the believer and makes him His own heritage and possession. The believer himself is made the inheritance of God. He is given the glorious privilege of *being*, of living and existing forever as God's most *cherished possession and heritage*. He becomes the most precious gem and treasure of God. This is the believer's inheritance, his heritage.

**"Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm" (Dt.9:29; cp. Ex.19:5).**

**"For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Dt.32:9).**

**"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine" (Ex.19:5).**

**"For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel [believers] for his peculiar treasure" (Ps.135:4).**

**"...I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Is.43:1).**

**"And they [believers] shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal.3:17).**

**"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Cor.4:7).**

**"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit" (Eph.2:19-21).**

**"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pt.2:9).**

3. The reason God makes us His inheritance is that we should exist to the praise of His glory. We shall live forever in the new heavens and earth as the perfect demonstration of His glory. The fact that God would take sinners—totally depraved sinners—and save them will cause praise upon praise to be heaped upon His name. His unbelievable love will be seen and glorified forever and ever by all creatures—both of heaven and of earth, both visible and invisible, both now and yet to be. All shall stand in stark amazement at God's spectacular glory—the glory of His eternal grace and love shown to the world in His dear Son, Jesus Christ.

**"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph.1:6).**

**"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb.13:14-15).**

**"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pt.2:9).**

**"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev.5:11-12).**

**"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and wor-**

shipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev.7:9-12).

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God” (Rev.19:1).

4. How does a person receive the inheritance? This verse says there are two ways (v.13).
- a. By hearing the Word of God. A person has to hear the Word of God before he can ever know the truth, the glorious gospel of salvation. He cannot believe in Jesus Christ unless he first hears about Christ.

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Ro.10:17).

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pt.1:23).

- b. By believing and trusting in Jesus Christ.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).

**8** (1:13-14) **Holy Spirit—Seal—Guarantee:** the seventh blessing—God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit. The word “earnest” (arrabon) means pledge, guarantee, a down payment. The Holy Spirit is given to the believer to give the believer perfect assurance of his salvation. We know that we are redeemed—that we are God’s cherished possession—by the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

Again note: Why does God give us such a glorious guarantee as His own wonderful presence? That His glory might be praised eternally.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Ro.8:16).

“Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor.1:22).

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father” (Gal.4:6).

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| <p><b>1 The basis: Faith &amp; love</b><br/>a. A strong testimony</p> <p>b. An ever present need</p> | <p><b>B. The Knowledge of God, 1:15-18</b></p> <p>15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,</p> <p>16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;</p> | <p>17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:</p> <p>18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.</p> | <p><b>2 The need: A growing knowledge of God—the God of Christ &amp; the Father of glory</b><br/>a. Thru the spirit of wisdom<br/>b. Thru the spirit of revelation<br/>c. Thru an enlightened heart</p> <p><b>3 The results of knowing God</b><br/>a. Know God's calling<br/>b. Know God's inheritance<br/>c. Know God's power, v.19</p> |
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## DIVISION I

### THE ETERNAL PLAN OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 1:3-23

#### B. The Knowledge of God, 1:15-18

(1:15-18) **Introduction:** Paul had just declared the eternal plan of God for the world (v.3-14). It is crucial that believers come to know the God of this plan in the most personal and intimate sense. This is the great subject of this passage: the knowledge of God—it is absolutely essential that believers grow more and more in the knowledge of God and that the world come to know God as their personal Savior.

1. The basis: faith and love (v.15-16).
2. The need: a growing knowledge of God—the God of Christ and the Father of glory (v.17-18).
3. The results of knowing God (v.18).

**1** (1:15-16) **Church—Testimony:** the basis of knowing God is faith and love. The Ephesian church had a strong testimony, a testimony so strong that it was being buzzed about all over the world. Their testimony and its strength had reached the ears of Paul. And note what it was that he had heard: the church had a strong faith in the Lord Jesus and had a strong love for all the saints (believers) of God.

- ⇒ He had heard about their faith in God's love (that God had sent His Son to save the world) and about their loyalty to the Lord Jesus in carrying the message of God's love throughout the world.
- ⇒ He had heard that they were ministering to the saints of God—demonstrating a great love for God's people.

It was this fact—their strong testimony of faith and love—that had stirred Paul to write the Ephesians. He knew that the Christian life never sat still. A person has to grow or else he slips backward. Therefore, Paul wanted the Ephesian believers to grow in their knowledge and power of God. He had just shared the great blessings of God which was theirs when they first came to know God (cp. Eph.1:3-14). Now he wanted them to grow in these blessings, the blessings of knowing God and experiencing the power of God. Therefore, he told them that he prayed for them. In fact, he never ceased to ask God that they might grow in the knowledge and power of God.

**2** (1:17-18) **Knowledge, of God:** the great need of believers is to grow in the knowledge of God. Note that the God we are to know is clearly identified. He is not the god of our own minds and thoughts—the god we conceive when we picture what God is like—the god made by men's minds and hands—the god of religion.

- ⇒ The God we are to know is the God of Jesus Christ: that is, the God whom Jesus Christ worshipped when He was on earth as a Man; the God whom Jesus Christ came to reveal to men. There is no other God—not a true and living God. If we are to really know God, we must come to know the God whom Christ worshipped and revealed.
- ⇒ The God we are to know is the Father of glory, that is, the only true and living God, the Supreme Majesty and Sovereign Lord of the Universe—the One who is the Supreme intelligence and power of the universe and who has created all and rules over all—the One who is omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (present everywhere), and so expansive that His very being and presence reaches out beyond the stars and embraces all that is or ever will be—the One who declares that He has "set His glory *above* the heavens" (Ps.8:1).

This is the God we are to know. As stated, He is the only living and true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the God of glory. Believers must grow more and more in the knowledge of Him; they must gain an ever-increasing knowledge of Him.

Three things are essential if believers are to grow in the knowledge of God. And remember these things are so important that Paul prayed unceasingly for God to give them to the believer.

1. First, to grow in the knowledge of God a believer must have the *spirit of wisdom* (sophia). (See note, *Wisdom—Eph.1:8* for meaning.)

- a. Note the phrase "the spirit of wisdom." What the believer needs from God is *a spirit*...
  - a spirit that reaches out and grasps after wisdom.
  - a spirit that hungers and thirsts after wisdom.
  - a spirit that seeks and seeks after wisdom.

- b. Wisdom can best be understood by the single words *what* and *how*. Wisdom means knowing what something is, what is behind something, and what can be done. It is knowing how to use or relate to something. Therefore, spiritual wisdom means...
  - knowing who God is and how to relate to Him.
  - knowing the truth and how to use it.

- knowing what to do and how to do it.
  - knowing how to live more and more fruitful lives—for the glory of God and for the welfare of men.
- c. Wisdom differs from knowledge. Knowledge is the grasping of facts, but grasping facts is not enough. Much more is needed: a person must know how to use the facts. That is where wisdom comes in. Wisdom knows how to use the facts. The point is this: it is not enough to know the facts about God; a person must know God personally. He must know how to experience the facts about God. He must use the facts to develop a personal relationship with God—a growing relationship—a relationship that is intimate, that grows deeper and deeper. This is the meaning of the word “knowledge” (epignosei): a personal and intimate relationship with God; a personal experience with God. It is not an intellectual knowledge of God, but an experiential knowledge of God.

**Thought 1.** If the believer is to grow in the knowledge of God, he must seek the wisdom of God more than anything else on this earth. It is the person who hungers and thirsts after God and His righteousness that is filled.

**“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Mt.7:24).**

**“In whom [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col.2:3).**

**“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.3:15).**

**“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas.1:5).**

**“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (Jas.3:17).**

2. Second, to grow in the knowledge of God a believer must have the *spirit of revelation*.
- a. Again, note the phrase “the spirit of revelation.” It is the Holy Spirit who reveals God to the believer. This is made abundantly clear by Scripture.

**“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor.2:9-12).**

The believer is indwelt by the Spirit of God (Jn.14:16-17; 14:26; 16:12-15; 1 Cor.6:19-20; 2 Cor.6:16). The Spirit of God dwells in him to teach him the deep things of God. But note what the believer must have in order to grow in the knowledge of God: “the spirit of revelation”...

- a spirit that drives after God.
  - a spirit that seeks to know God.
  - a spirit that hungers and thirsts after God above all else.
- b. The word “revelation” (apokalypseos) means to manifest; to reveal; to unveil; to uncover; to open. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the knowledge of God to Christians. In fact it is the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the meaning of all truth to the Christian (Jn.14:26; 16:12-15). This is clearly seen in 1 Cor.1:9-16 where the wisdom of the world is contrasted with the wisdom of God. A spiritual Christian sees (through the Spirit revealing to him) the meaning behind world events as well as day to day experiences. He understands who and what is behind the events of history and human experience. Therefore, he gains a growing knowledge of God day by day.

**Thought 1.** If the believer is to grow in his knowledge of God, the richness and deep things of God must be opened up to the believer. But the things of God are like everything else that is worthwhile: they are not handed over to men on a silver platter. A man must seek to learn more and more about God. He must seek to have the truth of God revealed to him.

**Thought 2.** Lehman Strauss points out that human philosophy says, “know thyself” (*Devotional Studies in Galatians & Ephesians*, p.132). However, Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent” (Jn.17:3).

To know oneself is important—very, very important. But the greatest thing in all the world is to know God personally and to know that one shall live with God forever. God and eternal life are the summits of knowledge. It is better to know that one shall never die, than to know all there is about oneself and lose that knowledge at death.

3. Third, to grow in the knowledge of God a believer must have the *eyes of his heart enlightened*. This is a beautiful description of the heart: “the eyes of the heart.” The heart must be opened so that the light of God can be seen and grasped. An open heart is the responsibility of both the believer and the Holy Spirit.

- ⇒ The believer must open his heart and focus its affection, intelligence, and will upon knowing God.
- ⇒ The believer must seek the Holy Spirit to enlighten and flood his heart with the things of God.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor.4:6).

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph.1:18).

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pt.2:9).

“For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness” (Ps.18:28).

“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Ps.119:130).

### **3** (1:18) **Knowledge, of God:** the results of knowing God are threefold.

1. A believer comes to know the hope of God’s calling. What is the hope of the believer’s call? It is what has already been covered in the great spiritual blessings of God (Eph.1:13-14):

- ⇒ that we should be holy and without blame, living before Him forever and ever in love (v.4).
- ⇒ that we should experience what it means to be adopted as children of God—forever and ever (v.5-6).
- ⇒ that we should experience eternal redemption and forgiveness of sin (v.7).
- ⇒ that we should possess the wisdom and understanding of God (v.8).
- ⇒ that we should live in the perfect heaven and earth where there will be no more division but only peace and unity in Christ Jesus (v.9-10).

Very simply stated, God has called us to stand before Him in the name and righteousness of Jesus Christ—to stand before Him just as Jesus Christ stands before Him: perfect. It is evident that we are not perfect—not now, not yet. But the day is coming when we shall be. Right now we experience the blessings of God only in part, only imperfectly. But when the glorious *Day of Redemption* comes, we shall be made just like our Lord Jesus Christ, righteous and perfect, enabled to live in God’s presence, worshipping and serving Him forever and ever. This is the believer’s hope; this is the believer’s calling.

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mt.13:43).

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Ro.8:29-30).

“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph. 3:20-21).

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).

2. A believer comes to know God’s inheritance—His inheritance in the saints. Believers are themselves the inheritance, that is, the heritage and possession of God. When we come to know God, we learn who we are—the glorious position God has given us: He has made us His very own possession and heritage. (See note, *Inheritance*—Eph.1:11-13 for discussion.)

3. A believer comes to know and to experience the enormous power of God. In discussing this glorious result, Paul explodes into a discussion of God’s power which was clearly shown in what He did for Christ. Because of its length, it is discussed in a separate subject in the next outline.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).

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| <p><b>1 God's power: A great power</b><br/> a. In believers<br/> b. Measured by God's power in Christ exalted</p> <p><b>2 The power that raised Him from the dead</b></p> <p><b>3 The power that took Him to heaven &amp; set Him at</b></p> | <p><b>C. The Power of God: Demonstrated in Christ's Exaltation, 1:19-23</b></p> <p>19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,</p> <p>20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the</p> | <p>heavenly places,<br/> 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:<br/> 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,<br/> 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.</p> | <p><b>4 God's right hand</b><br/> <b>The power that exalted Christ above all creatures: In this world &amp; in the next world</b></p> <p><b>5 The power that exalted Him as the Supreme Head of the church</b><br/> a. Christ—the Head<br/> b. The church—His body<br/> c. The church—His instrument</p> |
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**DIVISION I**

**THE ETERNAL PLAN OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 1:3-23**

**C. The Power of God: Demonstrated in Christ's Exaltation, 1:19-23**

(1:19-23) **Introduction:** this is a great passage covering a much needed subject—the power of God. If men ever needed anything, they need the power of God in their lives. If men have ever been gripped by evil and shame, bitterness and hate, lust and immorality, cursing and anger, robbery and assault, murder and war, selfishness and greed, division and strife, disappointment and emptiness, boredom and purposelessness, it is today. Men desperately need the power of God to help them in their daily lives and to right the wrongs of society.

The glorious news is that God offers His power to men—if they will only turn to His Son Jesus Christ. He promises His power to all believers. Note that this passage is a continuation of the prayer of Paul. He is praying that the Ephesian believers might know God personally and intimately, for God gives His power to those who truly come to know Him. Coming to know God is the key to receiving the power of God.

1. God's power: A great power (v.19).
2. The power that raised Him from the dead (v.20).
3. The power that took Him to heaven and set Him at God's right hand (v.20).
4. The power that exalted Christ above all creatures: in this world and in the next world (v.21).
5. The power that exalted Him as the Supreme Head of the church (v.22-23).

- 1** (1:19) **God, Power of:** when a believer really knows God, he experiences power—the power of God Himself. Note how God's power is described:
- ⇒ It is "exceeding" (hyperballon): surpassing, unlimited, immeasurable, beyond imagination.
  - ⇒ It is "great" (megathos): mighty, explosive, beyond measure. This is the word from which we get the English word *megathon* which measures atomic explosives. Imagine the great explosive power of God!

The thing to note is that God's power is to *us-ward*; that is, God takes His power and extends it, presents it, makes it available to the believer. How do we know this? Because of what God did for Christ. What God did for Christ He will do for us. God's power is demonstrated by what He did for Christ.

- 2** (1:20) **Power—God, Power of—Jesus Christ, Resurrection—Resurrection:** believers are to experience the power of God—the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Imagine the enormous power needed to raise a person from the dead. God wrought such power when He raised Jesus Christ.

**"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:23-24).**

**"But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14-15).**

**"And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts 10:39-41).**

**"[Jesus Christ is] declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Ro.1:4).**

The point is this: when God raised Jesus Christ, He demonstrated three things for men. He showed men that He had the power to do three things.

1. The power to raise Christ shows that God has the power to conquer all the trials and temptations of life. When God exercised the power to raise Christ, He conquered the most powerful trial that faces man—death. And in conquering death, God demonstrated that He has the power to conquer any trial or temptation of man, no matter what it is.

“There hath no temptation [trial] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor.12:9).

2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ shows that God has the power to give man a new life and the power to live a new life before Him. After Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead, He was not living His old life, the life He had before His death. He was a *new Man*; He had a new life. He had been raised from the dead to live a new life before God forever. He walked before God in newness of life.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory [power] of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:4).

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).

3. The power to raise Christ from the dead shows that God has the power to raise men from the dead. The believer shall experience the great resurrection power of God and be resurrected from the dead.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jn.5:28-29).

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn.6:40).

“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Th.4:16-18).

**3** (1:20) **Power—Jesus Christ, Exaltation:** believers are to experience the power of God—the same power that took Jesus Christ to heaven and set Him at God’s right hand. God did not just have the power to resurrect Jesus Christ, He had the power to take Jesus Christ into another dimension of being—into the spiritual world, that is, the world of the Spirit. God brought Jesus Christ to Himself and set Him at His own right hand. He is literally there; His body is in heaven—the spiritual world and dimension of being.

“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mk.16:19).

“Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God” (Lk.22:69).

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:30-31).

“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:20).

The point of God’s power is clear: He took Christ into heaven and exalted Him in order to demonstrate that He has the power to take men to heaven and to exalt them.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn.14:2-3).

“But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55-56).

“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev.22:14).

**4** (1:21) **Power, God—Believers, Exalted:** believers are to experience the power of God—the same power that exalted Jesus Christ above all creatures, both in this world and in the next world. Being seated at the right hand of God simply means having the highest seat of honor and authority in the universe. What God did was exalt Jesus Christ to rule and reign over all authority, no matter how great or powerful. Christ has been exalted above “all principality, and power, and might, and dominion.” And to make sure nothing is excluded—Jesus Christ has been exalted above “every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that [world] which is to come” (v.21). All things are placed in subjection under Him.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” (Ph.2:9-10).

“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above all fellows” (Heb.1:9).

“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (1 Pt.3:22).

The point is this: God gave Jesus Christ the authority to rule and reign over all; He demonstrated that He has the power to exalt us to rule and reign with Christ. This God promises to do.

“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt.25:23).

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mt.25:34).

“And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities” (Lk.19:17).

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge [rule, hold authority over] the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Cor.6:2-3).

“And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come” (Heb.6:5).

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” (Jas.2:5).

“And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev.5:10).

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them” (Rev.20:4).

“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev.22:5).

**5** (1:22-23) **Church—Jesus Christ, Head of Church:** believers are to experience the power of God—the same power that made Jesus Christ the head of the church. Jesus Christ paid the supreme price to start and build the church: He died for it. Therefore, God has given Him the supreme position over the church. Note two points.

1. The church is called the *body of Christ*. This is one of the Bible’s most descriptive pictures of Jesus Christ and the church: the picture of the *human body* with Christ being the Head and the church being His body (see note—1 Cor.12:12-31). William Barclay points out that this picture says something of enormous value. Christ needs the church and church needs Christ (Jn.20:21) (*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.108.) The head cannot function without the body, nor can the body function without the head. The head dreams dreams and plans plans. But a head, a mind by itself, is of no use. A head must have a body to carry out the plans so that the dream can be realized. Christ came to bring the dream and plan of peace and reconciliation to a world of lost men, men who were alienated from God and from one another. Now the body, the church, must carry out the dream and plan. The message of peace, in the power of Christ, must be taken to men by the church.

The point is this: if God had the power to create the church and to make Christ the head of the church, then He has the power to make the body *function and work* for Christ. God has the power to *get us busy* for the Lord—the power to help us in our witnessing—the power to stir us to proclaim the message of reconciliation and to minister to the desperate needs of a world lost and reeling under the weight of sin, darkness, starvation, disease, and suffering.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5).

“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily, prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Cor.12:27-28).

“Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph.1:23).

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:11-12).

**“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church” (Col.1:24).**

**“And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col.2:19).**

**“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim.1:7).**

2. The church completes all for Christ. William Barclay again points out that the church is the instrument through which the fulness of Christ fills all in all—everything. Jesus Christ is working throughout the world and in human history to bring about God’s eternal plan for the world. He is working and fitting everything into its proper place bit by bit, and He is doing it *through the church*. The church is the instrument of God for bringing His will about on earth. (*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.109.)

Again, the point is that God has the power to use the church and its believers to work out His eternal plan for the world. Just think—the church is the body upon the earth that God is using to work out human history!

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:16-20).**

**“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments [elementary knowledge and notions] of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col.2:8-10).**

**“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise [to return], as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:9-13).**

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| <b>CHAPTER 2</b>   |   | 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:                 | a. Walking after the course of the world<br>b. Walking under the devil's power<br>c. Walking in disobedience  |
| <b>II. THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 2:1-22</b>                |   | 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. | <b>3 A life spent with the disobedient of the world</b><br>a. Spent in lusts of flesh<br>b. Spent fulfilling one's own desires—of the flesh & of the mind |
| <b>1 A life of death</b><br><b>2 A life of trespasses &amp; sins</b> | <b>A. The Believer's Life Before Conversion: Life Without Christ, 2:1-3</b><br><br>And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; |   | <b>4 A life under God's wrath</b>   |

**DIVISION II**

**THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 2:1-22**

**A. The Believer's Life Before Conversion: Life Without Christ, 2:1-3**

(2:1-22) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Believers, Life of:** this chapter is one of the most important chapters in the Bible. It focuses upon the life of the Christian believer. It discusses his past, present, and future. It shows what life was like before Christ came and what it is like since He has come. It discusses what God has done for man in the *work of His mercy* and the *gift of His grace*. It also paints six pictures of the church. It is a chapter that should be lived in; it should be studied and taught time and again.

- A. The Believer's Life Before Conversion: Life Without Christ (2:1-3).
- B. The Believer's Conversion (Part 1): The Work of God's Mercy (2:4-7).
- C. The Believer's Conversion (Part 2): The Work of God's Grace—Salvation (2:8-10).
- D. Remember What Life Is Like Since Christ Came: Reconciliation and Peace (2:11-18).
- E. Remember Who You Are: Six Pictures of the Church (2:19-22).

(2:1-3) **Introduction:** the believer's life—what was it like before conversion? What was the believer's life like before he came to know Christ? When God looks down upon a man who is unconverted, how does God see him? What is the picture in God's mind of a man who is unsaved? William Barclay descriptively titles this passage, "Life without Christ." Well, what is it like—this life without Christ? What kind of life did the believer live before conversion?

- 1. A life of death (v.1).
- 2. A life of trespasses and sins (v.1-2).
- 3. A life spent with the disobedient of the world (v.3).
- 4. A life under God's wrath (v.3).

**1** (2:1) **Death:** before conversion man lives a life of death. Note the words "you...were dead." How can a man be living and yet be dead? To answer this question, we must understand what death means. The basic meaning of death (nekros) is *separation*. Death never means extinction, annihilation, non-existence, or inactivity. Death simply means that a person is separated, either separated from his body or from God or from both. H.S. Miller says, "Death is the separation of a person from the purpose or use for which he was intended" (quoted by Lehman Strauss, *Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians*, p.137). Man was created to know, fellowship, worship, and serve God; but man does not do it. If he worships at all, he worships his *own ideas and concepts of God*, creating a god to suit his own notions—a god that will allow him to go ahead and live as he wishes.

The point is this: man does not fulfil his purpose on earth, not the purpose for which he was created. He has little if anything to do with God. He is *separated from and dead* to God. The Bible speaks of three deaths.

1. Physical death: the *separation* of a man's spirit from his body. This is what men commonly call death. It is when a person ceases to exist on this earth and is buried.

**"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor.15:21-22).**

**"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb.9:27).**

2. Spiritual death: the separation of a man from God while he is still living and walking upon earth. This is the *natural state* of a man on earth without Jesus Christ. Man is seen as still in his sins and dead to God.

⇒ A person may walk in life *without God and Christ*, rejecting, rebelling and cursing God. The man is spiritually *separated* from God; he is *dead* to God.

⇒ A person may walk in life as a religious person, worshipping a god of his own thoughts and notions, rejecting the only living and true God who was revealed by Jesus Christ. The religious person is spiritually separated from God; he is dead to God.

Spiritual death speaks of a person who is dead while he still lives (1 Tim.5:6). He is a natural man living in this present world, but he is said to be dead to the Lord Jesus Christ and to God and to spiritual matters.

a. A person who wastes his life in riotous living is spiritually dead.

**“It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found” (Lk.15:32).**

- b. A person who has not partaken of Christ is spiritually dead.

**“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (Jn.6:53).**

- c. A person who does not have the spirit of Christ is said to be spiritually dead.

**“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).**

- d. A person who lives in sin is said to be spiritually dead.

**“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.2:1).  
“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col.2:13).**

- e. A person who is alienated from God is said to be spiritually dead.

**“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:18-19).**

- f. A person who sleeps in sin is spiritually dead.

**“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph.5:14).**

- g. A person who lives in sinful pleasure is dead while she lives.

**“But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Tim.5:6).**

- h. A person who does not have the Son of God is dead.

**“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 Jn.5:12).**

- i. A person who does great religious works but does the wrong works is dead.

**“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead” (Rev.3:1).**

3. Eternal death: the separation of man from God’s presence forever. This is the second death, an eternal state of being *dead to God*. It is spiritual death, separation from God that is prolonged beyond the death of the body. It is called the “second death” or eternal death.

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:23).**

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).**

**“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Th.1:9).**

**“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas.1:5).**

**“Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jas.5:20).**

**“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Rev.2:11).**

**“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).**

**“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezk.18:20).**

**Thought 1.** Everyone who has not trusted Christ is spiritually dead—dead to God, dead even while he lives upon this earth. This was the life of the believer before he was converted.

**2** (2:1-2) **Trespass—Sin—Satan—Worldliness:** before conversion, man lives a life of trespasses and sins. Note that it is trespasses and sins that separate men from God, that place him in a *state or process of death*. It is while men are living in trespasses and sins that they are dead (separated from God).

The word “trespasses” (paraptoma) means to fall, slip, blunder, deviate, turn aside, or wander away. It is a person who...

- falls from the right way.
- slips from doing what he should.
- blunders and fails.
- deviates off the right road.
- turns aside from what is right.
- wanders away from God and righteousness.

**“[Christ] who was delivered for our offences [trespasses], and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:25).**

**“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor.5:19).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins [trespasses, Greek paraptomaton], according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.2:1).**

**“And you, being dead in your sins [trespasses, Greek] and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col.2:13).**

The word “sins” (hamartia) means to miss the mark. W.E. Vine points out that sin is the term most often used to describe man’s fallen condition. It is what is meant by coming *short of the glory of God*. Man should live in a state of God’s glory, but it is evident that he does not. There is no glory—no glow, splendor, brilliance, or light shining out from his body. And there is certainly no glory or light emanating from his behavior. Listening to any newscast on any given day is clear evidence of man’s *inglorious behavior*.

The point is this: God is perfect but man is imperfect. And imperfection is as different from perfection as day is from night. Imperfection is short—totally and absolutely short—of perfection. Man is ever so short of God’s perfect glory:

- ⇒ man does not measure up to God.
- ⇒ man is not on the same level as God.
- ⇒ man does not reach up to God.

Man sins; he misses the mark of life. He does not live a perfect life. He may be respectable, but he is imperfect. He is never all he could be.

- ⇒ No husband or wife is free from selfishness and disturbance all the time—not perfectly.
- ⇒ No father or mother treats his child like they should all the time—not perfectly.
- ⇒ No child obeys his or her parent all the time—not perfectly.
- ⇒ No workman is diligent in his labor every minute of every day—not perfectly.
- ⇒ No neighbor is as good and kind and helpful as he should be all the time—not perfectly.
- ⇒ No person disciplines his body in eating, exercising, and sleeping all the time—not perfectly.
- ⇒ No person controls his mind from impure and selfish thoughts all the time—not perfectly.
- ⇒ No person uses his mind fully, to the maximum all the time—not perfectly.

Man is not perfect; he is short of perfection—short of God’s glory—short of the purpose for which God created him. This is what is meant by sin. Sin separates man from God. Man is dead (separated) in trespasses and sins. He is dead because he blunders and comes short of God.

**“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Ro.3:23).**

**“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Ro.5:12).**

**“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Ro.6:12).**

Now, note a significant fact: the man who sins is said to be walking after three things.

1. The sinner walks after the “course of this world [or age, aion, Greek].” This simply means he follows the world in its...

- |                |              |               |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| • opinions     | • positions  | • purposes    |
| • life         | • popularity | • technology  |
| • speculations | • honor      | • possessions |
| • pleasures    | • religion   | • science     |
| • selfishness  | • values     | • standards   |

**“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mt.16:26).**

**“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lk.21:34).**

**“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas.4:4).**

**“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 Jn.2:15).**

2. The sinner walks under the power of Satan. Note that Satan is called the “prince of the power of the air.” Man was never created to be evil or to do evil. Evil originated with an alien force, an alien force that exists in another world, the spiritual world or dimension of being. The Bible calls that evil force a person and he is named Satan or the devil. The spiritual world has access to this world and can influence the spirit of man. What has happened is that man, who has free will, has chosen to follow the evil way of Satan. When Satan tries to influence the spirit of man to sin, man often listens and sins. This is exactly what Scripture declares:

**“Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (Jn.8:44).**

**“And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him” (Jn.13:2).**

**“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:3-4).**

**“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph.6:12).**

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb.2:14).**

**“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pt.5:8).**

**“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn.3:8).**

**“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother” (1 Jn.3:10).**

3. The sinner walks in disobedience. Very simply, he refuses to obey God, refuses to do what God says. He chooses to do what he wants instead of what he should do. And note: he is classified by God as one of the “children of disobedience.” He is a child of disobedience; that is, he is in the family of disobedience, not in the family of God.

**“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Mt.7:26-27).**

**“For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Pt.2:25).**

**“[The disobedient] have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Pt.2:15).**

**“The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead” (Pr.21:16).**

**3** (2:3) **Lusts:** before conversion man lives a life with the disobedient of the world. Note the words, “among whom.” They refer to the children of disobedience mentioned in the previous verse. Note that the major stress of the disobedient is the desires of the flesh and of the mind. When most persons think of desire or lust, they think of the sins of the flesh such as:

- ⇒ illicit sex
- ⇒ overeating
- ⇒ intoxication
- ⇒ laziness
- ⇒ pornography

But note: the mind also desires and lusts. Some sinful lusts of the mind would be:

- ⇒ immoral thoughts
- ⇒ anger
- ⇒ unbelief
- ⇒ idolatry
- ⇒ envy
- ⇒ false beliefs

The point is this: the unconverted man lives to fulfill the desires of his flesh and mind. In reality, he has nothing else for which to live. He knows nothing but this world and its appeals; therefore, he seeks as much of the world as he can possess and enjoy. His life is self-centered, not God-centered; world-centered, not heaven-centered; selfish, not giving; banking and hoarding, not sacrificial—not meeting the needs of a world reeling in desperate need and death. The unconverted man spends his life with the disobedient of the world living after the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:28).

“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mk.4:19).

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet” (Ro.1:26-27).

“For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” (Ro.7:5).

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal.5:16-17).

“Mortify therefore your members [fleshly desires] which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).

“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence [immorality], even as the Gentiles which know not God” (1 Th.4:4-5).

“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:15).

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas.4:1-4).

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pt.2:11).

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:16).

**4** (2:3) **Wrath, of God:** before conversion, man lives under the wrath of God. Note the wording of this statement: “Were by nature the children of wrath.”

⇒ The unconverted man acts against God; he does not act for God.

⇒ The unconverted man rejects God; he does not receive God.

⇒ The unconverted man ignores God; he does not confess God.

⇒ The unconverted man denies God; he does not acknowledge God.

⇒ The unconverted man curses God; he does not praise God.

⇒ The unconverted man serves religion; he does not serve God.

⇒ The unconverted man honors a personal idea; he does not honor Christ, the very Son of God.

Man acts in wrath against God: he is a child of wrath, not a child of God. Therefore, he shall reap what he has sown. What he has measured to God shall be measured to him. The wrath of God shall fall upon him.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Ro.1:18).

“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath” (Ro.2:8).

“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph.5:6).

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th.1:7-8).

“For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (Heb.2:2-3).

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| <p><b>1 God has quickened us with Christ</b><br/> a. Why: Because His very nature is mercy &amp; love<br/> b. When: While we were dead in sins</p> | <p><b>B. The Believer's Conversion (Part I): The Work of God's Mercy, 2:4-7</b><br/><br/> 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,<br/> 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us to</p> | <p>gether with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)<br/> 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:<br/> 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.</p> | <p>c. How: By quickening us together with Christ<br/> <b>2 God has raised us up with Christ</b><br/> <b>3 God has made us sit in heavenly places—in Christ</b><br/> <b>4 God had one great purpose: To show us the riches of His grace—in the ages to come</b></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 2:1-22**

**B. The Believer's Conversion (Part I): The Work of God's Mercy, 2:4-7**

(2:4-7) **Introduction:** the most astounding interruption in human history is the word “but” in this passage. Man is dead in trespasses and sins, but God is rich in mercy. He has intervened in the destiny of man; He has interrupted the doom of death and judgment. God has had mercy upon us!

1. God has quickened us with Christ (v.4-5).
2. God has raised us up with Christ (v.6).
3. God has made us sit in heavenly places—in Christ (v.6).
4. God had one great purpose: to show us the riches of His grace in the ages to come (v.7).

**1** (2:4-5) **Quickened—Mercy—Love:** the work of God's mercy is to quicken us with Christ. The word “quicken” means to be made alive. We were dead in trespasses and sins, but God has made us alive. Note three significant points.

1. Why has God quickened us? Because of His very nature. God does not have a nature like most men picture: distant, disinterested, unconcerned, vengeful, and fearful.
  - a. God is full of mercy (eleei): feelings of pity, compassion, affection, kindness. It is a desire to succor, to tenderly draw unto oneself and to care for. Two things are essential in order to have mercy: seeing a need and being able to meet that need. God sees our need and feels for us (Eph.2:1-3). Therefore, He acts; He has mercy upon us...
    - God withholds His judgment.
    - God provides a way for us to be saved.
  - b. God is love; He is full of love (agape): a selfless and sacrificial love; a love of the mind, of the reason, of the will as well as of the heart and affections. It is the love that goes so far...
    - that it loves a person even if he does not deserve to be loved.
    - that it loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.
    - that it is compelled to sacrifice itself for its enemies (Ro.5:8, 10).

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

**“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:10).**

2. When did God quicken and make us alive to Him? When we were dead in sins. This refers back to the former passage and outline (see outline and notes—Eph.2:1-3 for discussion).

3. How did God quicken us? By quickening and making us alive *together with Christ*. Christ is alive; He is in heaven face to face with God right now. God quickens or regenerates and makes us alive with Christ. How does He do this? This is the discussion of the next two major points. As they are discussed remember that it is by God's grace that we are saved. Salvation is all of Him; none of it is of us. We are saved by the act of God and God alone.

**2** (2:6) **Salvation—Justification—Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** the work of God's mercy is to raise us up with Christ. Note a crucial fact. Scripture plainly declares that God has raised up believers *together with Christ*. How is this possible when Christ was crucified and raised up thousands of years ago? What does Scripture mean? It means this: God raised Jesus Christ for three reasons.

1. Jesus Christ lived a sinless and perfect life. God loved man and wanted to save man but He had a problem. Man had already sinned. Righteousness and perfection had already been lost and only perfection can live in the presence of God. However, there was one hope. If a man could live a perfect and ideal life, that man could secure the perfect, ideal righteousness. And then the ideal man could stand for and cover all men who would trust Him. This is what Jesus Christ did. He came to earth as a Man and lived a perfect and sinless life. He never broke the law nor went against God's will—not even once. He secured perfect righteousness. He was the Ideal and Perfect Man. Therefore, He did not deserve to die; He deserved to live eternally with God.

2. Jesus Christ died for man. God loved man and wanted to save man but He had a problem. Man had *already sinned* and broken the law; he had already committed rebellion against God. Therefore, the penalty of death had *already been enacted and pronounced*. Man had to die. However, there was one way out of the dilemma. If the Perfect and Ideal Man would bear the penalty of sin for man, then His ideal death could stand for and cover any man who really trusted Him. This is exactly what Jesus Christ did. He was the Ideal and Perfect Man who loved God with all His heart. Therefore, when God willed Christ to bear man's penalty and judgment for sin, He surrendered and sacrificed Himself. He died for man; He bore man's penalty and punishment for sin. He was perfectly obedient to God the Father *even in death*. Therefore, He did not deserve to die; He deserved to live forever with God.

3. Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead. He was the Ideal and Perfect Man; therefore, His resurrection can stand for and cover any person who truly trusts Him.

Now, how does God raise up the believer together with Christ? By belief—trust—faith. When a person truly believes in Jesus Christ, God loves His Son so much that He *counts* the person's faith as his identification with Christ. God sees the persons' faith and love for Christ, and He honors his faith and love by doing the very thing the person believes. The person believes and loves Christ for His righteousness, death, and resurrection; therefore, God counts the person as *being together* with Christ in His righteousness, death, and resurrection. God counts or credits the persons' faith...

- as his having already died and been raised with Christ.
- as his having been placed in the death and resurrection of Christ.
- as his having been identified in the death and resurrection of Christ.
- as his having been made a partaker in the death and resurrection of Christ.
- as his having been in union with the death and resurrection of Christ.
- as his having been bound together with the death and resurrection of Christ.

“And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6).

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:23-24).

“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ro.4:3).

“...[righteousness] shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:24-25).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:9).

“For he that is dead [counted dead, justified] is freed from sin” (Ro.6:7).

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11).

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth” (Ro.8:33).

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).

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

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).

**3** (2:6) **Heaven—Salvation:** the work of God's mercy is to sit us in heavenly places in Christ. Note two facts.

1. “Heavenly places” should read “in the heavenlies.” The believer is said to be *in Christ*. Christ is said to be “in the heavenlies.” Therefore, the believer is in the heavenly realm of experience with Christ. True, the believer physically lives on earth, but spiritually he has already been placed “in the heavenlies.” The believer is of both realms. He belongs to two worlds. He has two addresses: *in Ephesus* and *in Christ*. He maintains two relationships: one to earth and one to heaven (cp. Heb.3:1; 1 Pt.2:11).

2. The believer's salvation, his resurrection and exaltation, is an accomplished fact. In the word “together” (*synegeiro*) or “with Him” (RV), a profound truth is unfolded.

- a. God's unsurpassing power is said to have raised Christ from the dead and made Him to sit at God's right hand in the heavenly places (Eph.1:20).

- b. Believers are said to have been raised *with Christ* and are urged to “seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God...” (Col.2:12; 3:1, 3).
- c. It is said that believers are already raised from the dead *with Christ* and already seated *with Christ* at the right hand of God. The words “quicken” and “raised” and “made to sit” are all in the Greek aorist tense. They express what God has already done for His children in Christ. Christ has already died and been raised and exalted to live in heaven with God forever. God sees all things as they really are. Therefore, He sees believers as having already been raised and exalted to live eternally with Him—all because He sees them in Christ Jesus. He sees their faith and counts them—considers them, looks upon them—as being in Christ. (Cp. Acts 1:10-11; Ph.2:9; 1 Pt.2:9; Rev.1:6; 5:10.)

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11).

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:17).

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Ro.8:18).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:17).

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim.2:10).

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Pt.5:1).

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev.3:21).

“And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev.5:10).

“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev.22:5).

“Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name” (Ps.91:14).

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan.12:3).

**4** (2:7) **Salvation, Purpose:** the work of God’s mercy has one great purpose—to show believers the riches of His grace throughout all the ages to come. Very simply stated, God’s one great purpose is...

- to show the riches of grace toward us demonstrated in Christ Jesus.

God has done so much for us through Christ Jesus that it will take an eternity to show it all off. “Ages” (aiosin) literally means in the ages that are coming one upon another; that roll in one upon another. It means an eternity of ages. Grasping the verse is helped by breaking it up like this...

- the exceeding riches
- of His grace in His kindness
- toward us
- through Christ Jesus

God is going to be eternally glorified for His grace and kindness toward us. All creatures will live in *stark amazement* at God’s wondrous mercy shown toward men—all through Christ Jesus (cp. Eph.3:10).

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mt.13:43).

“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Ro.2:4).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).

“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:7).

“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.1:14).

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| <p><b>1 You are saved</b></p> <p>a. Saved by God's grace</p> <p>b. Saved through faith</p> <p>c. Not saved of yourself</p> <p>d. Saved as a gift of God, not of works</p> <p>e. Reason: Lest you boast</p> <p><b>2 You are God's workmanship</b></p> <p>a. Created in Christ Jesus</p> <p>b. Created to do good works</p> | <p><b>C. The Believer's Conversion (Part II): The Work of God's Grace—Salvation, 2:8-10</b></p> <p>8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:</p> <p>9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.</p> <p>10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.</p> |
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## DIVISION II

### THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 2:1-22

#### C. The Believer's Conversion (Part II): The Work of God's Grace—Salvation, 2:8-10

(2:8-10) **Introduction:** this passage is one of the great evangelistic summaries of the Bible. As F.F. Bruce points out, this passage is the watchword for reformation theology: "By grace alone, through faith alone, to God alone be the glory" (*sola gratia, sola fida, soli deo gloria*) (F.F. Bruce. *The Epistle to the Ephesians*. Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1961, p.51.) If a man wants to be saved, these verses tell him how to be saved. Salvation is the work of God, of God's grace and of God's grace alone. It is not of man, not to any degree whatsoever.

- ⇒ Salvation is a free gift of God. It is by grace alone that man is saved. Man can do nothing whatsoever to save himself. He cannot earn, win, or merit salvation. All man can do is accept the fact that God says He will save him, accept as true the free offer of salvation (Ro.11:6).
- ⇒ Salvation is received by faith (Ro.3:27; 4:2, 5; 1 Cor.1:31). Man must believe just what God says and accept His Word, accept His free offer of salvation. And when he accepts the fact that God says He will save him, God takes him and creates him into a "new man" (2 Cor.5:17; Eph.4:24; 1 Pt.1:23; 2 Pt.1:4).

1. You are saved (v.8-9).
2. You are God's workmanship (v.10).

**1** (2:8-9) **Salvation—Grace—Faith:** you are saved by God and by God alone. This is the major stress of this passage.

1. You are saved by God's grace. Grace means the favor and kindness of God, but there is a uniqueness about God's favor and kindness. His favor and kindness are given *despite the fact that it is undeserved and unmerited*. God has done a thing unheard of among men: God has given His grace to men...

- despite their cursing Him.
- despite their rejecting Him.
- despite their rebelling against Him.
- despite their hostility toward Him.
- despite their denial of Him.
- despite their neglect of Him.
- despite their half-hearted commitment to Him.
- despite their worship of religion instead of Him.
- despite their false worship.
- despite their idolatrous worship.
- despite their trespasses.
- despite their sins.

Grace is getting what we  
do not deserve  
  
 mercy is not getting what  
we do deserve

Grace is giving, but it is giving to people who do not deserve the gift. What is the gift that God has given? Jesus Christ. God has given His Son, Jesus Christ, to save men. He did not have to give His Son. God could have wiped man from the face of the earth. Man deserved it, but this is God's grace. God is full of mercy and love and kindness—by His very nature He is full of these glorious qualities. Therefore, God was *bound* to shower His grace upon man. God was bound to send His Son to save man.

God is not off someplace in the distance, far removed from man, disinterested and unconcerned with man's sufferings and death. God is gracious, full of mercy, love, and kindness for man; therefore, He has reached out through His Son Jesus Christ to help man. How?

- ⇒ By giving His Son to die *for man*. When Jesus Christ hung upon the cross, He was *taking our sins* upon Himself and bearing the punishment for our sins. We had committed high treason against God: rejected and rebelled against Him. The penalty for high treason is death; we are condemned to die. But Christ took our penalty and condemnation upon Himself. He died for us—in our place, in our stead, as our substitute. This is what Scripture means when it says that Christ died *for us*.

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

**“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:10).**

Note that the people for whom Christ died did not deserve His sacrificial love. They were men who were...

- “without strength” (Ro.5:6).
- “ungodly” (Ro.5:6).
- “sinners” (Ro.5:8).
- “enemies” (Ro.5:10).

This is the grace of God—God’s grace that showered itself upon sinful men who were lost and condemned—God’s grace that gave the greatest gift possible to men—the gift of His Son to save the world. (See notes, *Salvation*—Eph.2:6; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Justification*—Gal.2:15-16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:16; note—2:19-21.)

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:24).**

**“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor.8:9).**

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph.2:4-5).**

2. You are saved through faith. What does it mean to be saved through faith? Simply this: Jesus Christ died *for us*. He bore our sin and punishment upon the cross. When we believe, really believe, that Jesus Christ died for us, God does a wonderful thing. God takes our faith and counts it as the death of Jesus Christ *for us*. That is, when we honor God’s dear Son by believing in Him so much that we give all we are and have to Him, God takes the death of Jesus Christ and applies it to us.

The point is this: it is our faith that causes God to look upon us as having been in Christ when He died. It is our faith that causes God to credit us with salvation. (See notes, *Salvation*—Eph.2:6; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Justification*—Gal.2:15-16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:16; note—2:19-21 for more discussion.)

Jesus Christ is God’s gift to us. Salvation through Christ has been wrapped up as a gift and God hands it over to us. But note: a gift is not ours until we believe it is ours and we take and receive it. Suppose I hand you my Bible and say, “Here, this is yours. I give it to you as a gift. It is yours; take it.” What is necessary for the Bible (the gift) to become yours? You have to believe it is yours and reach out and receive it. You could say, “No thank you...”

- I do not believe you.
- I don’t want it.
- I deny its existence.
- I don’t have the time to use it.”

If this is your attitude, what happens to the gift? It never becomes yours. In my mind I gave it to you, but you never received it. You either did not believe it or did not want it.

This is what is meant by faith. If you believe, really believe that Jesus Christ died *for you*, you will reach out and receive the gift of God’s grace.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).**

3. You are not saved of yourselves. God is perfect, and to live in His presence, a person must be perfect. This is the great problem of man. Man is not perfect; therefore, he can never live in God’s presence—not in and of himself. Even if man could be good enough and do enough good to become perfect (he cannot, but even if he could) he would not be acceptable to God. Why? Because he has already transgressed and become imperfect. He already stands imperfect, corruptible, aging, dying, and decaying. If man is ever to be acceptable to God—if he is ever to be perfected and have his past wiped clean—it will not be by his own hands. He cannot save himself. Salvation is not of man.

**“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Cor.10:12).**

**“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal.6:3).**

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:5).**

**“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).**

**“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered” (Pr.28:26).**

**“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).**

**“The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD” (Obad.3-4).**

4. You are saved as a gift of God, not of works. There are at least seven reasons why salvation must be a free gift. (Note: some of these were stirred by thoughts from William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.121f.)

- a. Man cannot make God owe him. Man cannot put God in debt for work performed. A man who works puts his employer in debt for his services (Ro.4:4). God is completely independent. He cannot be put in debt to any man. God cannot be made to owe anything or to be obligated for anything. God does not save man because He is obligated to man or owes man, but because He loves and wills to save man.
- b. Man cannot bring perfection to God. God is perfect, incorruptible, and permanent. Man and everything about man is imperfect, corruptible, and decaying (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Eph.1:7). Man cannot offer and cannot give anything to God that will satisfy His perfection. Any offer or gift from an imperfect man to a perfect God is ever so short and inadequate. God accepts man’s offer of himself not because man merits acceptance, but simply because God loves and wills to accept man.
- c. Man cannot make God forgive him. Man is the one who has done wrong, offended and hurt God. It is man who has broken off the friendship and relationship with God (Ro.3:23; 8:6-8). Therefore, man is the one who is to apologize and ask forgiveness, and God is the One who is to have mercy and do the forgiving. If God chooses to have mercy, it comes from a heart of grace, not because man deserves it.
- d. Man cannot heal God’s heart. Man’s sin breaks the heart of God (Ro.5:6, 8, 10). Therefore, man’s offense is primarily against love; it is primarily against God’s very nature of love, mercy, and peace. Since man’s main offense is breaking the heart of God, he can only cast himself upon the love of God, apologize and ask forgiveness and trust God to forgive. This is the glorious message of salvation. If man turns to God and asks forgiveness, God forgives and accepts man back into His glorious grace.
- e. Man cannot save himself (Eph.2:8-9). No matter what law or work was chosen to be the channel for salvation, there would be some men who could never keep that particular law or perform that particular work. If salvation were by law and works, man could never be saved. There are always many who are totally unable to work and earn their way: the deformed, the poor, the sick, the weary, the underprivileged, the disadvantaged, the oppressed, and many, many others. However, the needy are always before God’s keen eyes, and He counts them precious. Therefore, He has made provision for salvation by grace and by grace alone.
- f. Man cannot make God love him (Tit.3:4-7). If salvation were by law and works, the love of God could never be known. God would be forced to save and bless us because He owes us, not because He loves us. Our works would forever require Him to pay our wages. He would not be free to do something for us freely simply because He loved us. We would never know what it is to be loved by God. We would know only what it is to be paid by God for work done.
- g. Man cannot set himself free and bring about liberty of conscience (see DEEPER STUDY # 4—Mt.26:28). If we are saved by law and works, liberty and freedom of spirit and conscience would never be experienced. We constantly fail and come short. This eats and gnaws away at us. If God does not forgive us simply because He loves us, then what can remove the guilt and aggravation of failure from our hearts? The law? No, for the law only points out our failure, and once we have failed we have failed, and the gnawing away of conscience begins (see note—Ro.3:21-22). The only way for the gnawing and guilt of conscience to be removed is for God to forgive us for failing and to convince us of His forgiveness. This He has done by grace—His grace.

**“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:22-23).**

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

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

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).**

**“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:4-5).**

5. The reason salvation is by grace and not by works is to prevent men from ever boasting. God is the Supreme and Majestic Being of the universe. He is the Creator of all that is in heaven and earth. God is the One who dwells in the ultimate of light and holiness and who deserves all the worship and glory of eternity. The honor and glory due His name are not to be shared with anyone. If man was saved by some effort of his own, he would be due some credit, some boast, some honor. This God cannot allow. His very nature forbids it. As God, He is the Supreme glory of the universe, and as the Supreme Being, He is to receive the supreme glory—that is, all glory and praise. His Supremacy—His being God—demands it.

**Thought 1.** How small we are and how glorious God is!

**“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped [from boasting], and all the world may become guilty before God” (Ro.3:19).**

**“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith” (Ro.3:27).**

**2** (2:10) **Salvation—Works, God—New Man:** you are God’s workmanship (poiema). Note two points.

1. We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. The believer experiences two creations, both a natural birth and a spiritual birth. The spiritual birth is the point of this verse. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, God *creates him in Christ*. What does this mean?

⇒ It means that God *quickens the spirit* of the believer and makes his spirit alive. Whereas the believer’s spirit was dead to God, God creates it anew and makes it alive to God.

**“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.2:1).**

**“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph.2:5).**

⇒ It means that God causes the believer to be *born again spiritually*.

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God....Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn.3:3, 5-6).**

**“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pt.1:23).**

**“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn.5:1).**

⇒ It means that God actually places His *divine nature* into the heart of the believer.

**“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).**

⇒ It means that God actually makes a *new creature* of the believer.

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor.5:17).**

**“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal.6:15).**

⇒ It means that God actually creates a *new man* out of the believer.

**“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:24).**

**“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).**

⇒ It means that God *renews the believer* by the Holy Spirit.

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit.3:5).**

2. We are created to do good works. God saves man *for good works* not by good works. F.F. Bruce points out that the believer is God's "workmanship" (*poiema*), God's work of art, God's masterpiece (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p.52). God fashions man and creates a masterpiece. God's workmanship is always a work of art. The believer does not create the beauty, the art that shows in the canvas of his life. The believer just shows that he is God's workmanship by the life he lives and displays. Works are an evidence of salvation. Those who walk in trespasses and sins (Eph.2:1-2) show that they are not God's workmanship no matter what profession they make. God's people give ample evidence of the *power of a new life* which operates in them.

Note that God has *ordained* us to walk in good works. Doing good works is not an option for the believer; it is the very nature of the believer. If a man has been created in Christ—if God has truly worked in him—the man does good works. His very nature dictates it. He cannot do otherwise. He is not perfect, and he fails; but he keeps coming back to God and falling upon his knees, believing and asking forgiveness, and getting back up and going forth once again to do all the good he can. As stated, it is his nature. He is a new creature created to do good works. Therefore, he does them. Just like a tree, he bears the fruit of his nature.

**"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mt.5:16).**

**"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col.1:10).**

**"That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (1 Tim.6:18).**

**"In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity" (Tit.2:7).**

**"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men" (Tit.3:8).**

**"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb.10:24).**

**"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works" (Jas.2:17-18).**

**"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pt.2:12).**

**"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn.1:7).**

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| <p><b>1 We were far off &amp; separated from God</b><br/> a. We were barricaded from God: Were Gentiles &amp; uncircumcised</p> <p>b. We were without Christ</p> <p>c. We were aliens from God's people (Israel)</p> <p>d. We were strangers from God's covenant &amp; promises</p> <p>e. We were without hope &amp; without God</p> <p><b>2 Christ brings us near to God</b></p> | <p><b>D. Remember What Life is Like Since Christ Came: Reconciliation &amp; Peace, 2:11-18</b></p> <p>11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;</p> <p>12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:</p> <p>13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the</p> | <p>blood of Christ.</p> <p>14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;</p> <p>15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;</p> <p>16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:</p> <p>17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.</p> <p>18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.</p> | <p><b>3 Christ brings us peace</b><br/> a. He made all men as one<br/> b. He broke down all barriers</p> <p>c. He wiped out all rules</p> <p>d. He creates a "new man"</p> <p><b>4 Christ brings us reconciliation</b><br/> a. By the cross</p> <p>b. By the preaching of peace</p> <p><b>5 Christ brings us access to God</b></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 2:1-22**

**D. Remember What Life Is Like Since Christ Came: Reconciliation & Peace, 2:11-18**

(2:11-18) **Introduction—New Creation—The Church:** in verses 11-22 Paul wants the reader to grasp what God has done for man from three points of view.

1. From an *historical view*. Before Christ, God dealt with man through the Jewish nation. Since Christ, God has been moving on a world-wide scale to include both Jews and Gentiles who are willing to follow Christ. God takes both Jew and Gentile believers and He makes them the citizens of His *new race*, His *new nation*, His *new creation* (see notes—Eph.2:14-15; 4:17).

2. From an *individual view*. The Jewish nation was made up of individual Jews, and the Gentile nations are made up of individual Gentiles. Therefore, God deals with each single person even as He deals with the Jewish nation and with the corporate nations of the Gentile world (1 Cor.10:32; Eph.2:10).

3. From a *new creation view*. God is no longer dealing with earthly divisions of nations. He is dealing with a new nationality of people, a *new body* of people who make up the true citizens of His Kingdom. These citizens are individuals from all the nations of the world who now approach God through the Lord Jesus Christ. God promises to *spiritually recreate* any person who approaches Him through Christ. God causes that person to be *born again*; He makes a *new man* out of him. God further promises the *new man* that he will become a member of God's *new body* and *new nation* of people—His true church (1 Cor.10:32). It is these believers—those who believe in Christ—who are to constitute the true *family of God* and to inhabit the *new heavens and earth* which God is to create in the future (2 Pt.3:10-13; Rev.21:1f).

The present passage is one of the most wonderful passages in all of Scripture. Remember what life is like since Christ came: reconciliation and peace.

1. We were far off and separated from God (v.11-13).
2. Christ brings us near to God (v.13).
3. Christ brings us peace (v.14-15).
4. Christ brings us reconciliation (v.16-17).
5. Christ brings us access to God (v.18).

**1** (2:11-12) **Division—Separation—Man, State of:** we were far off and separated from God. Note that Paul addresses the second person here, "you." He is referring to Gentiles, that is, to everyone who was not a Jew. Glance at the words "far off" in verse 13. There was a time when all of us who are Gentiles were "far off" and separated from God, a time when great division separated us from heaven. When? Before Christ. Before Christ there was a great gulf, a great distance that separated most of the world from God. This is the discussion of these two verses. Six things kept us from God. (Note: the same six things keep a man from God today. See outline and notes—Ro.9:3-5 for more discussion.)

1. We were barricaded from God by the Jews. God Himself had caused the Jewish nation to be born of Abraham. He had challenged the Jews to be the missionary force to the world, proclaiming that He and He alone was the only true and living God, and that He was going to send the Messiah to save the world. But the Jews failed in their mission. They became exclusive, super-spiritual, prideful, and boastful in their religion and failed to reach out to the other people of the world.

- ⇒ They took their own name, Jews, and called themselves by that name, but they classified everyone else in a package by the name of Gentile.
- ⇒ They took the major ritual of their religion, circumcision, and called themselves by that name, but they classified everyone else as the uncircumcised.

The point is that we as Gentiles were barricaded from God by religion, a religion that had known the truth but had allowed itself to become corrupted. (See notes and DEEPER STUDY # 1—*Israel*—Jn.4:22; DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Circumcision*—Ro.4:11.)

**Thought 1.** Religion can keep a man from God—a corrupted religion. We must be on guard to protect the truth of Jesus Christ from corruption.

2. We were “without Christ.” This means that we as Gentiles neither knew nor expected the Messiah, that is, the anointed One of God. As Gentiles we had no hope of the coming Saviour for the world.

3. We were “aliens” from God’s people, that is, from Israel. This means that we as Gentiles were not citizens of God’s people—the nation of people being built by God for Himself. As Gentiles we had no destiny.

4. We were “strangers from the covenant and promises of God.” This means that we as Gentiles were not the covenant people of God. God did not approach the Gentiles directly with the covenant relationship. The Jews alone had a covenant relationship with God.

5. We had “no hope.” This means that we as Gentiles lived in all the fears and the anxieties of life and in constant expectancy of death. We had no hope of a life beyond this world beyond human history.

6. We were “without God in the world.” This means that we as Gentiles stood alone in this world. We had no source of strength or hope beyond that which we ourselves could muster or which others like us could provide. There was nothing to which we could look beyond ourselves. We had “gods many, and lords many” (1 Cor.8:5), but we were alienated from the only living and true God.

“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Mt.15:8).

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools....who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever” (Ro.1:20-22, 25).

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness [all forms of immorality], to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:17-19).

“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies” (Ps.58:3).

**2** (2:13) **Jesus Christ, Blood—Reconciliation:** Christ brings us near to God. The words “but now” are cataclysmic, a forceful contrast. Christ Jesus has now come into the world. There was a time when He had not entered the world, a time when men were divided and separated from God and from each other, *but now* Christ has come to bring all men to God and to each other. How does Christ bring us near God? Note how clearly and unmistakably Scripture declares: “By the blood.” It is by the blood of Christ that men are brought near God. But why blood? Why was it necessary for Christ to die in order to bring us near God? There are at least two reasons.

1. Man was estranged from God: he had rejected and rebelled against God, committing high treason against Him. Man was working all kinds of evil and injustice in the world—all against the will and law of God. And, even as the case is among men, the penalty for high treason and insurrection is exile and separation or death.

Now note: there was only one way man could ever be brought back to God—if God loved him enough to forgive his transgression and rebellion. The glorious gospel is that God did love man that much. God was willing to forgive man. However, there was one problem. The judgment of exile or death had already been pronounced, and the Lord’s Word could not be revoked. What could God do? Only one thing: God had to provide a Perfect, Ideal Man for men, a Man who could stand as the Pattern for all men. If He could provide the Ideal Man, then He could die *for man* and His death would stand for the death of all men.

This God has done. God has loved man with a perfect love—a love so strong that He was willing to substitute His Son for man. Only God and God’s Son could love that much. This is the first reason Christ had to die, to shed His blood for man.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

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

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:18-19).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).

2. God wanted to show just how much He loves the world. No “greater love can a man give than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn.15:13). However, God has gone much farther than just giving His life for His friends. But note the point: we were not friends of God. We were enemies, in rebellion against Him, rejecting Him and every righteous law of His. Therefore, when Christ died, He died for men who were...

- “without strength” (Ro.5:6).
- “ungodly” (Ro.5:6).
- “sinners” (Ro.5:8).
- “enemies” (Ro.5:10).

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:8-10).**

**3** (2:14-15) **Peace—Reconciliation—Law—Brotherhood—Unity—Division—New Man** : Christ brings us peace. Note that Jesus Christ Himself is our peace.

- ⇒ Christ brings us peace when we realize that He died for us and offers us deliverance from the bondage of sin and death and a life of eternity with God.
- ⇒ Christ brings a deeper sense of peace when we realize that He gives the daily power to overcome the aggravating and terrible weight of anguish and guilt and loneliness and emptiness and fear.
- ⇒ Christ brings a still deeper sense of peace when we realize that He has brought perfect love and unity to the world—that He has eliminated all divisions and barriers and differences between God and man and between men.

Christ is *man’s peace* because He does four things for man.

1. Christ brings peace by bringing men together as “one” (v.14). Note that He has made “both one,” that is, Jew and Gentile. There are two ways that Christ makes men as one.

- a. All men now approach God on the same basis, on an equal footing: by the blood of Jesus Christ. There is no other way. Therefore, when a man comes to the cross, he comes with everyone else who is standing at the feet of Jesus. He stands as one with them—all on an equal basis: sinners who need a Savior. Standing there he is not accepted by God because he is better, healthier, wealthier, more intelligent, more capable, and more religious than anyone else. He is acceptable to God because He acknowledges his unworthiness and nothingness—his desperate need—to be saved by the blood of Christ. He is acceptable to God because he acknowledges that he is as all other men—lost and needful—and he comes as one with all other men to confess Christ as his Savior.

**“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn.14:27).**

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

**“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousnes, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:17).**

**“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph.2:14).**

**“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).**

- b. All men who come to Christ for salvation receive a common love and purpose and work.
- ⇒ First, there is the common love. Every believer who comes to Jesus Christ loves Him, and that common love *among* believers stirs a common love between believers. Love for Jesus Christ stirs love for all those whom Christ loves—which is everyone. Christ leads men to love one another.
  - ⇒ Second, there is the common purpose and work: that of living righteously and bearing testimony to the glorious message of salvation and to life eternal.

**“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5).**

**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28).**

**“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:12-13).**

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).**

2. Christ brings peace by breaking down all barriers (v.14). This is a picture taken from the temple. The temple was surrounded by a series of courts. Each court had a high wall separating it from the preceding court. As one approached the temple, he entered first of all the outer Court of the Gentiles. This is where the buying and selling of animals and the exchanging of money for foreign worshippers took place (see note—Mk.11:15). Then there was the Court of the Women. A Jewish woman was limited to this court unless she had come to make a sacrifice. The next court was the Court of the Israelites. This is where the whole congregation gathered on the great feast days and where sacrifices were handed over to the priests. The Court of the Priests was next. This court was in the temple proper where the temple itself stood. This area was considered sacred and was accessible only to the services of the priests. Finally, within the very heart of the temple stood the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place where the very presence of God was to dwell. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy Place and he could enter only once a year—at the great Passover Feast.

Partition after partition separated people from the presence of God. Tablets hung around the wall of the Gentile Court announcing that if any Gentile walked into any other court, he was to be put to death. The picture is that of Jesus Christ breaking down all barriers and walls that separate man from God. All men can now approach God equally through the death of Jesus Christ. Men build all kinds of barriers and prejudices against other men. Society is plagued with barriers and prejudices built around such things as...

- race
- color
- religion
- organizations
- wealth
- position
- morality
- dress
- appearance
- health
- commitment
- ability

But Christ has now done away with all barriers and prejudices. He has broken them all down by the blood of His cross. All men now approach God and become worthy on the same basis: by bowing before the cross and surrendering their lives to God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ and all ye are brethren” (Mt.23:8).**

**“But God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (Acts 10:28).**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Ro.10:12).**

**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28).**

**“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” (Jas.2:5).**

**“The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all” (Pr.22:2).**

3. Christ brings peace by wiping out the enmity of the law against us. Before Christ, man had to approach God through law. However, man discovered something: the law did not make him acceptable to God: it condemned him and showed him how far away from God he really was—totally depraved. Every time he broke the law, the law cried out “guilty” and pronounced the penalty of being imperfect and unworthy and unacceptable to God. Man discovered that the law was against him—at enmity with him. But now, Christ has done away with the enmity and condemnation of the law.

⇒ He has lived a sinless life, fulfilling the law perfectly; and thereby He has secured the Perfect and Ideal Righteousness.

⇒ He has also paid the penalty for man's having broken the law. As the Ideal and Perfect Man He could do this. When He died on the cross, He bore our condemnation and punishment for us.

The point is this: when Christ fulfilled the law, He became the embodiment of the law. He is now the Way. A man is to approach God through Him, not the law. Therefore, there are no laws, no rules, and no decrees to keep men from God. There is only one thing that keeps a man away from God: refusing to come to God through His Son Jesus Christ. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal.2:15-16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:16; notes—2:19-21; 3:13-14; 4:4-7; DEEPER STUDY # 2—Ro.8:3 for more discussion.)

**“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mt.5:17).**

**“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:3).**

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).**

**“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal.4:4-5).**

4. Christ brings peace by creating a “new man.” God planned and promised a “new creation”—the creation of a *new man* individually and corporately, a new man in whom Jesus Christ dwells (Col.1:27).

Individually when a man turns to Christ, Christ causes the man to be *born again*. He recreates the man—creates the man *all over again*. The man has a new life; he begins life all over again. He has a new beginning, and this new beginning brings peace—peace of heart and mind. (See note, *New Man*—Eph.2:10 for more discussion.)

Corporately in Jesus Christ all men who believe, both Jew and Gentile, make up *one new body* (Eph.2:16), *one new family* (Eph.2:19), *one new building* (Eph.2:20-22), *one new temple* (Eph.2:21), *one new fellowship* (Eph.1:22). (See note—Eph.4:17; DEEPER STUDY # 3—Eph.4:24.)

**4** (2:16-17) **Reconciliation—Jesus Christ, Cross:** Christ brings us reconciliation. The word “reconcile” (apokatalasso) means to change, to change thoroughly, to exchange, to change from enmity to friendship, to bring together, to restore.

The idea is that two persons who should have been together all along are brought together; two persons who had something between them are restored and reunited.

Five points should be noted about reconciliation.

1. The thing that broke the relationship between God and man was sin. Men are said to be enemies of God (Ro.5:10), and the word “enemies” refers back to the sinners and the ungodly (Ro.5:6, 8). The “enemies” of God are the sinners and ungodly of this world. This simply means that every man is an enemy of God, for every man is a sinner and ungodly. This may seem unkind and harsh, but it is exactly what Scripture is saying. The fact is clearly seen by thinking about the matter for a moment.

The sinner cannot be said to be a friend of God’s. He is antagonistic toward God, opposing what God stands for. The sinner is...

- rebelling against God
- rejecting God
- cursing God
- ignoring God
- disobeying God
- fighting against God
- denying God
- refusing to live for God

When any of us sin, we work against God and promote evil by word and example.

- ⇒ When the sinner lives for himself, he becomes an enemy of God. Why? Because God does not live for Himself. God gave Himself up in the most supreme way possible: He gave His only Son to die *for* us.
- ⇒ When the sinner lives for the world and worldly things, he becomes an enemy of God. Why? Because he chooses the temporal, things which pass away, over God. Man chooses temporal things when God has provided eternal life for him through the death of His Son.

This is the point of God’s great love or reconciliation. He did not reconcile and save us when we were righteous and good. He reconciled and saved us when we were enemies, ignoring and rejecting Him. As stated above, it is because we are sinners and enemies that we need to be reconciled.

2. The way men are reconciled to God is by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Very simply stated, when a man believes that Jesus Christ died for him...

- God accepts the death of Jesus Christ *for* the death of the man.
- God accepts the sins borne by Christ as the sins committed by the man.
- God accepts the condemnation borne by Christ as the condemnation due to the man.

Therefore, the man is freed from his sins and the punishment due his sins. Christ bore both the sins and the punishment for the man. The man who truly believes that God loves that much—enough to give His only begotten Son—becomes acceptable to God, reconciled forever and ever.

3. God is the One who reconciles, not men. Men do not reconcile themselves to God. They cannot do enough work or enough good to become acceptable to God. Reconciliation is entirely the act of God. God is the One who reaches out to men and reconciles them unto Himself. Men *receive* the reconciliation of God.

4. All men can be reconciled to one another, can be brought together, if they look up to God “through the Lord Jesus Christ.” Men who look up to Jesus Christ for reconciliation and peace with God are linked arm in arm under the same Lord. (See notes—Jn.14:27; Eph.2:13; 2:14-15; 1 Jn.1:3-4; 2:1-2.)

5. Men learn about reconciliation by the preaching of Jesus Christ. Christ was the first to preach the message. His followers are to follow in His trail, for there is no other way men can ever know that they can be reconciled to God apart from preaching.

**“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor.5:18; cp. v.19-21).**

**“...His grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph.1:6).**

**“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph.2:16).**

**“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).**

**“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb.2:17).**

**“We love him, because he first loved us” (1 Jn.4:19).**

**5** (2:18) **Access:** Christ brings us access to God. The word access (prosagoge) means to bring to, to move to, to introduce, to present. The thought is that of being in a royal court and being presented and introduced to the King of kings. Jesus Christ is the One who throws open the door into God’s presence. He is the One who presents us to God, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe.

Note that it is the Holy Spirit who escorts us into God’s presence. The idea is that of daily access—hour by hour, moment by moment. The Holy Spirit keeps us in the presence of God.

- ⇒ The Holy Spirit is the Divine Nature of God within us that gives us permanent access into God’s presence. (Jn.3:5; Ro.8:11; 2 Pt.1:4).
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit is the One who works in us and stirs us to move more and more into God’s presence (Ro.8:14; Gal.4:6-7).
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit is the constant companion with us, teaching us to live in God’s presence (Jn.14:26; 1 Cor.2:12-13).
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit is the One within us who bears witness that we are children of God and should approach God continually (Ro.8:15-16; Gal.4:4-6).

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| <p><b>1 Picture 1: A new nation</b></p> <p><b>2 Picture 2: God's family</b></p> <p><b>3 Picture 3: God's building</b></p> | <p><b>E. Remember Who You Are: Six Pictures of the Church, 2:19-22</b></p> <p>19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;</p> <p>20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles</p> | <p>and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;</p> <p>21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:</p> <p>22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.</p> | <p><b>4 Picture 4: A growing organism</b></p> <p><b>5 Picture 5: A worldwide temple—the universal church</b></p> <p><b>6 Picture 6: A local temple—the local church</b></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 2:1-22**

**E. Remember Who You Are: Six Pictures of the Church, 2:19-22**

(2:19-22) **Introduction—The Church:** this is an excellent description of the church. Six pictures are given in these four short verses.

1. Picture 1: a new nation (v.19).
2. Picture 2: God's family (v.19).
3. Picture 3: God's building (v.20).
4. Picture 4: a growing organism (v.21).
5. Picture 5: a worldwide temple—the universal church (v.21).
6. Picture 6: a local temple—the local church (v.22).

**1** (2:19) **Church—Believers—New Nation:** first, the church is pictured as a new nation or society. Note the word "fellowcitizens." We, the Gentiles, are no longer strangers and foreigners to God; we are now fellowcitizens with all the saints of God.

1. We were strangers and foreigners. The word "stranger" (xeno) means an outsider, an unknown person, a person who does not belong. The word "foreigner" (paroikoi) means sojourner, alien, a migrant, an exile. There was a time when we...

- were outside God and His kingdom.
- were unknown to God and His kingdom.
- did not belong to God and His kingdom.
- were sojourners, living outside God and outside His kingdom.
- were alien to God and to His kingdom.
- were migrants, not belonging to God nor to His kingdom.
- were exiles to God and to His kingdom.

There was a time when we were as a stranger and a foreigner to God, when we were not citizens of God's kingdom. We had no relationship and no fellowship with God and no home and no rights to citizenship in His kingdom.

But note the glorious news: we are no longer strangers and foreigners to God. Jesus Christ has brought us to God (see outline and notes—Eph.2:13-18). We are now *fellowcitizens* with all of God's people. We now have a home and all the rights of citizenship in God's kingdom.

2. Note the word "saints." It means those who are set apart or separated to God. The picture is that of a people who are *fellowcitizens* in a nation being created by God. The people are called...

- *Saints:* a people set apart to God.
- *Fellowcitizens:* a people being built into a new nation under God.

**"For our conversation [Greek politeuma, citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Ph.3:20).**

**"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb.11:9-10).**

**"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb.11:13-16).**

**"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pt.3:13).**

**"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev.21:1).**

**"And there shall in no wise enter into it [God's city, God's nation] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev.21:27).**

**2** (2:19) **Church—God, Family of:** second, the church is pictured as the family of God. Note the phrase “household of God.” Jesus Christ has brought us into the family of God. This involves two glorious privileges.

1. The privilege of adoption. We have been adopted as children of God, sons and daughters of His (see **DEEPER STUDY # 2—Adoption—Gal.4:5-6** for discussion). We now live in the same house with God and His family, and all the experiences of God’s family are now ours:

- |            |              |              |                 |
|------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| • love     | • help       | • clothing   | • direction     |
| • care     | • provision  | • food       | • fellowship    |
| • interest | • protection | • training   | • companionship |
| • concern  | • shelter    | • discipline | • intimacy      |

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:15-17).

“Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:4-6).

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb.2:11).

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not” (1 Jn.3:1).

2. The privilege of responsibility and service. Again, note the term household. Every person of the household has duties to perform, some service to render for the sake of the family. We are responsible to love and care, provide and teach each other—do all the things mentioned in the previous point and everything else that will build up and strengthen the family of God.

“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Mt.12:50).

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).

“But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all” (Mk.10:43-44).

“For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth” (Lk.22:27).

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet” (Jn.13:14).

“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:16).

“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer” (Ro.12:10-11).

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal.5:13).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).

“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph.6:7).

“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Tit.2:7).

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Heb.10:24).

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb.12:28).

**3** (2:20) **Church—Building, God’s:** third, the church is pictured as God’s building. Believers are pictured as being the building stones which are being used to construct a building for God. Note two significant points.

1. Jesus Christ Himself is the *chief cornerstone*. The symbolism of the chief cornerstone says three significant things to us.

a. The cornerstone is the first stone laid. All other stones are placed after it. It is the preeminent stone in time. So it is with Christ. He is *the first* of God’s new movement.

⇒ Christ is the captain of our salvation. All others are crew members who follow Him.

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb.2:10).

⇒ Christ is the author of eternal salvation and of our faith. All others are the readers of the story.

**“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb.5:9).**

**“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb.12:2).**

⇒ Christ is the beginning and the end. All others come after Him.

**“I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Rev.1:8; cp. 21:6; 22:13).**

⇒ Christ is the forerunner into the very presence of God. All others enter God’s presence after Him.

**“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb.6:19-20).**

- b. The cornerstone is the supportive stone. All other stones are placed upon it and held up by it. They all rest upon it. The cornerstone is the preeminent stone in position and power. So it is with Christ. He is the support and power, the Foundation of God’s new movement.

⇒ Christ is *the head cornerstone*, the only true foundation upon which man can build. All crumble who are not laid upon Him.

**“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).**

⇒ Christ is *the chief cornerstone* upon which all others are fitly formed together. All who wish to be fitly formed together have to be laid upon Him.

**“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph.2:20-22).**

- c. The cornerstone is the directional stone. It is used to line up the whole building and all the other stones. It can be called the *instructional stone*—upon it all the lines and instructions of the building are based. So it is with Christ. He is the Person who gave and gives the directions and instructions to God’s people. We—the church—are to build our lives upon His instructions and His instructions only. If we follow any other instructions or directions, we will be out of line; and when we are noticed, we will have to be removed, cast aside and replaced with a stone that can be set in line. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone. God used Him to give direction to all the other stones.

**“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Pt.2:6-8).**

**Thought 1.** Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone. If He is removed, the church will collapse: no Christ, no church. Christ holds everything within the church together. Therefore, it is an absolute necessity that He and He alone be preached, taught, and lived.

**“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Mt.7:24-27).**

**“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).**

2. We, the church, are built upon the foundation laid by the testimonies of the apostles and prophets. They surrounded the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Their record and testimony of the Word of God itself is the foundation upon which the church is to be laid.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn.17:17).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Ro.1:16).

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:8-10).

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:11-12).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph.4:14-15).

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th.2:13).

**4** (2:21) **Church—Building:** fourth, the church is pictured as a growing organism. The word “grows” is a biological word, the idea of a living organism. The church is pictured as a living organism—the union of various parts of a living being, of a dynamic body. This may seem strange to speak of a building in biological terms—a building that grows. The point is that more and more parts, more and more believers are brought and fitted into the building as each day passes. The building grows and grows and shall continue to grow until the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

Note another fact as well. Peter calls Jesus Christ the *living stone*. Christ is the *living stone* upon which all others are built up a spiritual house. All others have to be built upon Him if they wish to live and have their spiritual sacrifice accepted by God.

**“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.2:4-5).**

Note that it is all of God; it is all due to God’s work. He is the One who raises up the Savior. Note also that the Savior is the object of marvel and wonder.

**Thought 1.** The church and its believers have two dynamic challenges in this point.

- 1) The church must grow. It must be bringing new stones (believers) and fitting them into the building of God. The church must be adding on to the building. Its structure is not yet finished.
- 2) Every believer within the building is a part of the building and expected to fulfill its function within the building; that is, every believer is a laborer, a laborer who is expected to be busy adding on to the building of the church. We are all to be bringing new stones and fitting them into the great building of God, the church.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).

“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul” (Ps.66:16).

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Is.43:10).

“I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses” (Is.63:7).

**5** (2:21) **Church—Universal Temple:** fifth, the church is pictured as a world-wide temple, as the universal church. Note the word “all”—all believers make up the holy temple of God. All believers are pictured as a building, a universal church being structured for God’s presence. Each new believer and each generation of believers are seen as being

placed and fitted into God's universal structure. As the little chorus says, "Red and yellow, black and white—they are precious in His sight." All believers of every generation who are being called from all across the world are being fitted into God's universal building which will literally be the new heavens and earth. We, the church—the believers of the earth from all generations—shall be a part, a building stone, of the new universe when God makes the new heavens and earth (see verses above; note 1—Eph.2:19). However, note that each person is placed into the structure *only by Christ*. Only the person and the body of people who come to Christ as the chief cornerstone are fitted into the building. A man must build upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, which is the foundation of Christ Himself. Any other cornerstone or any other foundation constructs some other kind of building, not God's building. People may follow their own thought structure or some man's profound philosophy or even their own life-style, but it is not God's building that they structure. In Christ and in Christ alone and upon the foundation laid by the apostles is God's building being structured.

**Thought 1.** The gospel of Jesus Christ is open to all people everywhere. There is no place for division and prejudice, privilege and partiality, classes and caste systems in the temple or church of God. Every nation, even the uttermost part of the earth, is to be brought into the universal temple or church of God.

**"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt.16:18).**

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Mt.28:19).**

**"And the gospel must first be published among all nations" (Mk.13:10).**

**"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk.16:15).**

**"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk.24:47).**

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).**

**"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Ro.10:12).**

**"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:28).**

**"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph.3:6).**

**"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev.14:6).**

**6** (2:22) **Church—Holy Spirit, Indwelling Presence:** sixth, the church is pictured as a local temple, as the local church. Note that Paul now uses the word "you," referring to the Ephesian church in particular. Each local church is pictured as a building structured for God's presence (v.22). And each member is seen as an integral and essential stone being placed and fitted into the building (Eph.4:16; 1 Pt.2:5). The church's stability lies in each stone being placed, fitted and cemented by the same Lord, and by each stone holding up its load, fulfilling its purpose in the structure. Note that the local church exists for the purpose of providing a habitation, a home for the presence of God—through His Spirit. The church is to allow the Spirit of God to live out His life through the church. The Holy Spirit dwells within the church to help its believers when they are...

- troubled, distressed, or confused.
- discouraged or dispirited.
- suffering or dying.
- joyful and excited.
- slothful and inactive.
- witnessing and teaching.
- preaching and ministering.

The Spirit of God dwells within the church to conform the church to the image of God's will. The effectiveness of any local church depends upon how much it allows the Holy Spirit to dwell within and to control its body of members.

**"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (Jn.14:17).**

**"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Ro.8:9).**

**"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor.3:16).**

**"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor.6:19).**

**"That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim.1:14).**

**"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (1 Jn.2:27).**

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| <p><b>1 It gave Paul purpose for existing</b><br/> a. He existed to be a prisoner for Christ<br/> b. He existed to be a steward of God's grace</p> <p><b>2 It was a mystery: It required a special revelation to become known</b><br/> a. Revealed to Paul</p> <p>b. Revealed to others</p> <p><b>3 It was a threefold revelation</b><br/> a. All are fellow-heirs<br/> b. All are of the same body</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>III. THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 3:1-21</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A. A New Body of People: The Great Mystery of Christ, 3:1-13</b></p> <p>For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,<br/> 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you ward:<br/> 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,<br/> 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)<br/> 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;<br/> 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of</p> | <p>his promise in Christ by the gospel:<br/> 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.<br/> 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;<br/> 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:<br/> 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,<br/> 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:<br/> 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.<br/> 13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.</p> | <p>c. All share in God's promise: The new creation</p> <p><b>4 It affected Paul—profoundly</b><br/> a. Caused him to become a minister—by the power of God<br/> b. Caused him to become a preacher—unworthy as he was</p> <p>c. Caused him to become an evangelist</p> <p><b>5 It affects heavenly beings even now, profoundly so: Causes them to stand in stark amazement</b><br/> a. At what God is doing in the church<br/> b. At God's eternal purpose—in Christ<br/> c. At the believer's access into God's presence—by faith</p> <p><b>6 It stirred a willingness within</b></p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 3:1-21**

**A. A New Body of People: The Great Mystery of Christ, 3:1-13**

(3:1-21) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: God, Purpose:** chapter three begins a new division in Ephesians, "The Purpose of God for Christian Believers." But note: the passage discusses "The *Eternal Purpose of God*." God's purpose for believers involves much more than life on this earth. God has planned an eternal purpose for believers.

1. First, His purpose is to make a new body of people on earth who will love Him supremely. This is what is called the *mystery of Christ* (Eph.3:1-13).

2. Second, His purpose is to make the believer into a *mature person* filled with all the fulness of God (Eph.3:14-21).

(3:1-13) **Introduction:** prejudice, bitterness, segregation, hatred, disturbance, hurt, anger, and division rage between people. They rage in the hearts of husbands and wives, children and parents, student and teacher, employer and employee, race and religion, denomination and organization, neighborhoods and nations. Division in all its various forms is one of the greatest problems confronting the world. It is the most serious problem confronting God, for as long as men are divided from Him and from each other, there is no hope of men ever being reconciled to God. This is the subject of this passage: how God has dealt with the terrible division in the world. God's eternal purpose has been to create a new body of people, a people who will love Him and each other supremely. Note that this is what is known as the great mystery of Christ.

1. It gave Paul purpose for existing (v.1-2).
2. It was a mystery: it required a special revelation to become known (v.3-5).
3. It was a threefold revelation (v.6).
4. It affected Paul—profoundly (v.7-9).
5. It affects heavenly beings even now, profoundly so: causes them to stand in stark amazement (v.10-12).
6. It stirred a willingness within (v.13).

**1** (3:1-2) **Paul—Ministers:** these two verses give a glimpse into the very purpose for Paul's existence.

1. Paul existed to serve Christ, no matter the cost. Note: he says that he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ. He was speaking literally; he was a prisoner in Rome when he was penning these words. He was there because he was enslaved to

Christ, enslaved to the point that he would bear any suffering to share the glorious news of Christ even if it meant imprisonment and death.

2. Paul existed to be a steward of God. The word “dispensation” (oikonomian) means stewardship, management, administration, ownership. Paul was given the duty to oversee and administer the grace of God to the world.

**Thought 1.** What an enormous responsibility laid upon ministers of God!

1) Every minister of God is a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is to serve Christ no matter the cost—even if it means imprisonment.

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).

“But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all” (Mk.10:43-44).

“For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth” (Lk.22:27).

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet” (Jn.13:14).

2) Every minister of God is a steward of God’s grace. He is responsible for ministering the grace of God to men.

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:1-2).

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God” (Col.1:25).

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness” (1 Th.2:4-5).

“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:11-12).

“But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:3).

**2** (3:3-5) **Mystery—Revelation:** the mystery of Christ required a special revelation to become known. Note two points.

1. The mystery is called the mystery of *Christ* (v.4). Just what the mystery involves is discussed in the next note (v.6).

2. The word mystery (musterion) is defined in these verses. It was some truth that had to be revealed by God for man to know it. As verse five says: “in other ages it was not made known to the sons of men.” Glance at verse nine where it is said to be “the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God.” All this simply means that the mystery of Christ was...

- a truth that was not known before the apostles and prophets.
- a truth that could not be discovered by human reason.
- a truth that had to be revealed by God if it was to ever be known.

Note a striking point that needs to be noted by all men. The mystery of Christ was not a creation of man’s mind, of his rationalizations, concepts, thoughts, and ideas. Man could have never figured out the mystery. No man in this physical world could ever penetrate the spiritual world and discover the truth, no matter what some have claimed. Jesus said so:

“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (Jn.3:13).

The spiritual world and the mystery of Christ had always been a mystery, and they would have remained a mystery if God had not acted and revealed them to Paul and the other apostles and prophets of his day.

**3** (3:6) **Mystery of Christ—Church—Body—Heirs:** the mystery of Christ was a threefold revelation.

1. We, the Gentiles, are fellowheirs of God with the Jews. Scripture declares that “salvation is of the Jews” (Jn.4:22). Before Jesus Christ, if a person wished to be saved, he had to approach God through the Jewish religion. The Jews who really believed the promises of God were the heirs of God. (See notes—Eph.2:11-18; 2:11-12; Gal.3:6-7; 3:8-9; DEEPER STUDY # 1—3:8, 16; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.4:22 for more discussion.) However, since Christ, Gentile believers—all peoples of the earth—no longer have to approach God through any other people or religion. No matter who we are, we are now to approach God face to face through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Every person now has the glorious privilege of approaching God no matter...

- who he is
- what he has done
- where he is or has been
- when he comes

- how he comes
- why he comes

If a person is genuine in seeking after God, he can now approach God through Jesus Christ. There are no barriers—none whatsoever—to prevent him from coming to God and being adopted by God as an heir of God with all other believers.

**“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:15-17).**

**“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:4-6).**

**“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:4-7).**

**“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb.6:17).**

**“Wheren ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.1:6-7).**

**“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pt.3:7).**

2. We, the Gentiles, are of the same body with the Jews. No longer does man have to approach God through one body or nation of people. God’s love is universal. God is now allowing all men to approach him through the Lord Jesus Christ. God is now creating a new body of people made up of people from all nations and races—all centered around His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers now form what is called the body of Christ. But note: this means far more than just an organizational body. The body of Christ (believers in Christ) *is actually a living organism*. How is this possible?

⇒ By the Spirit of God. Believers are actually indwelt by the Spirit of God who energizes and empowers the spirit of believers. He creates a spiritual union by melting and molding the heart of the Christian believer to the hearts of other believers. He attaches the life of one believer to the lives of other believers. Through the Spirit of God, believers become one in life and purpose. They have a joint life sharing their blessings and needs and gifts together.

**“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn.17:20-21).**

**“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (Jn.17:23).**

**“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5).**

**“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Cor.12:27).**

**“[The church] which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph.1:23).**

**“In whom [Christ] all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph.2:21-22).**

**“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:11-12).**

**“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church” (Col.1:24).**

**“And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col.2:19).**

**“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.2:5).**

3. We, the Gentiles, receive the same promise of Christ as the Jews did. The promise in Christ, of course, involves all the promises of God. But note: God had promised Abraham that he would inherit the promised land and have a great nation born of his loins. That great nation was the Jewish nation. This is the reason the Jews, even today, consider Palestine their land. However, there was a spiritual meaning to God’s promise: Canaan is a type of heaven and of the new heavens and earth God is going to recreate. (See note, *Promised Land*—Acts 7:2-8 for more discussion.) Therefore, the

primary promise in Christ has to do with the glorious privilege of being saved and living with God and Christ for eternity in the new heavens and earth.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro.10:9-10).**

**“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:4-7).**

**“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).**

**“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Rev.21:1).**

**4** (3:7-9) **Paul—Minister:** the mystery of Christ profoundly affected Paul. Barclay points out that Paul’s greatest glory was God’s call and God’s work (*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.145). Paul saw the dignity of the ministry, the dignity of being especially chosen by God. The ministry was a radiant privilege for Paul. God did not have to persuade Paul to be a minister. No one had to persuade Paul to teach (Eph.4:1); to sing (Eph.5:19); to speak for God (Eph.4:17); to visit (2 Cor.13:1f); to administer the affairs of the church (1 Cor.7:1f); to give his money (2 Cor.8:1f; 9:1f). Paul did not have to be coerced. He saw his call to be a minister of God as the greatest of all privileges.

Something else of primary importance: Paul says that his call to be a minister and a preacher was a gift, a free gift of God’s grace. God had the right to call him simply because God has all rights. God is God. There was no merit, no worth, no value within Paul that caused God to choose him as a minister and as a preacher. Paul simply exclaims, “what a privilege! What a responsibility! the less of the least called of God to minister and to preach!”

1. The salvation in Christ caused Paul to become a minister (v.7).

**“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament” (2 Cor.3:6).**

**“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:1-2).**

**“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:18-21).**

**“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Eph.3:7).**

**“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Col.1:23).**

**“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God” (Col.1:25).**

**“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).**

2. The salvation in Christ caused Paul to become a preacher. Note Paul’s utter humility. He had what we all need: a deep, intense sense of unworthiness before God.

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

**“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (Acts 17:2-3).**

**“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect” (1 Cor.1:17).**

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor.1:30).

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor.2:2-4).

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor.4:5).

“For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Th.1:9-10).

“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim.1:11).

3. The salvation in Christ caused Paul to become a dynamic witness or evangelist. Note the statement “to make *all* men see...the mystery [salvation].”

“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city” (Acts 18:9-10).

“And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard” (Acts 22:14-15).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness” (1 Th.2:4-5).

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).

**5** (3:10-12) **Church—Salvation:** the mystery of Christ profoundly affects heavenly beings. It causes them to stand in stark amazement at three things.

1. Heavenly beings stand in stark amazement at what God is doing in the church. This is the meaning of verse ten. Looking at several different translations will show this.

“In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places” (NAS).

“So that the many phases of God’s wisdom may now through the church be made known to the rulers and authorities in heaven” (Williams).

“So that through the church God’s many-sided wisdom would now be shown to the rulers and authorities in heaven” (Beck).

God’s glorious purpose in salvation and in the church is to show His love and wisdom to the whole universe—to stir every creature in heaven to stand in stark amazement at what He is doing. Note that the heavenly beings see what is happening right now.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Ro.11:33).

“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Ro.14:11).

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

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that

are in them, heard I saying, **Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever**" (Rev.5:9-13).

2. Heavenly beings stand in stark amazement at God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. (See outline and notes—Eph.1:3-14; 2:7 for discussion.)

**"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began"** (2 Tim.1:9).

**"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began"** (Tit.1:2).

3. Heavenly beings stand in stark amazement at the believer's access into God's presence—at the fact that access is granted to us by *faith in Christ* (see note, *Access*—Eph.2:18 for discussion).

**"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture"** (Jn.10:9).

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God"** (Ro.5:1-2).

**"For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father"** (Eph.2:18).

**"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith in him"** (Eph.3:12).

**6** (3:13) **Conclusion:** Paul is, therefore, willing to suffer for the church. The glory of all that lies ahead for the believer is so glorious that any suffering is worth the reward. Therefore, no believer should ever *faint* in suffering or in seeing other believers suffer. It is all worth the price of whatever suffering we are called to bear, even martyrdom.

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| <p><b>1 The prayer</b><br/>a. Was for a cause<br/>b. Was with bowed knees<br/>c. To the Father of Christ<br/>d. Was for the whole family of God: Believers, past &amp; present</p> <p><b>2 Request 1: For strength, power within—by God's Spirit</b></p> <p><b>3 Request 2: For Christ to rule &amp; reign within—by</b></p> | <p><b>B. A Mature Believer in Christ: The Great Prayer for the Church &amp; the Believer, 3:14-21</b></p> <p>14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,<br/>15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,<br/>16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;<br/>17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye,</p> | <p>being rooted and grounded in love,<br/>18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;<br/>19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.<br/>20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,<br/>21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.</p> | <p>faith<br/><b>4 Request 3: For love</b><br/><b>5 Request 4: For understanding—a full understanding of spiritual things</b><br/><b>6 Request 5: To know the love of Christ</b><br/><b>7 Request 6: For the fulness of God</b><br/><b>8 Conclusion: The encouragement to pray &amp; trust God for the answer</b><br/>a. The fact: God is able<br/>b. The source: The power that works in us<br/>c. The purpose: That God might be glorified in the church through Jesus Christ</p> |
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### DIVISION III

#### THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 3:1-21

##### B. A Mature Believer in Christ: The Great Prayer, 3:14-21

(3:14-21) **Introduction:** this is the great prayer of Paul for the church and the believer. It is probably the second most important prayer in all the Bible, ranking second only to the Lord's model prayer (Mt.6:9-13). Because of its importance, it should be prayed by believers every day. Certainly, this is the reason God has had it included in Holy Scripture. Note the detail as it is read and studied. Its focus is a mature believer in Christ.

1. The prayer (v.14-15).
2. Request 1: for strength, power within—by God's Spirit (v.16).
3. Request 2: for Christ to rule and reign within—by faith (v.17).
4. Request 3: for love (v.17).
5. Request 4: for understanding—a full understanding of all spiritual things (v.18).
6. Request 5: to know the love of Christ (v.19).
7. Request 6: for the fulness of God (v.19).
8. Conclusion: the encouragement to pray and trust God for the answer (v.20-21).

**1** (3:14-15) **Prayer:** note four things about the prayer.

1. The prayer was for a specific cause, a specific purpose. The words "for this cause" refers back to the eternal plan of God and the life of the Christian believer which he has discussed (Eph.2:1-3:13). That is, Paul is referring back to the great salvation and birth of the church which God has wrought through Christ. No greater thing has ever been wrought upon earth than what God has done through Christ. Through Christ...

- God has wrought salvation (Eph.2:1-10).
- God has given birth to the church, the new body of believers which He is building (Eph.2:11f).

Therefore, it is of utmost necessity that the work be completed. The work of salvation must be completed, and the building of the body of believers (the church) must be completed. This is the *great cause* for which Paul prays.

2. The prayer was so important that it drove Paul to his knees. Bowing is a sign of desperate need and dependency. It shows that a person...

- is utterly dependent upon God.
- is earnest.
- is reverencing God.
- is humble before God.

3. The prayer addresses God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal God, to show men just what God is like. Before Christ, men had thought of God as far away, distant, and unconcerned with man and his world. But Christ revealed that this is just not true; it is a false picture of God. God is near and vitally interested in man and his world. In fact, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).

The point is this: when Paul prayed to God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, he was praying to the God who would listen and answer his prayer. He was not praying to the ceiling, nor into thin air, nor to some lifeless concept or idea in his mind. He was praying to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ who was the only living and true God—to the very God who would hear his prayer.

4. The prayer was also addressed to the Father of the whole family of God. That is, God is the Father of all believers who have ever believed and trusted His promise, both past and present.

**2** (3:16) **Holy Spirit—Power:** the first request is for strength and power in the inner man, for the strength and power of God's Spirit, for His presence and power in our lives. Note several facts.

1. The word "strengthen" (krataiothenai) means to be made strong, tough, enduring. It means to have energy or force; to act, endure, or resist.

2. The word "power" (dunamei) means force, energy, might.

3. The believer needs to be strengthened with power in the "inner man," that is, in the deepest part of his being, in his soul, in his heart, in his spirit—in the spirit that God has renewed. It is there that he must be *strengthened with power*. Why?

a. Because it is the only way he can overcome the flesh with all its weakness. It is the only way he can conquer...

- temptation and sin
- trouble and trials
- disease and suffering
- grief and death
- selfishness and worldliness
- problems and circumstances

(See note, *God's Blessings*, pt. 1—Eph. 1:3 for more discussion.)

b. Because it is the only way the believer can ever lay claim to all the blessings of God and fulfill God's eternal purpose for his life (Chapter 1-3). The believer must be strengthened with power in order to break loose from the flesh and focus upon the eternal promises and call of God. Simply stated, his spirit must be strong and powerful...

- to be everything God wants him to be.
- to do everything God wants him to do.

4. Note the source of such conquering strength and power: the Holy Spirit of God. And note that He dwells within the *inner man* of the believer. There is no other source that has enough power to conquer the severe trials and corruptions of this world, all of which result in death and decay. No group of men—not even all the men in the world with all their science and technology—possesses the power to control the evil and death of man. We do not even have the power to make one single person perfect nor to stop one single person from dying. If there is a Power strong enough to conquer the evil and corruption of this world, it is in the Spirit of God and in Him alone. Therefore, the great prayer of the believer is that God would grant to His church—to all the believers of the world...

- "that you might be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man."

5. Note one other thing: How do we know God will hear and answer our prayer? How do we know that God will give us this strength and power? Because of what this verse says: "...according to the riches of his glory." The "riches of God's glory" is seen in Jesus Christ. It is God's glorious grace and salvation revealed in Christ. God loves us! That is the reason He will strengthen us with might by His Spirit. (Cp. Eph. 2:4-10.)

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).**

**"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).**

**"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Eph. 1:19).**

**"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).**

**"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Col. 1:11).**

**"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions" (Heb. 11:33).**

**"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Is. 40:31).**

**"Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Is. 41:10).**

**3** (3:17) **Jesus Christ, Indwelling Presence:** the second request is for Christ to dwell, that is, rule and reign, in our hearts—by faith. The word "dwell" means a permanent not a temporary dwelling. It means to take up permanent residence; to live in a home; to enter, settle down, and be at home. When a person believes in Jesus Christ for the first time, Christ enters his life. Therefore, the believer is not praying for Christ to enter the hearts and lives of believers; Christ is already in their hearts and lives. What then does this request mean? Just what the verse says:

- ⇒ that Christ would be at home and live in a permanent sense within the believer.
- ⇒ that the believer would be aware and conscious of Christ within his heart—always aware and conscious that Christ has taken up residence within him.
- ⇒ that the believer would let Christ control and guide his life—permanently and constantly—because Christ is at home in his heart.

It is the presence of Christ within that motivates the believer to follow Christ. The more the believer is aware and conscious of Christ within him, the more he will *walk and live* in Christ.

Note that Christ dwells within the believer by faith. But note that Biblical faith is not a wish or hope that something is true. It is not *perhaps* something is true but *perhaps* it is not. Biblical faith always means the belief and commitment of a person's life to truth and reality; it is a belief and commitment to fact.

“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (Jn.14:20).

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (Jn.17:23).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col.1:27).

“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him” (1 Jn.3:24).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).

**4** (3:17) **Love:** the third request is for love. This is *agape love*, the very same love God has for us (see notes, *Love*—Eph.2:4-5; Gal.5:13-15; 5:14; 5:22-23 for discussion).

**5** (3:18) **Understanding:** the fourth request is for understanding, a full understanding of all spiritual things. It is crucial that the believer grasp God’s eternal plan and glorious salvation—all that has been covered in chapters one through three:

- ⇒ the great blessings of God (Eph.1:3-14).
- ⇒ the knowledge and power of God (Eph.1:15-23).
- ⇒ the mercy and grace of God (Eph.2:1-10).
- ⇒ the reconciliation and peace wrought by Christ (Eph.2:11-18).
- ⇒ the church: who and what it is (Eph.2:19-22).
- ⇒ the new body of people God is forming, that is, the great mystery of Christ (Eph.3:1-13).

God has done so much for the believer that it cannot be measured. Therefore, believers must pray and seek God to increase their understanding and the understanding of all saints. All believers must comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height of what God has done for them and the church. The more believers comprehend, the more they will surrender their lives to Christ and serve Him.

**Thought 1.** The more we understand what God has done for us, the more we will reach out to take the love and salvation of God to a world reeling under the plight of evil, poverty, and death.

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor.2:9-12).

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things” (2 Tim.2:7).

“For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Pr.2:6).

“Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength” (Pr.8:14).

**6** (3:19) **Jesus Christ, Love of:** the fifth request is to know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge. It is utterly impossible to grasp and experience the love of Christ anywhere close to its full measure, but we should pray for God to help us learn more and more of His love—and we should make the request *often every day*. (See notes—Gal.1:4-5; 3:13-14; Eph.2:6; 2:8-10; 2:13 for discussions on the love or death of Jesus Christ. See note, *Jesus Christ, Humiliation*, pt.2—Lk.2:40 for a complete picture of the depth of the love of Jesus Christ.) There has never been penned a greater description of the unsurpassing love of Christ than that of F.M. Lehman in the song, “The Love of God”: “Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made; were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade, to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry. Nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky. O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forever more endure. The saints and angels song.”

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (Jn.10:17-18).

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn.15:13).

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:8-10).

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Ro.8:35).

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor.5:14-15).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).

**7** (3:19) **God, Fulness of:** The sixth request is for the fulness of God. The Amplified New Testament is excellent in describing the meaning of this request:

**“That you may be filled (through all your being) unto all the fullness of God...[that is] may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself!”**

The believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Spirit, Christ, and of God. When Jesus Christ was promising to send the Holy Spirit to believers, He promised that the trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—would all three come and indwell believers:

**“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever....If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:16, 23).**

The point is this: each Person of the Godhead has a different function within the believer. Therefore, the believer is to ask specific things concerning each. He has already prayed to be strengthened by the Spirit and to have Christ dwell within and control his heart. Now the believer is to pray for “all the fulness of God Himself”—for God and His presence in all its fulness to fill and flood him, ruling and reigning and having His perfect way in the life of the believer.

Note one other point stressed by F.F. Bruce. The preposition “unto” (eis) suggests a progressive experience. The believer is to pray for God to constantly fill him, to constantly flood him with all the fulness of God (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p.69).

**“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord! or who hath been his counsellor! or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever” (Ro.11:33-36).**

**“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col.1:9).**

**8** (3:20-21) **Conclusion:** there is the encouragement to pray and to trust God for the answer. Note two points.

1. God is able to do what we ask. Note just how strong and powerful God is. He is able to do...
  - “exceedingly”: to surpass; to go beyond any request; to overcome and do anything.
  - “abundantly”: to overflow and to do more than enough.
  - “above”: to go over and above, beyond any need.
  - “all that we ask.”
  - all that we can think. Imagine going beyond anything we can think! What is the greatest answer or deliverance we can think? God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we can think.

**Thought 1.** Thompson Chain Reference Bible points out what Scripture says about God’s power: He is able...
 

- to raise up children from stones.

**“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Lk.3:8).**

- to fulfill promises even if they are humanly impossible.

**“And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Ro.4:21).**

- to make grace abound.

**“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor.9:8).**

- to do exceeding abundantly.

**“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).**

- to subdue all things.

**“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).**

- to guard the soul’s treasure.

**“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that [the soul] which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim.1:12).**

- to save to the uttermost.

**“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb.7:25).**

- to keep from falling.

**“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).**

(Thompson, Frank Charles. *The New Comprehensive Bible Helps*. “The New Chain Reference Bible,” Indianapolis, IN: B.B. Kirkbride Bible Co., 1964, p.153, number 3810.)

2. Note the source of answered prayers: it is the power that works in us. What is that power within us? It is the combined power of all that God has put within us, all that for which we are praying:

- ⇒ the power of the Spirit strengthening us.
- ⇒ the power of Christ indwelling us.
- ⇒ the power of love working in us.
- ⇒ the power of understanding all that God does.
- ⇒ the power of the fulness of God Himself.

**“But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Mt.19:26).**

**“For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Lk.1:37).**

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).**

**“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Ro.16:25).**

**“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).**

**“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power” (Eph.1:19).**

**“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim.1:7).**

3. Note the purpose of God in answering prayer and in doing all this for us: that He might be glorified in the church through Christ Jesus. And note how long He is to be glorified: throughout all ages, world without end.

|                                 |  |  |  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
|                                 | <b>CHAPTER 4</b>   | meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;  | b. With meekness<br>c. With longsuffering<br>d. With love  |
|                                 | <b>IV. THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9</b>   | 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.   | <b>2 The purpose for walking worthy: To keep the unity, the peace</b>  |
|                                 | <b>A. The Believer is to Walk Worthy of His Calling, 4:1-6</b>   | 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;                                | <b>3 The seven basic reasons</b><br>a. Only one body<br>b. Only one Spirit<br>c. Only one hope<br>d. Only one Lord<br>e. Only one faith<br>f. Only one baptism, v.5<br>g. Only one God & Father of all |
| <b>1 The way to walk worthy</b> | <b>I</b> therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, | 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,<br>6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. |  |
| a. With lowliness               | 2 With all lowliness and   |  |  |

## DIVISION IV

### THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9

#### A. The Believer is to Walk Worthy of His Calling, 4:1-6

(4:1-6:9) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Believers:** How is the believer to live as he walks day by day throughout life? This chapter begins a discussion on the walk of the Christian believer. The instructions are very practical. Up until now the instructions have dealt with doctrine:

- ⇒ the eternal plan of God for Christian believers.
- ⇒ the great blessings of God.
- ⇒ the knowledge and power of God.
- ⇒ the work of God's mercy and the gift of God's grace: our great salvation.
- ⇒ reconciliation and peace.
- ⇒ the church—the true church—the new body of people God is creating to be the citizens of the new heavens and earth.

We have seen great theological truths revealing the *believer's position in Christ*—truths that show the believer soaring in the heavenlies! But now, coming down to earth and dealing with where we are: How are we to live day by day? How does our *position in Christ* work itself out in our lives? How does Christ help us deal with the trials, problems, difficulties, and sufferings of day to day living? The believer's walk is the subject of Ephesians from this point on.

- A. The Believer is to Walk Worthy of His Calling, Eph.4:1-6.
- B. The Believer is to Walk by Using His Gifts, Eph.4:7-16.
- C. The Believer is to Walk Differently From the Gentiles, Eph.4:17-24.
- D. The Believer is to Walk Putting Off the Garments of the Old Man, Eph.4:25-32.
- E. The Believer is to Walk Following God, Eph.5:1-7.
- F. The Believer is to Walk as a Child of Light, Eph.5:8-14.
- G. The Believer is to Walk Carefully and Strictly, Eph.5:15-21.
- H. The Believing Wife and Husband are to Walk in a Spirit of Submission and Love, Eph.5:22-33.
- I. Believing Children and Parents are to Walk Under God's Authority, Eph.6:1-4.
- J. Believing Slaves and Masters (Employers-Employees) are to Walk Under God's Authority, Eph.6:5-9.

(4:1-6) **Introduction:** we owe God more than we could ever pay. God has taken His own dear Son and...

- provided the Ideal and Perfect righteousness for us.
- provided a Substitute to die for us—to actually bear our punishment for having rejected, rebelled, and cursed God, and for having broken God's law.
- provided deliverance from death for us through the reconciliation of Christ.
- provided a new life for us—a life of love, joy, peace, and power through the Holy Spirit living within us.
- provided the absolute assurance of living eternally with God forever and ever.
- provided so much more that even an eternity could not describe it.

God has honored us as much as a creature can be honored. He has seated us with Christ in the heavenlies to rule and reign with Christ forever and ever. God has done so much for us that He could do no more than what He has done. We do not see it all yet, for we are still on this earth—left here to be witnesses to the great and glorious salvation that is in Christ Jesus. But the day is soon coming when we will experience it all. God is going to make a new heavens and earth that will be perfect, in which there will be no suffering and no death, and we shall live eternally, ruling and reigning with Christ.

As stated, we owe God; we owe God so much that we could never even begin to pay Him. What then can we do? Very little, but there is one thing that we must do: we must walk worthy of our calling. We must walk worthy of the honored position to which God has exalted us.

1. The way to walk worthy (v.1-2).
2. The purpose for walking worthy: to keep the unity, the peace (v.3).
3. The seven basic reasons (v.4-6).

**1** (4:1-2) **Believer, Walk:** How can the believer walk worthy? What must the believer do to please God as he lives day by day...

- |              |                   |                          |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| • at work?   | • at church?      | • with fellow believers? |
| • at play?   | • at home?        | • with family?           |
| • at school? | • with neighbors? | • with friends?          |

Once a person believes in Jesus Christ and becomes a member of God's people and of God's church, what must he do to walk worthy of God's great calling—to bring honor to the name of Christ and His church?

1. The believer must walk with all lowliness (see note, *Humility*—Ph.2:3 for discussion).
2. The believer must walk with all meekness (see note, *Meekness*—Gal.5:22-23 for discussion).
3. The believer must walk with longsuffering (see note, *Longsuffering*—Gal.5:22-23 for discussion).
4. The believer must walk forbearing others in love (see note, *Love*—Gal.5:22-23. Also see notes, *Love*—Gal.5:13-15 for more discussion.)

**2** (4:3) **Unity—Brotherhood:** the purpose for walking worthy is onefold—unity. Believers are to work at keeping the peace so that they can stay bound together in the unity of God's Spirit. Jesus Christ has broken down all walls and barriers existing between men. Everyone can now be saved:

- |                     |             |              |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|
| • all nationalities | • the poor  | • the white  |
| • all peoples       | • the rich  | • the red    |
| • all languages     | • the black | • the yellow |

Every person is precious in the sight of God. When a person approaches God through Jesus Christ, he comes like everyone else: on the same ground and on the same level. He is no better and no worse than anyone else: he is a man who stands in need of God's forgiveness; and he, along with everyone else, is bowing before Christ and accepting Him as his Lord and Master. The man, just like everyone else, is subjecting himself to become the servant of Christ. Wealth, position, social status—it is all forgotten. The only thing that matters is the salvation and life which Christ offers.

The point is this: when a person comes to Christ in such a spirit, the Spirit of God enters his life and binds the person to all other believers. There is a great spiritual *bond of peace* wrought by the Spirit of God between all believers. All divisiveness, differences, and prejudices are set aside; and a spirit of love, peace, and unity exist.

Within the church there is a *prevailing spirit of peace* wrought by God's Spirit. However, note a tragic fact: not every believer walks in the Spirit—not all the time. Too often, believers allow self and the *old life* to re-enter the picture—their old...

- |               |              |               |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| • prejudices  | • complaints | • pride       |
| • differences | • criticisms | • arrogance   |
| • hurts       | • grumblings | • comparisons |
| • jealousies  | • gripes     | • dislikes    |

The result is catastrophic for the church: divisiveness and a disturbance of the peace and spirit of unity. This is the reason for this charge. Note the word "endeavor" (*spoudazontes*). It means being diligent, working to take care and to do one's very best, and to make haste to do it. The only way to walk worthy of God's great calling is to work at keeping the peace and unity which God has given us. Nothing cuts the heart of God like divisiveness between His people, divisiveness which tears apart His church. The very thing God is doing is creating a new body of people to live together in the love and unity of His Son. He is going to create a new heavens and earth in which there will be no other spirit. Therefore, He expects us to live in the love and unity of His Spirit now.

**"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor.1:10).**

**"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor.13:11).**

**"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph.4:3).**

**"Only let your conversation [behavior] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Ph.1:27).**

**"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Pt.3:8).**

**3** (4:4-6) **Believers, Walk:** there are seven basic reasons why we should walk worthy and strive to keep the peace and unity of God's Spirit *in the church*. Note what has just been said, for the point needs to be stressed: there is great need to keep the peace and unity *within the church*. Far too often the church is the place where the peace and unity of believers fly apart. Again, there are seven reasons why this should never happen—seven reasons why believers should always walk in the peace and unity of the Spirit.

1. There is only "*one body*." There are not two bodies nor several bodies of believers. However, in this imperfect world, there are many different denominations and churches. But note what God is doing: God is *creating only one body of people* who trust and follow His dear Son. When a person places his trust in Jesus Christ, God does six things to the believer that place him into the body of Christ:

- ⇒ God gives a *new birth* to the believer—quickens him spiritually—causes him to be born again (Jn.1:12-13; 3:3-6; Tit.3:5; 1 Pt.1:23; 1 Jn.5:1).
- ⇒ God makes a new creature, a *new man* out of the believer (2 Cor.5:17; Eph.4:24; Col.3:10).

- ⇒ God places His divine nature into the believer (2 Pt.1:4).
- ⇒ God puts His Holy Spirit into the believer, actually has His Spirit enter the believer's body. The believer's body becomes a temple for the presence of God's Spirit (Jn.14:16-17; 1 Cor.3:16; 6:19-20).
- ⇒ God causes the believer to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, control (Gal.5:22-23).
- ⇒ God places the believer into the *new body of people* He is creating, that is, into the body of Christ, His church.

**“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor.12:13).**

Note the last two experiences in particular. There is no way a believer can be in conflict with another believer unless he is walking after the flesh and is in a backslidden condition. There are just some things that are contrary to love and joy and peace that hurt and damage the body...

- |                             |                       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| • an ill spirit             | • seeking our own way |
| • struggling for position   | • forming cliques     |
| • self-centered differences | • selfishness         |
| • reactions                 | • envy                |
| • feeling superior          | • anger               |

Such things have no place in the church, not in the *new body* which God is creating. There is only one body of true believers, not two—not one body over here and another body over there. This is the reason we are to strive to keep the peace and the unity of the Spirit. There is only one body, and only as we keep the peace and unity of the body can we walk worthy of God's great calling.

**“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5).**

**“Now ye are the body of Christ [church], and members in particular” (1 Cor.12:27).**

**“[The church] which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph.1:23).**

**“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:12).**

**“...his body's sake, which is the church” (Col.1:24).**

**“And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col.2:19).**

2. There is only *“one Spirit.”* The *same Spirit* that dwells within one member of the body dwells in all members of the body.

⇒ It is God's Spirit that causes a man to be born again.

**“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn.3:5-6).**

**“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn.6:63).**

**“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11).**

⇒ It is God's Spirit that calls and gifts and directs each member to fit in and work within the body.

**“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:2).**

**“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Ro.8:14).**

**“But the manifestation [gifts] of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Cor.12:7; cp. 12:8f).**

The point is this: each member is to do his part in carrying out the mission of the body—for Christ. Acting independent of the body is of another spirit, for there is only One Spirit creating the body of Christ.

3. There is only *“one hope.”* Every genuine believer has the same hope: the great day of redemption. It is to be a new world created perfectly for Christ Jesus and His people. Life in the new heavens and earth will be a life of love and joy and peace—a life of oneness and unity and brotherhood—all perfected. What God is after is for us to live as we shall live in the future. Our future lives in the new heavens and earth are to be the pattern for the way we live together now. We shall be redeemed and reconciled to God and to each other—all living together in a perfect world of love and joy and peace for ever and ever. The hope for eternity—the hope that fills our hearts for such a world—is to be the driving force that stirs us to live together in peace and unity.

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).**

**“Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel” (Col.1:4-5).**

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” (1 Pt.1:15).

“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments” (1 Jn.2:2-3).

4. There is only *“one Lord.”* There is only one Master and King. Every believer has bowed before the same Lord to become His subject and to receive His orders. As His subjects, believers are unequivocally instructed...

- to live as He said: holy and righteous and pure, bearing the fruit of His Spirit (Gal.5:19-21).
- to carry out His orders as one body (Mt.7:21-23; 1 Cor.12:5; Ph.2:9-11).

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:21-23).

“And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord” (1 Cor.12:5).

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

5. There is only *“one faith.”* There are not two faiths nor several faiths. There is only one faith that leads into God’s presence and that is the faith founded by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other approach to God. If a person wishes to live with God—to be approved and accepted by Him—that person has to approach God through the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The point is this: every believer has come to God in the very same way—by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in Him is the only way, the only true faith. Therefore, standing before God and having come to Him through the same faith, there is no room for any differences. We all stand on the same ground, on the same level: the ground and level of faith.

“But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed” (Gal.1:23).

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

6. There is only *“one baptism.”* All believers have given public witness to their faith by submitting to the ordinance of water baptism. Each has been identified as being members of the same body because each has been initiated through the same ritual. Therefore, having entered the church through the same ordinance, we should not become divisive. Divisiveness denies and brings shame to the meaning of the ordinance. Divisiveness is a reflection of the depth of our commitment. It shows that our sincerity in being baptized was lacking, greatly lacking. It shows that we care little for Christ and for our baptism experience, for the great ordinance which initiated us into the church.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Ro.6:3).

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor.12:13).

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal.3:27).

7. There is only *“one God and Father of all.”* This is probably a primitive confession of faith.

⇒ “One God”: God is creator of all and as such is supreme over all.

⇒ “One Father of all”: as Father, God loves all. The Christian belief begins with God as love.

⇒ “Above all”: God controls all.

The point is striking: If there is only one God and Father of all believers, how then could He be leading two believers to stand toe to toe against each other? The answer is obvious: He could not. One or both believers are following their own fleshly carnal ways. Someone is not following the only God and Father.

“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord” (Mk.12:29).

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim.2:5-6).

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three agree in one” (1 Jn.5:7).

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p><b>1 Every believer is gifted</b></p> <p><b>2 Every believer's gift has cost the greatest possible price</b></p> <p>a. The picture</p> <p>b. The great cost: The death of Christ &amp; His descending into the lower parts of the earth</p> <p>c. The great value: That Christ might fill all things—the whole universe with His presence</p> <p><b>3 Every believer's gift is Christ-centered</b></p> <p><b>4 Every believer's gift has a threefold purpose</b></p> <p>a. An immediate purpose:</p> | <p><b>B. The Believer is to Walk by Using His Gifts, 4:7-16</b></p> <p>7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.</p> <p>8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.</p> <p>9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?</p> <p>10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)</p> <p>11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;</p> <p>12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of</p> | <p>the body of Christ:</p> <p>13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:</p> <p>14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;</p> <p>15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:</p> <p>16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.</p> | <p>To equip others</p> <p>b. An eternal purpose: To become a perfect man like Christ</p> <p>c. A personal purpose</p> <p>1) To no longer be children—immature</p> <p>2) To grow up in all things—mature</p> <p>3) To do his part in building up the church</p> |
|---|--|--|--|

**DIVISION IV**

**THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9**

**B. The Believer is to Walk by Using His Gifts, 4:7-16**

(4:7-16) **Introduction:** note the word “but.” It is strong. As studied in the previous passage, the church is one body, and every member is to strive to keep the oneness and unity of the Spirit. But believers are not only a unity, they are a diversity. There are differences between believers. What are those differences? They are gifts, special abilities given by God which are to be used to strengthen believers and to reach the world and minister to it. Gifts—spiritual gifts given by God—are the subject of the present passage. The believer is to walk using the gifts God has given him. (See outlines and notes—Ro.12:3-8; 1 Cor.12:1-14:40 for more discussion.)

1. Every believer is gifted (v.7).
2. Every believer's gift has cost the greatest possible price (v.8-10).
3. Every believer's gift is Christ-centered (v.11).
4. Every believer's gift has a threefold purpose (v.12-16).

**1** (4:7) **Gifts, Spiritual:** every believer is gifted. Note the words, “But unto every one of us is given...the gift of Christ.” There is not a single believer exempted or left out; Christ has given every believer some spiritual gift. It is important to note what is meant by spiritual gifts. A spiritual gift does not mean the natural ability or talent of a person. God, of course, keeps natural abilities and talents in mind when He gifts a person, but spiritual gifts are special gifts given to believers. They are highly specialized gifts—gifts that are given to build up believers in the church and in witnessing and ministering to the world. The point to note is that every genuine believer has received a spiritual gift, a highly specialized gift. He has received his gift to carry out the ministry of the Lord upon the earth.

Note another significant point. Jesus Christ gives us the grace to use our gifts. Grace means the strength, wisdom, courage, motivation, love, concern, care, and power—all the favor and blessings of Christ. Whatever is needed to use the gift, Christ gives us. He measures out the exact amount of grace needed for the maximum use of a gift.

**Thought 1.** What a glorious truth! What a spark of encouragement! Everyone of us is gifted by Christ—gifted with a highly specialized gift. And we have the measure of grace—whatever measure is needed—to use our gifts. Christ pours out His grace upon us, equipping us to carry out our task upon earth. This is significant, for it means that our gift is the gift of Christ. It is the very best gift *for us*. We should not be displeased with our gift, nor covet to be like someone else and have his gift. Christ has placed us and given us the very best gift for us—if we are truly His, yielded and committed to serve Him.

“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey” (Mt.25:15).

“God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith” (Ro.12:6).

**“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor.4:7).**

**“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Cor.12:4).**

**“But the manifestation [illuminations, gifts] of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Cor.12:7).**

**2** (4:8-10) **Gifts, Spiritual:** every believer’s gift has cost the greatest possible price.

1. Note the picture. The picture of Christ giving gifts to men is dramatic. It is the picture of an ancient king who has conquered his enemies. The king is sitting astride his white stallion and riding under the arch of triumph as he enters the city. Teeming thousands shout their adoration and praise. Following in his train is his army. And then following his army they come, the enemy stumbling along on foot in chains, looking like the defeated foe they are. They had initially come to fight tooth and nail to subject the people of the great king to their tyranny. But now they come to offer gifts to the great conqueror. The conqueror receives the gifts and in turn bestows the gifts upon his own people. (Cp. Ps.68:18.)

There are great enemies of man—enemies that attack time and time again—enemies that try to make man aimless and meaningless.

⇒ There is the great enemy of alienation and separation. Alienation is the energy and tendency that tries to shut God and others out of a person’s life. Tragically, alienation results in a sense of emptiness, uselessness, and loneliness.

⇒ There are two great enemies that snap away all meaning for man—sin and death.

However, Christ has gone to war in behalf of man. Christ has conquered all enemies that make life useless and meaningless. Now He gives the greatest gift of all—the gift of meaning, purpose, and significance in life. He fills life with all that a man could possibly desire and use. He gives the greatest gifts, gifts that keep a person busy with the most meaningful and purposeful life imaginable.

**Thought 1.** If Christ has really given such meaning and purpose to life, why then are so many people bored with their work and life? Why are so many (even believers) dissatisfied, empty, without purpose, and wanting a change? Scripture tells us, and it tells us plainly.

1) A person has not committed his life to Christ—not fully, not totally. He does not really deny himself and follow Christ.

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

2) A person has not sacrificed himself, all he is and has, to serve Christ and mankind. A person has not committed himself to a life of service. Real life is found *only* in service. God has ordained it so.

**“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Mt.16:25).**

**“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Mt.23:11).**

**“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Lk.22:26).**

**“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (Jn.4:35).**

3) A person lives and sows to his flesh instead of the Spirit.

**“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting [meaning, purpose, significance]” (Gal.6:8).**

2. Note the great cost Christ paid to gain the right to gift believers. He had to die and descend into the lower parts of the earth. F.F. Bruce points out that the “lower regions” of the earth may mean three things: the earth to which Christ came; the sepulchre in which the Lord’s body was laid; or Hades—the abode of the dead (Acts 2:25-35; cp. Ps.16:10; 110:1). (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p.83.) (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Pt.3:19-20.)

In allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture, the correct interpretation would seem to be “Hades.” When other Scriptures contrast the descent of Christ with the ascent of Christ, the two farthest extremes seem to be indicated.

- In Ro.10:6-7 “ascending into heaven” is contrasted with “descending into the abyss”—the abode of the dead.
- In Ph.2:8f, Christ humbling Himself to the lowest “depths of death” is contrasted with Him being “exalted to the highest” heavens by God.
- In Mt.12:40, Christ being “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” is taken from Jonah 2:3-4 “in the heart of the seas.” In light of these facts, Christ’s descending into the lower parts of the earth must mean more than Christ just being placed in a sepulchre. It must mean *the place of departed spirits or the abode of the dead*.

The point is this: Jesus Christ had to die and experience hell for men in order to gain the right to gift men. That is the enormous price our gifts cost. If He had not died, then we could not be saved or gifted with spiritual gifts. There would be no purpose or significance to life—not beyond a few short years upon this earth. All we would have to look forward to

would be death. But Christ has died, and He has conquered all the enemies of man—conquered them in order to gain the right to save and gift us.

**“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (Jn.12:31).**

**“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)” (Eph.4:8-10).**

**“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col.2:15).**

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb.2:14).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Pt.3:18-20).**

**“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn.3:8).**

3. The great value of what Christ did is glorious. He died that He might ascend above the heavens and fill all things, that is, fill the whole universe with His presence. Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father, and He rules and reigns over all. He is now able to save and gift men. But remember: it is because He paid the greatest price possible. He died for us—died to gain the right to pour His grace and gifts out upon us.

**“Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God” (Lk.22:69).**

**“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:19-20).**

**“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Ph.2:8-9).**

**“Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev.5:12).**

**3** (4:11) **Gifts, Spiritual:** every believer’s gift is Christ-centered. Note the words, “He gave.” It is Christ and Christ alone who gives spiritual gifts to men. Men cannot work up the gifts, nor give the gifts to other men. Christ alone possesses the spiritual gifts to give to men. Five gifts are mentioned here.

1. The gift of an *apostle*. The word “apostle” (apostolos) means to send out. An apostle is a representative, an ambassador, a person who is sent out into one country to represent another country. Three things are true of the apostle.

⇒ He belongs to the One who has sent him out.

⇒ He is commissioned to be sent out.

⇒ He possesses all the authority and power of the One who sends him out.

The word “apostle” has both a narrow and a broad usage in the New Testament.

a. The narrow sense. It refers to the twelve apostles and to Paul as an apostle (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor.9:1). In this narrow sense there were at least two basic qualifications.

1) The apostle was a man chosen directly by the Lord Himself or by the Holy Spirit (cp. Mt.10:1-2; Mk.3:13-14; Lk.6:13; Acts 9:6, 15; 13:2; 22:10, 14-15; Ro.1:1). He was a man who had either seen or been a companion of the Lord Jesus.

2) The apostle was a man who had been an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor.9:1).

b. The broad sense. The word “apostle” refers to other men who preached the gospel. It is used of two missionaries, Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14, 17) and Silas (1 Th.2:6); and two messengers, Titus (2 Cor.8:23) and Epaphroditus (Phil.2:25). There is also a possibility that James, the Lord’s brother (Gal.1:19) and Andronicus and Junia (Ro.16:7) are referred to as apostles.

In the narrow sense, the gift of an apostle was bound to die out because of the unique qualifications to receive the gift. But historically, in the broad sense, there is perhaps a sense in which the qualifications and gift itself are still given and used by the Lord. The Lord’s servant of any generation must *see* the Lord and know Him intimately. Similarly, the servant must personally *see and experience* the power of the resurrection. Certainly there are some in every generation who have *seen* the Lord Jesus and who *know and experience* the power of the Lord’s resurrection. Perhaps the Lord Jesus endues them with the very special gift of an apostle to be used throughout His most precious domain—the church.

2. The gift of a *prophet*. This is the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God’s Spirit. It includes both prediction and proclamation, and neither one should be minimized despite the abuse of the gift.

There is no question, the gift to predict events has been abused to the point of the ridiculous. However, the abuse of a gift does not eliminate the fact that the Spirit of God sometimes gives believers a glimpse into coming events in order to prepare and strengthen them to face the events.

However, the major function of prophecy is clearly stated by Scripture, and the fact should be heeded by all believers:

**“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor.14:3).**

3. The gift of an *evangelist*. This is the gift of carrying the gospel all over the world. It is the gift that specializes in proclaiming the gospel to the lost of the world. It would include both what we call the evangelist and the missionary.

**“And the next day we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him” (Acts 21:8; cp. Acts 8:26-40).**

**“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph.4:11).**

**“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim.4:5).**

4. The gift of a *pastor* (*poimenas*). This word means shepherd. A.T. Robertson points out that the Lord Jesus told Peter to shepherd His sheep (Jn.21:16), that Peter told other ministers to shepherd the flock of God (1 Pt.5:2), and that Paul told the elders (ministers) of Ephesus to shepherd the church of God for which Christ had died (Acts 20:28) (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.53.) The traits of a shepherd can be seen by looking at the references to Christ as the shepherd of believers. The pastor is an under-shepherd to the Chief Shepherd, Christ Jesus our Lord.

a. The shepherd knows the sheep; He knows each one by name. This is said to have been a fact among shepherds and their sheep in Jesus’ day. Shepherds actually knew each sheep individually, even in large herds. The fact is certainly true with Christ and His sheep.

**“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine” (Jn.10:14).**

**“But if any man love God, the same is known of him” (1 Cor.8:3).**

**“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).**

**“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine” (Is.43:1).**

b. The shepherd feeds the sheep even if He has to gather them in His arms and carry them to the feasting pasture.

**“He shall feed the flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Is.40:11).**

c. The shepherd guides the sheep to the pasture and away from the rough places and precipices.

**“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Ps.23:1-4).**

d. The shepherd seeks and saves the sheep who get lost.

**“For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?” (Mt.18:11-12).**

**“I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick” (Ezk.34:16).**

e. The shepherd protects the sheep. He even sacrifices His life for the sheep.

**“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (Jn.10:11).**

**“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb.13:20).**

f. The shepherd restores the sheep who go astray and return.

**“For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Pt.2:25).**

g. The shepherd rewards the sheep for obedience and faithfulness.

**“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pt.5:4).**

- h. The shepherd shall keep the sheep separate from the goats.

**“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (Mt.25:32-33).**

5. The gift of a *teacher*. Some commentators consider teaching to be part of the gift of the pastor, that is, the pastor is the pastor-teacher. The function of the teacher is the gift to instruct believers in the truth of God and His Word. It is the gift to root and ground people in doctrine, reproof, correction, and righteousness. Teaching is a high calling, one of the greatest of callings. Teaching is ranked second only to the spiritual gifts of apostle and prophet (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor.12:28; Eph.4:11). Every apostle, prophet, and pastor has the gift of teaching, but every teacher is not an apostle or prophet or pastor. The gift of teaching bears one of the largest responsibilities given by God; therefore, the teacher will be required to give a strict account to God for his faithfulness in using his gift (see note, *Teacher*—Jas.3:1).

The spiritual gift of teaching is the gift of understanding and communicating the Word of God, of edifying believers in the truths of God’s Word. It involves understanding, interpreting, arranging, and communicating the Word of God. The gift of teaching is given to the believer who commits his life to the Word of God, to sharing its glorious truths with God’s people.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).**

**“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Cor.12:28).**

**“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph.4:11).**

**“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).**

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).**

**“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).**

**“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Pt.2:2-3).**

**4** (4:12-16) **Gifts, Spiritual:** every believer’s gift has a threefold purpose. Note a significant fact: the five gifts described above are gifts that involve speech or proclamation. They are very specialized gifts, gifts that are usually looked upon as being the official or professional gifts of the church. They are not given in full measure to every believer although every believer...

- should be as an apostle in that he is serving Christ in a very special ministry and faithfully using the gift God has given him.
- should be as a prophet in that he is daily proclaiming God’s Word.
- should be as an evangelist in that he is bearing witness to the lost.
- should be as a pastor in that he is shepherding and caring for people all the time.
- should be as a teacher in that he is teaching the truths of God’s Word to all whom he knows.

1. There is an immediate purpose for the professional or office-bearing gifts in the church and among God’s people. It is to equip believers to do the work of the ministry. The word “perfecting” (*katartizo*) means to equip for service and ministry. This is critical to see, for the office bearer in the church *is not* to be the only one who goes about doing the work of the ministry. In fact, his *primary task* is to be an equipper, a person who makes disciples and *prepares others* to serve Christ (see note, *Discipleship*—Mt.28:19-20). Note another critical point: the very purpose for equipping laymen is so that the body of Christ, the church, may be built up. This is a significant point, for it means that the church cannot be built up without the members themselves doing the work of the ministry. All believers within a church must be involved in the work of the ministry. As Wuest says: “This is an order that the Body of Christ, the Church might be built up, by additions to its membership in lost souls being saved, and by the building up of individual saints.” (Wuest, Kenneth S. *Ephesians and Colossians*. “Wuest Word Studies,” Vol.1. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953, p.101.)

If the work of the ministry was left up to the professional ministers, the task would never get done, for there are too few official ministers. Lay persons must be equipped to reach the lost and to minister to the needs of a world reeling under the weight of evil and suffering and death.

2. There is an eternal purpose for the office-bearing or professional gifts. It can be stated no clearer than what the verse itself says. It says three things:

- a. The minister of God works to bring about a perfect unity among God’s people. The minister of God is called...
  - to bring peace and reconciliation to the church.
  - to lead people into perfect harmony and oneness of spirit.
  - to shepherd people out of cliques, divisiveness, murmuring, grumbling, griping, and all the other sins that militate against a perfect unity.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor.1:10).

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor.13:11).

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:3).

“Only let your conversation [behavior] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Pt.3:8).

- b. The minister of God works to bring about the knowledge of the Son of God.

“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth” (Hos.6:3).

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (Jn.8:31-32).

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Jn.17:3).

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Ph.3:10).

“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, bring fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col.1:10).

- c. The minister of God works to bring about a perfect man, a man who measures up to the stature of Christ Himself—to the fulness of His stature.

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (1 Cor.13:11).

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb.5:14).

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Heb.6:1).

“And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness” (2 Pt.1:5-6).

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever” (2 Pt.3:18).

“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all” (1 Tim.4:15).

3. There is the personal purpose for the professional or office-bearing gifts. This purpose also involves three parts.
- a. That we no longer be children and immature, being led astray by false teaching. Again, the verse is the best commentary on itself. Ministers are given to us to keep us from being “children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of [false] doctrine” or false teaching. We must always remember, there is such a thing as...
- “the sleight of men”: deceivers, cheaters in the faith, men who will cheat us out of the truth.
  - “cunning craftiness”: deceivers who act clever and have novel ideas that sound correct, but they are only deceptions of the truth.

Note that such men are plentiful, so plentiful that they are just lying, waiting to deceive.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mt.7:15).

“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mt.15:9).

“Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30).

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Ro.16:18).

“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein” (Heb.13:9).

**“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily [secretly] shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).**

**“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 Jn.7).**

- b. That we grow up in all things—in Christ. Note there is only one way to do this: by speaking and proclaiming the truth. This is the task of the minister.

**“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (Jn.15:3).**

**“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn.17:17).**

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).**

- c. That we do our part in building up the church. Note that *every joint or every believer* “supplies” something to the body of Christ (the church). And what every joint or believer supplies is very significant. Note how the significance is stressed: Christ takes every joint or believer and the believer...
- is fitly joined together with all the other believers.
  - has his work compacted with that supplied by other believers.
  - has an effective and productive work along with that measured by other believers.
  - helps to increase the body.
  - helps to edify the body in love.

What more could be said about the contribution made by every believer? What greater challenge could be given to a believer? We must give all we are and have to get the job done. Much is at stake for each of us. An eternal weight of responsibility rests upon every single believer, for each one is responsible for reaching people and building them up. Some people will never be reached and ministered to if a single one of us comes up short. For this reason, everyone of us is gifted by Christ Jesus our Lord.

**“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Cor.12:4-7).**

**“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all” (1 Tim.4:15).**

**“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor.3:18).**

**“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon” (Ps.92:12).**

**“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Pr.4:18).**

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| <p><b>1 The believer is not to walk after the Gentiles, that is, as ungodly men</b></p> <p>a. With emptiness of mind</p> <p>b. With dark understanding</p> <p>c. Alienated from God</p> <p>1) Because they are ignorant of God</p> <p>2) Because hearts are hard</p> <p>d. Being past feeling</p> <p>e. Being given over to gross sensuality</p> | <p><b>C. The Believer is to Walk Differently From the Gentiles, 4:17-24</b></p> <p>17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,</p> <p>18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:</p> <p>19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work</p> | <p>all uncleanness with greediness.</p> <p>20 But ye have not so learned Christ;</p> <p>21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:</p> <p>22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts:</p> <p>23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;</p> <p>24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.</p> | <p>f. Indulging in all uncleanness with greediness</p> <p><b>2 The believer is to walk after Christ</b></p> <p>a. The reason: He has learned about Christ—heard &amp; been taught by Him</p> <p>b. The way to walk in Christ</p> <p>1) Put off the old man<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p>2) Be renewed in your mind<sup>DS2</sup></p> <p>3) Put on the new man<sup>DS3</sup></p> |
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## DIVISION IV

### THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9

#### C. The Believer is to Walk Differently From the Gentiles, 4:17-24

(4:17-24) **Introduction:** this passage contains an astounding truth—believers are neither Gentiles nor Jews; they are a *third race* of people. Therefore, they are not to walk like men; they are to walk like Christ.

1. The believer is not to walk after the Gentiles, that is, after men (v.17-19).
2. The believer is to walk after Christ (v.20-24).

**1** (4:17-19) **Believer, Life and Walk:** the believer is not to walk as the Gentiles, that is, as ungodly men. This is very significant. Remember: Paul is writing to Gentiles. The church at Ephesus was a Gentile church. Now note the verse. In the authorized version (King James) believers are told to no longer walk as “other Gentiles” walk, as though they were still classified as Gentiles. But the word “other” is not in the best and oldest manuscripts. Thus, the exhortation is to “no longer walk as Gentiles walk.” That is, believers are set off and set apart from Gentiles. They are no longer classified as Gentiles or Jews (cp. 1 Cor.10:32). Who then are believers? The point being made is that they are a *third race on earth*. They are the *new creation*; the creation of a *new body* of people, a *new nation*, a *new race*. They are the children of God who are to inhabit the *new heavens and earth*. (F.F. Bruce makes this point and refers to two ancient writers who also used the phrase of a *third race*. Clement of Alexandria in his *Miscellanies* (VI. 5.39), a second century document called the *Preaching of Peter*, and Diogenetus in his second century work, *The Epistle to Diogenetus*, chapter 1. They call Christians “a new race,” a race distinct from Jews and Greeks. *The Epistles to the Ephesians*, p.90.) (See notes—Lk.8:21; Eph.2:11-18; 2:14-15; 2:19-22; 4:17-19.)

The point is this: believers are not to walk as *other men* walk. Why? Because believers are new creatures in Christ Jesus, and the walk of other men does not please God. What is it that other men do that does not please God? This passage gives five traits about unbelievers that displease God. Remember: believers are to have nothing to do with any of these. They are never to return to the paths of their former life.

1. Unbelievers walk in the *vanity of their mind* (v.17). The *mind* (nous) includes the ability to will and to do the truth as well as know the truth; it includes morality as well as reasoning and understanding. The word “vain” means empty, futile, senseless, aimless, unsuccessful, worthless.

When men push God out of their minds, their minds are void and empty of God and of His truth and morality. *God is not in their thoughts*. Their minds are ready to be filled with some other god or supremacy, that is, with the things of the world:

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|-----------------------|---------------------|
| ⇒ worldly pleasures   | ⇒ worldly religions |
| ⇒ worldly possessions | ⇒ worldly ideas     |
| ⇒ worldly power       | ⇒ worldly honor     |
| ⇒ worldly position    | ⇒ worldly gods      |

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen.6:5).

“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts” (Ps.10:4).

“The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity” (Ps.94:11).

“These six things doth the LORD hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies and he that soweth discord among brethren” (Pr.6:16-19).

“The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD” (Pr.15:26).

**“Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth” (Ezk.8:12).**

The mind of man walks after these things, neglecting, ignoring, and rejecting God. The believer must never return to the *walk of an empty mind*; he must never again allow his mind to become empty of God.

2. Unbelievers walk with their *understanding darkened* (v.18). To *understand* means to grasp, comprehend, perceive. To be *darkened* means to be blinded, and unable to see. The unbeliever does not grasp or understand God; his understanding is darkened and blinded, and unable to see God. He often understands this world and the things of this world, and he gives his life over to the things of this world. But he is not able to understand God and His eternal plan for the world through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The believer is not to allow his understanding to become darkened. He is not to return to the world of the spiritually blind, the world of those who walk with darkened understanding.

**“They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course” (Ps.82:5).**

**“Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness” (Pr.2:13).**

**“The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble” (Pr.4:19).**

**“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27).**

**“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).**

**“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).**

**“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim.3:7).**

3. Unbelievers walk *alienated from the life of God*. Unbelievers are spiritually dead and doomed to eternal death. “Alienated” (apallotrio) means to be estranged, separated, cut off, detached. There are always unfriendly or hostile feelings involved in alienation. The unbeliever is *alienated* from the life of God. He is...

- estranged from God with unfriendly or hostile feelings.
- separated from God with unfriendly or hostile feelings.
- cut off from God with unfriendly or hostile feelings.
- detached from God with unfriendly or hostile feelings.

Why? Not because of God. The Bible is clear about this issue. Unbelievers are alienated from God because of their own wilful ignorance and hardness of heart. The word “blindness” is the word hardness (porosis) in the Greek. Note the words “in them.” The cause is “in them”:

⇒ They choose to be ignorant within their minds—choose to be ignorant of God.

⇒ They choose to harden their own hearts.

Unbelievers are responsible for their own death. God has provided the fountain of youth for man, the way for man to live forever. God had given His life, that is, eternal life, to man. The only way man can ever miss God’s gift of eternal life is to reject God and His gift.

**“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Mt.15:8).**

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn.3:16-19).**

**“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27).**

**“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph.2:12).**

**“But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Tim.5:6).**

**“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies” (Ps.58:3).**

**“Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?” (Jer.2:5).**

**“That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols” (Ezk.14:5).**

4. Unbelievers are *past feeling* (apalgeo); that is, they reach a point where they no longer have feelings for God and His standard of morality. To be *past feeling* means to become callous, insensible, hardened. The more a person walks without God the more callous a person becomes to God. The more a person walks in sin, the more callous his conscience becomes to righteousness. Sin becomes more and more acceptable. The person’s conscience no longer bothers him. He

reaches a point of being *past feeling*. The believer is not to return to sin. He is not to walk as other men walk—in sin, becoming callous and insensitive to God.

**“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27).**

**“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:19).**

**“Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim.4:2).**

**“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing” (Heb.5:11).**

5. Unbelievers give themselves over to *lasciviousness*, to all forms of sensual living (see note, *Lasciviousness*, pt.4—Gal.5:19-21 for discussion).

6. Unbelievers indulge in all uncleanness with greediness. The word “uncleanness” (*akatharsias*) means to be dirty and filthy; to be infested with every kind of unclean, immoral, dirty, and polluted behavior. It is the most immoral behavior imaginable. It is *unbridled lust* turned loose.

**“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mt.5:28).**

**“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Ro.6:19).**

**“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).**

**“For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (1 Th.4:7).**

**“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb.13:4).**

7. The word “greediness” (*pleonexia*) means avarice, coveting, craving, grasping, desiring to have more and more; hoarding all one can get and still craving more. It is being enslaved and held in bondage by the things of this earth: for example, food, drink, and a host of fleshly sins and self-centered behavior.

Believers are not to walk in such a life. They are not to walk as other men walk.

**“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Ex.20:17).**

**“For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness: and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely” (Jer.6:13).**

**“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezk.33:31).**

**“And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage” (Mic.2:2).**

**“Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!” (Hab.2:9).**

**“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).**

**“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).**

**2** (4:20-24) **Believer, Walk—Old Man—New Man:** the believer is to *walk in Christ*. He is not to walk as men walk.

The reason is clearly stated: believers did not learn such a sinful life from Christ. Christ did not live a sinful life, and He has not taught us to live a sinful life as other men live. If a man has heard Christ and been taught by Christ, then he has heard and been taught *the truth*. Note that the Teacher is Christ Himself, not the minister. By the Holy Spirit, Christ uses the body and voice of the minister to teach people how they are to live. If a person has really heard Christ speaking to their hearts, then what they heard was not the kind of life lived by unbelievers. The true walk is a walk in Christ, and a walk in Christ involves three actions. (Because of their importance and length, the three actions are covered in separate notes.)

1. The believer is to *put off the old man* (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Eph.4:22 for discussion).

2. The believer is to be *renewed in the spirit of his mind* (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Eph.4:23 for discussion).

3. The believer is to *put on the new man* (see DEEPER STUDY # 3—Eph.4:24 for discussion).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(4:22) **Old Man:** the “old man” refers to what a man is *before he accepts Christ*. It is the very *nature of man*, the *natural*, corruptible seed which is passed on from generation to generation and leads to death. It is what is called the nature of Adam. (See note, *Natural Man*—1 Cor.2:14 for a much more detailed discussion.)

Three things are taught about the old man in the Scriptures.

1. The believer's *old man* has already been put to death. It was crucified with Christ (Ro.6:6). When the believer received Christ, God began immediately to count him buried with Christ and united with Christ in the very likeness of His death. This is the meaning symbolized in baptism.
2. The deeds of the old man have been *put off* from the believer (Col.3:9). The power of evil deeds has been broken and the believer is no longer in bondage to them.
3. In this passage, the believer himself is exhorted to *put off the old man*. He is told to exercise his own will in putting off the *old man*. He so wills by realizing and acting upon three truths.
  - a. The old man, from God's perspective, is counted dead. Therefore, the believer *counts* his old man as already being dead.

**“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:11).**

- b. The old man is recognized as being very much alive. The old man is tempted to *look, taste, feel, think*—to *experience sin*. But the believer rejects the temptation. He refuses to participate in sin. He puts off the old man as he walks day by day.

**“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Ro.6:12-13).**

- c. The old man (including all creation) is seen aging and dying day by day. The believer realizes that this world and all that is within it, including his old man, is in a constant process of dying. He knows that all is dying because the evil desires of nature are deceitful, and deceit disturbs and destroys relationships—the very nature of things (Eph.4:22). Such destruction deteriorates and corrupts; it eats away at life and at the balance of things until all things become nothing but decayed matter. Therefore the believer puts off the old man and puts on the new man—by faith in the love of God. When a person believes in the love of God, God responds by loving him so much that He makes a permanent man out of him, a new man who is to live eternally and become a citizen of the new heavens and earth.

**“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Ro.6:6).**

**“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph.4:22).**

**“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (Col.3:9).**

**“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pt.4:3).**

**“But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” (2 Pt.1:9).**

### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(4:23) **Mind, Renewed:** the believers mind is to be renewed (*ananeousthai*), which means to be made new, readjusted, changed, turned around, and regenerated.

- a. The mind of man has been affected by sin. It desperately needs to be renewed. The mind is far from perfect. It is *basically worldly*, that is...
 

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• selfish</li> <li>• self-centered</li> <li>• self-seeking</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• centered on this world</li> <li>• centered on the flesh</li> <li>• centered on this life</li> </ul> |
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Scripture is clear about the corruption of man's mind. The human mind has just been tragically corrupted by man's selfishness and sin. Man's mind...

- has become *vain*, empty, and futile in its *imagination*s.

**“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Ro.1:21).**

- has become *reprobate*.

**“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Ro.1:28).**

- has become carnal and full of enmity against God.

**“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Ro.8:7).**

- has become blinded by Satan lest it believe the glorious gospel of Christ.

**“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).**

- has become *full* of vanity, futility, emptiness.

**“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of the mind” (Eph.4:17).**

- has become focused upon earthly things.

**“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Ph.3:18-19).**

- has become alienated from God and an enemy to God.

**“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col.1:21).**

- has become fleshy.

**“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Col.2:18).**

- has become defiled.

**“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled” (Tit.1:15).**

- b. The mind is renewed by the presence of Christ in the life of the believer. When a person receives the Lord Jesus Christ as His Lord, the man is *spiritually*...
- born again (Jn.3:3-8; 1 Pt.1:23).
  - made into a new man (Eph.4:24; Col.3:10).
  - made into a new creature (2 Cor.5:17).
  - given the mind of Christ (1 Cor.2:16; cp. v.9-15).

What this means is a most wonderful truth, and it is easily seen. When a person receives Jesus Christ into his life, he receives the mind of Christ as well. Christ places His mind into the believer’s mind; that is, Christ changes the believer’s mind to focus upon God. Whereas the believer’s mind used to be centered upon the world, it is now centered upon spiritual matters. The believer’s mind is renewed, changed, turned around, and regenerated to focus upon God. However, it is critical to remember that only Christ can renew the human mind. Only Christ can implant *the mind of Christ* within a person. Only Christ can give a person His thoughts and the spirit to *live out* His thoughts.

- c. The believer is to live a transformed life; that is, he is to walk day by day *renewing his mind more and more*. He is to allow the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) to focus his mind more and more upon God and spiritual things.
- ⇒ The believer is to love the Lord with all his mind.

**“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Mt.22:37).**

- ⇒ The believer is to keep his mind upon spiritual things, not carnal things.

**“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:5-6).**

- ⇒ The believer is to cast down imaginations and every thought that interrupts his knowledge of God and to captivate every thought for Christ.

**“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:3-5).**

⇒ The believer is not to let his mind be corrupted.

**“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor.11:3).**

⇒ The believer is not to fulfill the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

**“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph.2:3).**

⇒ The believer is not to walk as the world walks, in the vanity of their mind.

**“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind” (Eph.4:17).**

⇒ The believer is to be renewed in the spirit of his mind.

**“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph.4:23).**

⇒ The believer is to let the mind of Christ be in him by walking humbly before God and men.

**“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Ph.2:5).**

⇒ The believer is to think only upon the things of praise and virtue.

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Ph.4:8).**

⇒ The believer is to live by the laws of God which God has put into his mind.

**“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Heb.8:10).**

⇒ The believer is to arm himself with the same mind as Christ in bearing suffering.

**“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (1 Pt.4:1).**

### DEEPER STUDY # 3

(4:24) **New Man:** a man *regenerated, renewed, born again* who has become spiritually minded. It is a *new man* created by Christ; he has been given a holy nature and an incorruptible life. It is opposed to the *old man* with a corrupt nature. It is a man who is...

- in fellowship with God.
- obedient to God's will.
- devoted to God's service.

There are two Greek words translated by the English word *new*. There is the word *neos* which refers to something new that has just been made, but there are already many others existing just like it. There is the word *kainos* which refers to something new, something just made and there is nothing like it in existence. *Kainos* is the word used here. Jesus Christ makes a *new man* entirely—a creation unlike any other creation existing. The Gentile believer is not made into a Jew; neither is a Jewish believer made into a Gentile. Each, through the Lord Jesus Christ, is made into a *new kind of person—a new man in God*. Every person *can begin life all over again*; every person can have a new beginning, a new life by coming to Jesus Christ.

How is this possible? By the power of God. When a person believes in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ—really believes and entrusts his life into the hands of Jesus Christ—God creates the spirit of the person in righteousness and true holiness. God takes the faith of the person and *credits it as the righteousness of Jesus Christ*. God actually credits the person's faith *as the perfect righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ*. Therefore, the person stands before God in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ. But note: this is not all that God does. He does more marvellous things for the believer—all having to do with creating the believer into a new person.

1. God quickens the spirit of the believer and makes his spirit alive. Whereas the believer's spirit was dead to God, God creates it and makes it alive to God.
2. God causes the believer to be born again spiritually.
3. God actually places His divine nature into the heart of the believer.
4. God actually creates a new man out of the believer.
5. God renews the believer by the Holy Spirit.

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| <p><b>1 The garment of lying</b><br/> a. The charge: Put away<br/> b. The reason: Believers are one body</p> <p><b>2 The garment of anger</b><br/> a. The charge: Deal with<br/><br/> b. The reason: Can be the devil's foothold</p> <p><b>3 The garment of stealing</b><br/> a. The charge: Work<br/><br/> b. The reason: To help the needy</p> | <p><b>D. The Believer is to Walk Putting Off the Garments of the Old Man, 4:25-32</b></p> <p>25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.</p> <p>26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:</p> <p>27 Neither give place to the devil.</p> <p>28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.</p> | <p>29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.</p> <p>30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.</p> <p>31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:</p> <p>32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.</p> | <p><b>4 The garment of worthless talk</b><br/> a. The charge: Speak only good<br/> b. The reason: To build up others</p> <p><b>5 The garment of being contrary</b><br/> a. The charge: Grieve not the Holy Spirit<br/> b. The reason: He seals us</p> <p><b>6 The garments of unkindness</b><br/> a. The charge: Unclothe<br/> b. The reason: God forgave you</p> <p><b>7 The garments of the new man</b><br/> a. The charge: Clothe yourself<br/> b. The reason: You are forgiven</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9**

**D. The Believer is to Walk Putting Off the Garments of the Old Man, 4:25-32**

(4:25-32) **Introduction:** this is a most practical passage. When a person clothes himself, he wants to be sure to put on the right clothes. If he *dresses improperly* and puts on clothes that clash and are unacceptable, he is unacceptable and rejected by most people. Most people avoid the person who is improperly dressed, for he embarrasses them. So it is with God. There are things that we are to put on and things that we are not to put on; things that are to clothe our lives and things that are not to clothe our lives. The present passage discusses the things that are to be stripped off. The believer is to put off the garments of the old man.

1. The garment of lying (v.25).
2. The garment of anger (v.26-27).
3. The garment of stealing (v.28).
4. The garment of worthless talk (v.29).
5. The garment of being contrary (v.30).
6. The garments of unkindness (v.31).
7. The garments of the new man (v.32).

**1** (4:25) **Lying:** the believer is to strip away the garment of lying (pseudo). (See note, *False Witness*—Ro.13:9 for more discussion.) The word lying means that which is false. It is untruthfulness, deception, misrepresentation, exaggeration.

1. A lie does at least three things.
  - a. Lying misrepresents the truth. It camouflages and hides the truth. The person lied to does not know the truth; therefore, he has to act or live upon a lie. If the lie is serious, it can be very damaging:
    - ⇒ A lie about a business deal can cost money and cause terrible loss.
    - ⇒ A lie about the salvation of the gospel can cost a person the hope of eternal life.
    - ⇒ A lie about loving someone can stir emotions that lead to destruction.
  - b. Lying deceives a person. It leads a person astray. A person deceives...
    - to get what he wants.
    - to seduce someone.
    - to cover up or hide something.
    - to cause harm or hurt.

The point to see is that lying is a deception, and deception eventually causes misunderstanding, disappointment, bewilderment, helplessness, and emotional upheaval.
  - c. Lying builds a wrong relationship, a relationship built upon sinking sand. Two people cannot possibly be friends or live together if the relationship is based upon lies. Lying destroys...
    - confidence                      • love
    - assurance                        • trust
    - security                            • hope

2. Scripture gives one strong reason for believers to speak only the truth: they are members of one another. Every believer is a member of the great body of people which God is building, the body of Christ, that is, the church. William Barclay has an excellent description of this point.

*“We can only live in safety because the senses and the nerves pass true messages to the brain. If in fact the senses and the nerves took to passing false messages to the brain, if, for instance, they told the brain that something was cool and touchable when in fact it was hot and burning, life would very soon come to an end. A body can only function accurately and healthily when each part of it passes true messages to the brain and to the other parts. If then we are all bound into one body, that body can only function when we*

*“speak the truth. All deception impairs the working of the body of Christ.” (The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians, p.184.)*

3. The believer is to be altogether what he says. There is to be nothing covered, nothing hid, no shame, no pretense. He is to be exactly the same before men that he is in private and the same in private that he is before men. His life is not to be a lie.

⇒ Lying or bearing false witness is one of the Ten Commandments.

**“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor” (Ex.20:16).**

⇒ Lying is one the gross sins that defile men.

**“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Mt.15:19).**

⇒ Lying takes its stand with the father of lies, the devil.

**“Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (Jn.8:44).**

⇒ Lying is closely associated with idolatry. It causes a person to profess something other than the truth.

**“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev.21:27).**

**“For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev.22:15).**

⇒ Lying or deceiving men is to be a characteristic of the antichrist.

**“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Th.2:9).**

⇒ Lying is not what it professes to be.

**“I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth” (1 Jn.2:21).**

**“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Th.2:9).**

⇒ Lying is opposed to the truth.

**“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).**

**2** (4:26-27) **Anger** (orgizesthe): the believer is to strip away the garment of anger. Men do become angry: note that Scripture recognizes this. There are times when anger is called for, but we are to guard against sinning when we become angry. Anger causes us to either react, lash out and hurt others, or else it motivates us to right wrongs and correct injustices.

1. There is wrong anger or what may be called unjustified or selfish anger.

- a. There is the anger that broods, that is selfish. It harbors malice; it will not forget; it lingers; it broods; it wills revenge and sometimes seeks revenge.
- b. There is the anger that holds contempt (raca). It despises; it ridicules; it arrogantly exalts self and calls another person empty and useless. This is an anger that is full of malice. It despises and scorns (raca). It arises from pride—a proud wrath (Pr.21:24). Such feelings or anger walk over and trample a person. It says that whatever ill comes upon a person is deserved.
- c. There is the anger that curses. It seeks to destroy a man and his reputation morally, intellectually, and spiritually.

2. There is right anger or what may be called justified anger. The believer must be an angry person—angry with those who sin and do wrong and who are unjust and selfish in their behavior. However, a justified anger is always disciplined and controlled; it is always limited to those who do wrong either against God or against others. The distinguishing mark between justified and unjustified anger is that a justified anger is never selfish; it is never shown because of what has happened to oneself. It is an anger that is purposeful. The believer knows that he is angry for a legitimate reason, and he seeks to correct the situation in the most peaceful way possible (see notes—Ro.12:18; Jn.2:12-16).

**“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph.4:26).**

**“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Ro.12:18).**

**“And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting; and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changer’s money, and overthrew the tables” (Jn.2:13-16).**

**Thought 1.** Anger is cast against many. Too often hurt feelings exist between those who are supposed to be the closest: husband and wife, parent and child, neighbor and friend, employer and employee. The Lord is clear about the matter: we must never allow anger to take hold of us without just cause.

3. Note that the devil exploits selfish anger and uses it for his own ends. He sows discord and disturbance and dissension. Paul usually prefers to use the word “satnas” for Satan, but here he uses “diabolos.” “Diabolos” means slanderer, a tale-bearer who murders reputations. (See notes, *Anger*—Mt.5:21; 5:22 for more discussion.)

**“But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth” (Col.3:8).**

**“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jas.1:19).**

**“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 Jn.3:15).**

**“Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil” (Ps.37:8).**

**“He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly; and a man of wicked devices is hated” (Pr.14:17).**

**“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Pr.16:32).**

**“The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression” (Pr.19:11).**

**“Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools” (Eccl.7:9).**

**3** (4:28) **Stealing:** the believer is to strip away the garment of stealing. The word “steal” (klepto) means to cheat, to take wrongfully from another person, *either legally or illegally*. Note that the laws of men are not the determining rule governing whether a person is stealing or not. This is what is so often misunderstood about stealing.

⇒ Men can sometimes use the law to steal.

⇒ Men can take from others without ever breaking a law.

⇒ Men can secure too much of something, well beyond what they need; and when they hoard, they are taking something that by nature belongs to others.

Very simply stated, the Bible teaches that stealing is the taking of anything that *rightfully or by nature* belongs to others. There are at least three forms of stealing.

1. A person steals by taking something which is *actually possessed or personally owned* by another person. If a person owns it and we take it, then we are guilty of stealing. It may be something as simple as a pencil from the office or an answer to a test from a fellow student, or it may be something as complex as embezzlement of funds through bookkeeping procedures. If we take it, we have broken God’s commandment and stand guilty as thieves.

**“Not purloining [stealing], but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Tit.2:10).**

**“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief” (1 Pt.4:15).**

**“A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight” (Pr.11:1).**

**“It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth” (Pr.20:14).**

**“The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death” (Pr.21:6).**

**“He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress” (Hos.12:7).**

2. A person steals by hoarding and banking more than he needs. *Keeping back* is stealing. It is...

- keeping what is not needed for one’s own needs.
- keeping back what is desperately needed by others.
- taking away what nature and the earth have provided to meet the needs of the human population.
- hoarding the knowledge and gifts and blessings God gave to be used for the welfare of a desperate world filled with so many who are less privileged and gifted.

We may call it by whatever name we wish, but to God it is stealing. God has put within the earth enough resources to meet the needs of His people, and He has given men both the *ability and command to subdue and have dominion over the earth*. Look closely at His command:

**“And God blessed them [man and woman], and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen.1:28).**

The earth is to be subdued and taken dominion over by men. Men are commanded by God to develop the technology to explore the universe and to control nature, and to feed, clothe, house and give health to people. Note what God is saying. He is not saying some are to have the benefits and blessings of the earth. He is saying that men are to love each other and *share* the blessings of the earth together. When men use their God-given ability to make money and produce goods, and

then begin to keep back and hoard, they are stealing; they are keeping for themselves what rightfully belongs to others. Therefore, they will suffer catastrophic loss in the next world. They will suffer total devastation (Lk.12:20; 16:22-23). Why? Because they did not *love enough* to do what they and their particular talents were put on earth to do: provide for those who were less gifted and less fortunate.

**“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mt.6:19-21).**

**“And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you” (Lk.3:13).**

**“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).**

**“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Tim.6:9).**

**“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim.6:17-19).**

**“Thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbors by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezk.22:12).**

3. A person steals by living extravagantly, beyond what he needs. There are some who give to meet the crying needs of the world, yet they do not live sacrificially. They *keep plenty* for themselves, indulging their flesh...

- in clothing
- in food
- in jewelry
- in housing
- in transportation
- in recreation
- in possessions
- in property

Many within industrialized nations are guilty of *selfishness* despite a tenderness and concern for the needy in the world. However, *concern and some giving* are not enough to fulfill the demand of God that we share and meet the needs of our fellow men throughout the world. Every day that we awaken and arise out of bed, the world is reeling under the weight of *masses*...

- who are hungry and starving to death.
- who are without drinking water.
- who are without adequate clothing.
- who are diseased and without medicine.
- who have no roof over their heads.
- who have no one to teach them.

There is no question, the means to help meet the needs of the world exist today. The lack is not manpower and resources; the lack is *sacrificial commitment* to give the resources and to go and become personally involved. The extravagant and indulgent are stealing from the needy, and the gifted are not meeting the needs of the less gifted. The scene is tragic, for God put the gifted upon earth to *sacrificially* meet the needs of the less gifted. But instead of meeting their needs, the gifted are living in excessive comfort and pleasure, indulging the whims of their flesh.

**“Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Mt.19:21).**

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” (Mt.23:25).**

**“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mk.4:19).**

**“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Lk.12:33).**

**“Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them” (Amos 5:11).**

What is the answer? Diligent work—working and working so that we can have enough to help others. This is the will of God: working in order to have enough to give away. Work is to be honest and to meet the necessities of one’s family; however, working just for self is selfish. And selfishness corrupts and leaves a person’s heart and work empty and aimless. But working in order to help others in the name of Christ—this is the will of God. This is the only way the needs of the world can be met. Work is to be for the Lord’s purpose and cause—the cause that provides the means to reach and to help people (1 Jn.3:17). (See note, *Steal*—Ro.13:9 for more discussion.)

**4** (4:29) **Worthless Talk:** the believer is to strip away filthy and foul talk. The word “corrupt” (*sapros*) means rotten, foul, putrid and polluting. Corrupt talk, of course, would include cursing and unholy talk and even the worthless conversation that is so often carried on by people. The Amplified New Testament has a good description.

**“Let no foul or polluting language, nor evil word, nor unwholesome or worthless talk [ever] come out of your mouth” (Eph.4:29).**

Scripture says that a man with a foul mouth has a mouth that is “an open sepulchre [grave]” (Ro.3:13). An open grave is foul, and it is a symbol of corruption. So is a man with a sinful mouth. His mouth is...

- |           |              |                |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| • foul    | • polluted   | • profane      |
| • dirty   | • filthy     | • dishonorable |
| • obscene | • detestable | • offensive    |

The obscene mouth may range from off-colored humor to dirty jokes, from immoral suggestions to outright propositions for sex. But no matter, a man with a foul mouth stinks just like an open grave; his filthiness causes corruption, the decay of character. The filth from his mouth eats and eats away at his character and at the character of his listeners—so much so that he becomes as offensive as that of a decayed corpse. The foul, filthy mouth kills character, its attractiveness, trust, faithfulness, morality, honor, and godliness.

**“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Mt.12:34).**

**“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell” (Jas.3:6).**

**“For their heart studieth destruction, and the lips talk of mischief” (Pr.24:2).**

The believer is to speak only that which is good and which will edify or build up people. Speech is for the purpose...

- of sharing good things.
- of building up and strengthening people.
- of ministering grace (favor, blessings) and helping each other as we plow through life.

**“And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Lk.24:32).**

**“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph.5:19).**

**“How forcible are right words! But what doth your arguing reprove?” (Job 6:25).**

**“Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips” (Ps.141:3).**

**“They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power” (Ps.145:11).**

**“Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones” (Pr.16:24).**

**“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Pr.25:11).**

**“The words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself” (Eccl.10:12).**

**“The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned” (Is.50:4).**

**“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Mal.3:16).**

**5** (4:30) **Holy Spirit:** the believer is to strip away the garment of being contrary or of grieving the Holy Spirit. “Grieving” (lupeite) means to pain; to offend; to vex; to sadden the Holy Spirit. When a child acts contrary to the counsel of his parents, he hurts and grieves them. So when a person acts contrary to the counsel of the Holy Spirit, he hurts and grieves Him. Note three points.

1. The command is forceful, very forceful. This is seen in the name of the Holy Spirit. He is not only called the Holy Spirit here, He is called both the Holy Spirit and “the Spirit of God”—a double reference.

2. There are at least four ways the Holy Spirit can be grieved.

a. He is *grieved* when believers allow impure things to penetrate their life or thoughts.

**“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Ro.8:5-7).**

b. He is *grieved* when believers behave immorally.

**“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:12-13).**

c. He is *grieved* when believers act unjustly.

**“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:3-4).**

d. He is *grieved* when believers participate in anything contrary to the nature of the Holy Spirit. Note the context of this passage: the command to “grieve not the Spirit” is surrounded by a series of negative commands.

**“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Ro.8:8-10).**

3. The reason we should not grieve the Spirit of God is because of His great ministry to us: He has sealed us until the day of redemption (see note, *Holy Spirit*, Seal—Eph.1:13-14 for discussion).

**6** (4:31) **Believer, Walk—Sins, List:** the believer is to strip off the garment of unkindness.

1. There is “*bitterness*” (pikria): resentment, harshness. A man who is bitter is often...
  - sharp
  - resentful
  - cynical
  - cold
  - harsh
  - stressful
  - intense
  - relentless
  - distasteful
  - unpleasant

Any expression involving any of these is sin to God. God desires men to be filled with love and joy and peace and to express such. Anything less than the expression of these is sin.

2. There is “*wrath*” (thumos): (see note, *Wrath*, pt.10—Gal.5:19-21 for discussion).
3. There is “*anger*” (orge): (see note, *Anger*—Eph.4:26-27 for discussion).
4. There is “*clamor*” (krauge): arguing, fussing, quarrelling, brawling. It means insulting, boistrous behavior, and loud talking.
5. There is “*malice*” (blasphemia): slander, hurtful, injurious speech.

**7** (4:32) **Believer, Walk:** the believer is to put on the garments of the new man. Frankly, this verse speaks for itself more forcefully than any commentary ever could.

1. The word “*kind*” means to be gentle, caring, helpful, courteous, good, useful, giving, and showering favors upon people. It is the opposite of being neglectful, harsh, sharp, bitter, and resentful. Lehman Strauss points out that kindness comes from such words as *kin* and *kindred* which means that it treats a person as one’s own kin. Believers are brothers in the Lord (*Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians*, p.189).

**“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Ro.12:10).**

**“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Col.3:12).**

2. The word “*tenderhearted*” means to show compassion, mercy, understanding, love, tenderness, and warmth. It means to *be aware* of a person’s hurts and sufferings, problems and difficulties, emotions and mental state, physical and spiritual condition. It means to be tenderhearted toward them.

**“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt.5:7).**

**“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Lk.6:36).**

**“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:35).**

**“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).**

**“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).**

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).**

3. The word “*forgiving*” means to be gracious to a person, to pardon him for some wrong done. Note that the person has done wrong; he has hurt and caused us pain. But the command is to still forgive him.

4. The reason we should forgive each other is because God has forgiven us. No matter how much a person has done against us, it does not come close to what we have done against God. Yet, God has forgiven us. Why? For Christ’s sake. Jesus Christ died for us—died for our sins so that we could be forgiven. Therefore, God forgives us. No matter what we have done, God forgives us when we want forgiveness. He forgives us despite our having rejected, cursed, ignored, neglected, and rebelled against Him.

The point is this: because of what Christ has done for us, we should forgive others no matter what they have done.

**“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Mt.11:25).**

**“...ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Lk.6:35-36).**

**“And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Lk.17:4).**

**“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).**

**“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col.3:13).**

| CHAPTER 5   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 By becoming a follower of God</b></p> <p><b>2 By loving as Christ loved</b></p> <p>a. He made an offering to God—sacrificed Himself</p> <p>b. He became a sweet fragrance to God</p> <p><b>3 By being clean-bodied, that is, morally pure</b></p> | <p><b>E. The Believer is to Walk Following God, 5:1-7</b></p> <p>Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;</p> <p>2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.</p> <p>3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as be cometh saints;</p> | <p>4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.</p> <p>5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.</p> <p>6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.</p> <p>7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.</p> | <p><b>4 By being clean-mouthed</b></p> <p><b>5 By knowing God's solemn warning</b></p> <p>a. Uncleanness has no part with God</p> <p>b. There are deceivers</p> <p>c. The wrath of God is coming</p> <p><b>6 By separating himself from the unclean</b></p> |

**DIVISION IV**

**THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9**

**E. The Believer is to Walk Following God, 5:1-7**

(5:1-7) **Introduction:** the challenge of this passage is one of the greatest challenges in all the Word of God. Just imagine—the great Pattern for the believer is God Himself. The believer is to follow the Person of God. The believer is to walk through life following God.

1. By becoming a follower of God (v.1).
2. By loving as Christ loved (v.2).
3. By being clean-bodied, that is, morally pure (v.3).
4. By being clean-mouthed (v.4).
5. By knowing God's solemn warning (v.5-6).
6. By separating oneself from the unclean (v.7).

**1** (5:1) **Believer, Duty:** the believer follows God, first, by *becoming* a follower of God. Note the word “be” (ginomai). It means *to become* a follower of God. The idea is that of commitment, attachment, devotion, allegiance, attention. Before a person can be a follower of God, he must commit and attach himself to God. He must surrender and devote his life to God and then begin to follow after God.

The word “followers” (mimetai) means imitators. Some prefer the translation that we are to become imitators of God. Note the phrase “as dear children.” Just as children learn by imitating their parents, so we are to learn by imitating God. The very idea that we are to be *followers and imitators* of God is a bold idea. Just imagine, Scripture boldly proclaims that we are to become *like God!*

- ⇒ Christ said: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Mt.5:48).
- ⇒ God demanded: “Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy” (Lev.19:2).
- ⇒ Paul declared: “But we all...are changed into the same image [of Christ] from glory to glory” (2 Cor.3:18).
- ⇒ Peter charged: “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pt.1:15-16)
- ⇒ The early church saint, Clement of Alexandria said: “The Christian practices being God” (Quoted by William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.190).

**2** (5:2) **Jesus Christ, Death—God, Glory of—Believer, Duty:** the believer follows God, second, by loving as Christ loved. Two things about the death of Christ should be noted here.

1. The phrase “gave Himself for us” is a simple phrase with profound meaning. It does not mean that Christ died only as an example for us, showing us how we should be willing to die for the truth or for some great cause. What it means is that Christ died in our place, in our stead, as our substitute. This meaning is unquestionably clear. (See **DEEPER STUDY # 1**—1 Pt.2:21-25 for more discussion.)

- a. The idea of sacrifice to the Jewish and pagan mind of that day was the idea of a life given in another's place. It was a substitutionary sacrifice
- b. The idea of sacrifice is often in the very context of the words, “Christ gave Himself for us” (Eph.5:2).

**“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (Jn.6:51).**

**“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (Jn.10:11).**

**“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep” (Jn.10:15).**

**“He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation” (Jn.11:51).**

**“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn.15:13).**

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (Jn.17:19). (Cp. Jn.10:11; Ro.8:32; Gal.1:4; 2:20; 1 Tim.2:6; Tit.2:14.)

2. The words “Christ gave Himself...an offering...to God for a sweet-smelling savour [smell]” gives a higher meaning to the death of Christ than just meeting our need. The word “offering” refers to the burnt offering of the Old Testament (Lev.1:1f). The burnt offering was given to God not merely because of sin, but because a person wished to glorify and honor God. A person wished to show his love and adoration to God. This is an aspect of Christ’s death that is often overlooked—an aspect that rises far above the mere meeting of our need. In giving Himself as an “offering to God,” Christ was looking beyond our need to the majestic responsibility of glorifying God. This means that His first purpose was to glorify God. He was concerned primarily with doing the will of God—with obeying God. God had been terribly dishonored by the first man, Adam, and by all those who followed after him. Jesus Christ wished to honor God by showing that at least one man thought more of God’s glory than of anything else. Christ wished to show that God’s will meant more than any personal desire or ambition that He might have.

He said: “That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given commandment [to die for man] even so I do. Arise, let us go hence” (Jn.14:31; cp. Lk.2:42; Jn.5:30).

The point is this: the believer is to walk in love, *just as Christ has loved us and has given Himself as an offering and a sacrifice to God*. The believer is to love so much that he gives himself as an offering and a sacrifice. There is to be no limit to the offerings and sacrifice of our lives to God and to men. Remember: God’s love—agape love—is always an acting love.

“As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us” (Eph.5:2).

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:35).

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn.15:12).

“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).

“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 Jn.3:14).

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn.3:16-18).

“Beloved, let us love one other: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 Jn.4:7-8).

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 Jn.4:20).

**3** (5:3) **Believer, Duty—Fornication—Uncleanness—Covetousness:** the believer follows God, third, by being clean-bodied, that is, morally pure. If a believer is to follow and imitate God, he has to be morally pure; he has to keep his body clean. He cannot let it become dirty and spotted.

⇒ He has to keep his body free of fornication (see note, pt.2—Gal.5:19-21 for discussion).

⇒ He has to keep his body free of uncleanness (see note, pt.6—Eph.4:17-19 for discussion).

⇒ He has to keep his body free of covetousness (see note, pt.7—Eph.4:17-19 for discussion).

Note the importance of rejecting these sins: they are not to be named *even once* among us. And the command is an imperative: “Let it not be *once named*”—not even *mentioned once*. You, that is, your body, is never to engage in fornication, uncleanness, or covetous acts. Note another fact: such things are not even to be talked about. They are not to be named, talked about, or mentioned in our conversation. Immorality and indecent conversation and jokes are to be the farthest thing from the mind of the believer who follows God. God has nothing to do with such dirt and filth.

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Mt.5:8).

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim.1:5).

“...neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure” (1 Tim.5:22).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:14).

**4** (5:4) **Believer, Duty—Tongue—Speech—Conversation:** the believer follows God, fourth, by being clean-mouthed. If a believer is to follow and imitate God, he has to be pure in speech and conversation; he has to keep his mouth or tongue clean. He cannot let his mouth become foul, polluted, filthy, and vile.

1. He is never, not once, to be engaged in “filthiness” (aischrotes): using the mouth in obscene, shameful, foul, polluted, base, immoral conduct and conversation. What an indictment of our day—a day of sodomy and perversion. And note: the word refers to both conduct and speech. How polluted and foul-mouthed so many have become—so much so that society could easily be known as a second Sodom and Gomorrah.

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet” (Ro.1:26-27).

“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members [body parts] servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Ro.6:19).

“Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks” (Eph.5:4).

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jas.1:21).

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness” (2 Pt.2:9-10).

2. The believer is *never once* to engage in “foolish talking” (morologia): empty, unthoughtful, senseless, wasted, idle, aimless, or purposeless talk; talk that just fritters away and wastes time, that has absolutely no purpose to it. It also means sinful, foolish, silly, and corrupt talk.

“For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Tim.1:10).

“Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?” (Job 15:2-3).

“In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise” (Pr.10:19).

“A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterward” (Pr.29:11).

“For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool’s voice is known by multitude of words” (Eccl.5:3).

“The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness” (Eccl.10:13).

3. The believer is *never once* to engage in “jesting: (eutrapelia): to joke, talk foolishly, poke fun, act or speak without thought; to be suggestive in conversation; to make wisecracks. It also has the idea of being cunning and clever, of being polished in suggestive and off-colored joking and using it to attract attention and win favors (Wuest. *Ephesians and Colossians*, Vol.1, p.121). Jestings is often used in off-colored jokes or conversation, at parties or breaks in order to be suggestive.

“As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbor, and saith, Am not I in sport [joking]?” (Pr.26:18-19).

“For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts” (2 Tim.3:6).

“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile [deception]” (1 Pt.3:10).

Note that such talk is not fitting or becoming to believers. Believers are to be engaged in conversation that builds people up and offers thanks and praise to God.

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph.5:18-19).

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col.3:17).

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col.4:6).

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Th.5:18).

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim.1:13).

“Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you” (Tit.2:8).

“The words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself” (Eccl.10:12).

**5** (5:5-6) **Believer, Duty—Immorality—Uncleanness:** the believer follows God, fifth, by knowing God’s solemn warning. Note three significant points.

1. Uncleanness has no part with God, no part whatsoever. The profession of a person does not matter: if he practices these things, he will not share in the kingdom of Christ and of God. And, note, *the doom* pronounced is not future, it is present. It does not say, “he shall not have,” but rather, “he does not have an inheritance with God.” He may have houses,

lands, and all kinds of possessions; but he does not have one scrap of the kingdom. He has lost all that is really worth having. Note the specific sins mentioned that doom a person.

- ⇒ Being a “*whoremonger*” ( pornos ): illicit sexual intercourse; fornication; prostitution; immoral behavior.
- ⇒ Being an “*unclean person*” ( akathartos ): unclean, immoral, dirty thoughts or behavior.
- ⇒ Being a “*covetous person*” ( see note above—Eph.5:3 for discussion).
- ⇒ Being an “*idolator*” ( see note, *Idolatry*, pt.5—Gal.5:19-21 for discussion).

2. There are deceivers walking all about us. There are people who will tell us...
  - that sex is the normal and natural thing for man—that a one time affair will not hurt—that it is acceptable and will not harm us.
  - that securing possessions is normal behavior and banking and storing up is acceptable. It builds position, ego, and self-image, and that could never be wrong; and having more than what we need enables us to give to help the needy as we desire.

**“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Ro.16:18).**

**“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Cor.11:13-14).**

**“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).**

**“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim.3:13).**

**“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers” (Tit.1:10).**

**“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 Jn.7).**

3. Barclay points out that there were and still are two main deceptions about Christianity (*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.192f).

- a. There were those who felt that they could say and do anything and still be acceptable to God. This argument came primarily from those *outside* the church, although there were some within the church who held the same argument. This idea finds its roots in the philosophy of Gnosticism. Gnosticism said that man is both body and spirit. They felt that the spirit is the only important part of man—the only part that really matters. It is the only part that really concerns God. What a man does with his body does not matter; the body is not important. It makes no difference whatsoever if a man abuses his body: gorges, dirties, and fouls it.

However, Christianity counters, “Never!” Both body and soul are important. We see this in Jesus Christ. He honored the body by taking a body upon Himself (Heb.2:14). Today He honors the body by making it the “holy temple” for His presence in the person of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.6:19). Jesus Christ is interested in the body of man as well as the spirit of man. He is interested in the whole man, and He saves the whole man.

- b. There were those primarily within the church who felt that sin was irrelevant. How much a person sinned just did not matter. God is love and He forgives and forgives no matter how much wrong we do. In fact, some argued that the more we sin, the more God is able to forgive and demonstrate His mercy in us. So why not live the way we want? Why not sin and let God’s mercy and love shine through us, for the more we sin the more God’s grace will be seen. But Christianity counters, “Never!” God’s love and grace are not only a gift and a privilege, but a responsibility and an obligation.

However, note what God says: “Because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience” (v.6; cp. Eph.2:2). The wrath (orge) of God is a decisive anger, a deliberate anger that arises from His very nature of holiness. It is an anger that is *righteous, just, and good*—that stands against the sins and evil of men—their dirt and pollution and immoralities—their injustices and neglects of a world that reels under the weight of lost, starving, diseased, and dying masses. God could never overlook the whoremonger who destroys family life nor the covetous man who overlooks the needy. He would not be God; He would not be loving or just if He overlooked such evil persons.

**“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Ro.1:18).**

**“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Ro.2:5).**

**“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph.5:5-6).**

**“Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him” (Ps.2:12).**

- 6** (5:7) **Believer, Duty—Separation:** the believer follows God, sixth, by separating himself from the unclean. No believer is to take part in the sins discussed in these verses. In fact, he is to separate himself from all who do take part in such sins.

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this unto-ward generation” (Acts 2:40).

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).

“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators” (1 Cor.5:9).

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor.6:14).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph.5:11).

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 Th.3:6).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

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|   | <b>F. The Believer is to Walk as a Child of Light, 5:8-14</b>                                  | with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.<br>12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.<br>13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.<br>14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. | <b>of darkness</b><br>a. The charge: Have no fellowship with darkness<br>b. The reason: It is a shame to even speak of the things done in secret<br><b>5 Light reveals &amp; converts everything it touches</b><br><b>6 Light awakens the sleeping</b><br>a. The challenge: Arise from the dead<br>b. How: By Christ |
| <b>1 Light, not darkness, is the nature of believers</b>                        | 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: |   |  |
| <b>2 Light bears the things of life—the fruit of the Spirit<sup>Dsl,2</sup></b> | 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)                |   |  |
| <b>3 Light shows what is acceptable</b>   | 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.   |   |  |
| <b>4 Light exposes the works</b>  | 11 And have no fellowship  |   |  |

**DIVISION IV**

**THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9**

**F. The Believer is to Walk as a Child of Light, 5:8-14**

(5:8-14) **Introduction:** two walks through life are available to men. There is the life and walk of darkness or the life and walk of light. There is a world of difference between the two. In fact, a person's eternity is determined by which life and walk he pursues.

1. Light, not darkness, is the nature of believers (v.8).
2. Light bears the things of life—the fruit of the Spirit (v.9).
3. Light shows what is acceptable (v.10).
4. Light exposes the works of darkness (v.11-12).
5. Light reveals and converts everything it touches (v.13).
6. Light awakens the sleeping (v.14).

**1 (5:8) Darkness—Light—Believer, Nature:** light, not darkness, is the nature of believers.

1. Before a person is saved, he is not only in darkness, but he is darkness—the very embodiment of darkness. What does this mean? Think for a moment: a person who does not know God is all alone. He may have plenty of people and friends moving about him, but they—everyone of them—will soon die and be gone. In fact, so will he, and he will have died in darkness—never having known God. A person who does not know God is in darkness:

- ⇒ He does not know where he has come from. To him everything is a result of human and natural process. It is the way of the world and of man: we are born and here we are. Man is blind—in darkness about the truth of where he and his world originated.
- ⇒ He does not know why he is on earth—not really. He arises in the morning, goes about his daily affairs, and retires at night. Arises the next morning, goes about his daily affairs, and retires at night. Arises the next morning, and on and on. Where he is heading and why he is here—the inner core of life—is all a mystery. The real purpose, meaning, and significance of life are not understood—not really. He lives in darkness as to why he and everyone else are really on earth.
- ⇒ He does not know where he is going—not after death. Is there really a God or not, a heaven or not? How can he know and be absolutely sure? He is in darkness about the future, that inevitable day of death and eternity that rushes ever so rapidly toward every one of us.

This is what is meant about man being in darkness, about his being the very embodiment of darkness. He is wrapped up in darkness: past, present, and future. Apart from God, no man knows the truth: no man knows where he has come from, why he is here, or where he is going. His whole life is shadowed and covered, permeated and filled with darkness. He is not walking as light; he is walking as darkness.

**“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Mt.6:23).**

**“And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (Jn.1:5).**

**“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn.3:19).**

**“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Ro.13:12).**

**“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Th.5:4).**

2. However, the truth is glorious: the believer was darkness, *but now* he is light *in the Lord*. Jesus Christ said: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn.8:12). It is Christ who brings light to life. He shows us the truth of life, of God, of creation, of death, and of destiny. He shows us...

- the beginning and origin of all things.
- the purpose, meaning, and significance of all things.
- the truth of death and eternity.

But note: Jesus Christ has not only shown us light; He has made us light. He has changed our nature from darkness to light. The light of life has been immersed into our very nature. We are now the very embodiment of light itself; we shall live eternally. We are the light of the eternal God in the midst of a world of darkness. Therefore, we are to walk as children of light (see outlines and notes, *Light*—Mt.5:14; DEEPER STUDY # 3—Jn.1:5; note—1:9; DEEPER STUDY # 1—8:12; DEEPER STUDY # 5—12:35-36 for more discussion).

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid” (Mt.5:14).

“And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (Jn.1:5).

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph.5:8).

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Ph.2:15).

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col.1:13).

“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (1 Th.5:5).

**2** (5:9) **Holy Spirit, Fruit:** light bears all good things—the fruit of the Spirit. (See note, *Holy Spirit, Fruit*—Gal.5:22-23 for more discussion.) A life that illuminates light will give off three things in particular.

1. *Goodness* (see note, *Goodness*—Gal.5:22-23 for discussion).
2. *Righteousness:* (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Righteousness*—Eph.5:9 for discussion).
3. *Truth:* (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Truth*—Eph.5:9 for discussion).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(5:9) **Righteousness** (dikaiousune): means two simple but profound things. It means both *to be right and to do right*. (See DEEPER STUDY # 5, *Righteousness*—Mt.5:6 for more discussion.)

1. There are those who stress *being righteous and neglect doing righteousness*. This leads to two serious errors.
  - a. False security. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he has *believed in Jesus Christ*. But he neglects doing good and living as he should. He neglects obeying God and serving man.
  - b. Loose living. It allows one to go out and do pretty much as he desires. He feels secure and comfortable in his *faith in Christ*. He knows that what he does may affect his fellowship with God and other believers, but he thinks his behavior will not affect his salvation. He thinks that no matter what he does he is still acceptable to God.

The problem with this stress is that it is a false righteousness. Righteousness in the Bible means *being righteous*, but it also means *doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing about being righteous without living righteously.

2. There are those who stress *doing righteousness and neglect being righteous*. This also leads to two serious errors.
  - a. Self-righteousness and legalism. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he does good. He works and behaves morally and keeps certain rules and regulations. He does the things a Christian should do by obeying the main laws of God. But he neglects the basic law: the law of love and acceptance—that God does not love him and accept him because he does good, but because he loves and trusts the righteousness of Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 5—Mt.5:6).
  - b. Being judgmental and fault-finding. A person who stresses that he is righteous (acceptable to God) because he keeps certain laws often judges and finds fault with others. He feels that rules and regulations can be kept, *he* keeps them. Therefore, anyone who fails to keep them is judged, criticized, and censored.

The problem with this stress is that it, too, is a false righteousness. Again, righteousness in the Bible is *being righteous as well as doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing of being acceptable to God without *being made righteous in Christ Jesus* (see DEEPER STUDY # 5—Mt.5:6; note—Ro.5:1 for more discussion. Cp. 2 Cor.5:21.)

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:20).

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor.15:34).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph.6:14).

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Ph.1:11).

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Tim.6:11).

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

(5:9) **Truth** (aletheia): moral truth, saving truth, working truth, living truth. It is not simply something to be *known*; it is something to be *done* (Jn.8:31). It is the knowledge and the experience of true reality as opposed to false reality. It is truth in "the inward parts" (cp. Ps.51:6; Eph.5:9). It is diametrically opposed to sham and hypocrisy. It permits no compromise with evil. It even abstains from the appearance of evil (1 Th.5:22). It is a regard for truth in every respect: believing it, reverencing it, speaking it, acting it, hoping in it, and rejoicing in it. Such truthful behavior frees one from all the bondages and impediments of life. (See notes—Jn.1:9; DEEPER STUDY # 2—14:6.)

**"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (Jn.7:16-17).**

**"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Ph.3:10).**

**"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowlege of God" (Col.1:10).**

**"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hos.6:3).**

God's Word is said to be the truth (Jn.17:17), and Jesus Christ Himself claimed to be the Truth (Jn.14:6). To distinguish between the two, God's Word is sometimes said to be the Written Truth or Word, and Jesus Christ is sometimes said to be the Living Truth or Word.

1. The truth sets man free from the shadow of doubt and despair. Man no longer has to grasp and grope about to know the truth, whether it be the truth of God or of his own world. Jesus Christ has revealed the truth: the nature, the meaning, and the destiny of all things.

**"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jn.1:9, 14).**

**"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor.3:17).**

2. The truth sets men free from the bondages of sin. Man no longer has to grasp after the power to overcome; nor does he have to struggle against the weight of guilt. The search for deliverance and for the power to conquer, to overcome, to attain, and to live is now over. It is all found in Jesus Christ. (Cp. Ro.6:1f. See note—Ro.8:28-39.)

**"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (Jn.1:12).**

**"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn.14:6).**

**"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Ro.7:23-25).**

**"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace....For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Ro.8:6, 15).**

3. The truth sets man free from the bondage of death. Man no longer has to be subjected to the fear of death. By His death and resurrection Jesus Christ has now conquered death. And in His death and resurrection man now has the most glorious of hopes: he can now live eternally (Heb.2:14-15).

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (Jn.5:24-29).**

**"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Ro.8:2).**

**"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb.2:14-15).**

4. The truth sets man free from the bondage of judgment and hell. The darkness of an unknown future and the apprehension of an impending judgment constantly faces man. At best, man can only hope for annihilation, and he shudders at the thought. At worst, he can expect torture by the gods that be, and he trembles at the possibility. But Jesus Christ has revealed the truth. He Himself has borne the judgment and the punishment of judgment for man.

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).**

**“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly....But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:6, 8-9).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness” (1 Pt.2:24).**

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

5. The truth sets man free to be saved to the uttermost. Existence, love, joy, peace, satisfaction, pleasure, hope—nothing has to be incomplete any longer. No good thing ever again has to be denied man. Jesus Christ, the Truth, is able to save man to the uttermost—completely, perfectly, finally, and for eternity. All a person has to do is to come to Christ for salvation, for He lives forever to intercede for every man.

**“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb.7:25).**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

**“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col.2:9-10).**

**3** (5:10) **Light—Believer, Walk:** light proves things; it shows what is acceptable. What does this mean? As the believer walks in the light...

- he proves what is acceptable and not acceptable to the Lord.
- he discriminates between what is acceptable and not acceptable to the Lord.
- he shows to the world what is acceptable and not acceptable to the Lord.
- he shows what path to take and what path not to take.
- he shows what a person should do and not do.

**Thought 1.** Everything the believer does is to be “unto the Lord”; that is, he is to set his attention and energy upon pleasing the Lord. He is to strive to will and to do the pleasure of the Lord. He is to struggle to bring his will under control and to control his behavior in order to fulfill the joy of the Lord. Why? Because the Lord loved and gave Himself for the believer; therefore, the believer is to love and give himself to please the Lord.

**“Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Eph.5:10).**

**“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more” (1 Th.4:1).**

**“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Th.5:21).**

**“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Heb.11:5).**

**“But to do good and to communicate [share] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).**

**“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 Jn.4:1).**

**4** (5:11-12) **Darkness—Light—Believer, Walk:** light exposes the works of darkness.

1. The charge is clear and forceful: believers are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Note that the works of darkness are...

- dark: leaving a man stumbling and groping about in the world, lost and unable to see where he is going.
- unfruitful: bearing no lasting fruit beyond this world when death overtakes him.

The unfruitful works of darkness are those works covered in the previous passage (Eph.5:3-6) and in the works of the flesh (Gal.5:19-21). They lead to death; therefore, the believer is to have no fellowship—no fellowship whatsoever—with the unfruitful works of darkness.

**“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this un-toward generation” (Acts 2:40).**

**“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators” (1 Cor.5:9).**

**“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor.6:14).**

**“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).**

**“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph.5:11).**

**“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 Th.3:6).**

**“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (1 Jn.1:5-6).**

**“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).**

2. The believer’s task on earth is striking: he is not to fellowship with the works of darkness; he is to live in so much light that his life reprove (elegcho, that is, exposes, rebukes, and convicts) people of their sins or dark works.

**Thought 1.** Sin is never to be taken lightly. The very fact that we are charged to reprove it is clear evidence. Our task is to reflect so much light that all the works of darkness around us are exposed and expelled. Remember when light appears, the darkness is always extinguished. But if the light leaves or is turned off, the darkness reappears.

**“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Lk.17:3).**

**“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph.5:11).**

**“The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity” (1 Tim.5:2).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

3. The reason why we should not have fellowship with the dark works of the world is this: it is a *shame* to even speak of those things which are done by them in secret. What a rebuke! We are not even to talk about dark works! We are not to be sharing conversation about the dark works of this world (see note—Eph.5:8; Jn.3:18-20; DEEPER STUDY # 2—8:12).

**“But let your communication be, Yea, yea Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Mt.5:37).**

**“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col.4:6).**

**“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.1:13).**

**“Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you” (Tit.2:8).**

**5** (5:13) **Conversion—Light—Believer, Walk:** light reveals and converts everything it touches. Note two things.

1. When light touches something it becomes light. It is lit up and to some degree the object gives off light itself. It is converted and changed. When the light of Jesus Christ touches the life of a person in darkness, that life is changed: it becomes light. The darkness is done away with and eliminated. Note another fact as well: that person begins to touch the lives of those in darkness who surround him.

2. So long as evil is done in secret it thrives, but when it is dragged out of the dark corners and closed rooms into the light, it dies. When a person confronts Christ, his dark works are exposed in all their hurt, damage, filth, and corruption. We must always remember, this is the very reason many refuse to confront Christ. They prefer their dark works (Jn.3:20f). But when a man confronts Christ and abandons his dark sins, he becomes “light in the Lord” (Eph.5:8). He is transformed by the person of Christ. William Barclay points out that this is seen in the *healing* that is found in the rays of the sun. The light of Jesus Christ is just like the rays of the sun. The light of Jesus Christ not only illuminates and reveals, it also cleanses. The light of Jesus Christ is not only a revealing and condemning thing, it is a healing thing as well. (*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.195f.)

**6** (5:14) **Sleep, Spiritual—Death, Spiritual—Conversion:** light awakens the sleeping, those who are spiritually dead. Most people in the world are as sleeping men when it comes to walking in the light of God. They are living in the darkness of spiritual sleep and spiritual death—ever rushing on to that inevitable day of eternal darkness and death. Note a most unfortunate fact: this passage is being written to believers. Too many professing believers are passing through life just like unbelievers: asleep—living in the darkness of spiritual sleep and spiritual death—fellowshipping with and too often participating in the works of darkness. They are unaware and ignorant of the great heritage and promises God has given us in Christ Jesus. (See note, *Death—Eph.2:1* for more discussion.)

**“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Ro.13:11).**

**“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor.15:34).**

**“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph.5:14).**

**Thought 1.** Note that the only Source to awakening out of spiritual sleep and death is Jesus Christ and Him alone.

**“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (Jn.1:4).**

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn.8:12).

“Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth” (Jn.12:35).

“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (Jn.12:46).

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor.4:6).

“Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth” (1 Jn.2:8).

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|  | <b>G. The Believer is to Walk Carefully &amp; Strictly, 5:15-21</b>            | wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;<br>19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;<br>20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;<br>21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. | <b>5 By being filled with the Spirit</b><br>a. A singing spirit<br><br>b. A thankful & praying spirit<br><br>c. A submissive & respectful spirit |
| <b>1 By looking around &amp; watching every step</b> | 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,             |   |  |
| <b>2 By redeeming the time</b>                       | 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.                              |   |  |
| <b>3 By understanding the Lord's will</b>            | 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. |   |  |
| <b>4 By rejecting drunkenness</b>                    | 18 And be not drunk with   |   |  |

**DIVISION IV**

**THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9**

**G. The Believer is to Walk Carefully and Strictly, 5:15-21**

(5:15-21) **Introduction:** how the believer walks day by day throughout life is crucial to the cause of Christ and to the welfare of society. He either contributes to the building up of society or to the tearing down of society. He either carries the message of life to the world or he carries the message of silence and death. For this reason, it is important that the believer walk carefully and strictly throughout life.

1. By looking around and watching every step (v.15).
2. By redeeming the time (v.16).
3. By understanding the Lord's will (v.17).
4. By rejecting drunkenness (v.18).
5. By being filled with the Spirit (v.18-21).

**1** (5:15) **Believer, Walk:** walk carefully and strictly by looking around and watching every step. Life is a walk, a path that we trod every day. When we arise in the morning, we begin to walk about. God expects us to walk circumspectly (akribos), that is, carefully and accurately—exactly as we should. Note: there are two kinds of persons who walk throughout life.

1. There is the fool or unwise person: this simply means the person who is unthinking, thoughtless, careless, uncaring, and worldly minded.

The unwise is the person who gives little thought about where he should go and where he should not go. He just arises in the morning and goes to work or about his daily routine with little thought about God and about what happens beyond this life. If he makes a mistake here and there, it does not matter that much, not to him. Making mistakes is just the way of all human life.

He thinks that he will be acceptable to whatever God there is, if he just lives a life..

- that is fairly decent and honorable and useful
- that pays its dues to God here and there

The unwise person is not concerned about watching every step and being alert to every temptation and pitfall in life. He could care less about struggling and being exact and strict in life. Living a careful, accurate, strict, disciplined, controlled life is not that important to him.

2. There is the wise person: the thinking, thoughtful, careful, caring, spiritually minded person. This is the person on mission. He knows God personally and he knows that he is on earth to live a righteous and godly life and to bear testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, when he arises in the morning and goes to work or about his daily affairs, he walks in the presence and praise of God. His thoughts are upon God all day long. Mistakes matter to him. It all matters—the daily reports and talk about man's...

- |               |             |                     |                  |
|---------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------|
| • sin         | • war       | • shame             | • selfishness    |
| • cursing     | • hunger    | • evil              | • power struggle |
| • murder      | • divorce   | • off-colored jokes | • neglect        |
| • immorality  | • suffering | • obesity           | • hate           |
| • drunkenness | • drugs     |                     |                  |

The wise man is not only concerned about every step of life, but he struggles to watch every step—to make sure that he walks throughout life exact, strict, disciplined, and controlled. He knows that the only answer to the evil and problems of life is Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation [calling] wherewith ye are called” (Eph.4:1).

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (Eph.5:15).

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).

**2** (5:16) **Time—Opportunity:** walk carefully and strictly by redeeming the time. The idea is not to *buy* time. Time is the gift of God; a man has time. What he is to do is to use his time to buy things of value. He is to redeem time, to turn his time in, for things of value. This means two things.

1. A person is to use his time wisely; he is not to waste time. Time is a gift of God. A man does not have to redeem or *buy* time; he already has time. When he is born into the world, he is born into time. Time exists—it is here with or without us. We do not have to do a single thing to redeem it. What we have to do is to use time—use it wisely—use it *to do* the best that we can.

**Thought 1.** The choice is ours. We can sit and twiddle away hours and engage in activity and conversation that is of little, if any, value or worth; or we can use time wisely, keeping our thoughts and hands busy...

- in our profession and work, contributing to the good of society.
- in our worship, and service for Christ—all day long—joining with others of God's church in witnessing and ministering to the lost and needy of our communities and cities.
- in meeting the needs of a world reeling under the weight of desperate masses gripped in suffering, sin, and death.

2. A person is to use his time by taking advantage of the opportunities that arise throughout the day. This, too, is what redeeming the time means. The believer is to redeem the opportunities...

- to live righteously and godly.
- to witness and share Christ.
- to be diligent on the job.
- to set an example of commitment and discipline with work, at home, and at play.
- to be faithful to God and family.
- to speak up for Christ and righteousness.
- to pray instead of allowing time to be wasted. (See outline and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Prayer*—Mt.6:9-13; note—Eph.3:14-21 for what we should pray for every day. If a believer commits himself to pray as Christ and Paul prayed, he will find that he has no time to waste.)

Note why we are to redeem the time: because the days are evil. This refers to all the evil that confronts the believer as he walks day by day—so much evil that he must stay alert to keep from falling and failing. He must be alert to live righteously and to bear testimony to Christ. The evil can range from mild temptations over to persecutions, from small money problems to a world economic collapse, from a minor family squabble to war. The evil of the world is ever before us—small and great. The task of the believer is to redeem the time—make the most use of what time he has. The opportunity will soon pass because the days are evil.

- ⇒ The opportunity to witness will pass.
- ⇒ The opportunity to show diligence will pass.
- ⇒ The opportunity to speak up will pass.
- ⇒ The opportunity to love will pass.
- ⇒ The opportunity to minister will pass.
- ⇒ The opportunity to work hard will pass.
- ⇒ The opportunity to pray will pass.
- ⇒ The opportunity to give will pass.

**Thought 1.** How many of us waste time? So much time is wasted by so many...

- by not really being efficient
- by watching television
- by lack of diligence at work
- by unprofitable activity on weekends
- by what we read
- in restaurants
- in the evenings at home

Each of us needs to take a moment and think through where we waste so much time and correct it. More than ever we need to give ourselves to make a significant contribution to our work and society, to our church and community, to living righteously and godly, to witnessing and helping a world of people who are discouraged and lonely, hungry and cold, hurting and suffering, needy and helpless—all lost in sin—all without the knowledge of Christ and of eternal life. The call of the hour is to redeem the time.

**“But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away”**  
(1 Cor.7:29-31).

**“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”**  
(2 Cor.10:5).

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things”** (Ph.4:8).

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph.5:15-16).

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Col.4:5).

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Ps.90:12).

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Eccl.12:1).

**3** (5:17) **Jesus Christ, Will of—Believer, Walk:** walk carefully and strictly by understanding the Lord’s will. Note how both the unwise man and the wise man are defined in this verse.

⇒ The unwise man is a man who does not understand the will of the Lord.

⇒ The wise man is a man who does understand the will of the Lord.

The word “understand” (suniemi) means to grasp, perceive, see with the mind and comprehend. As stated in the previous verse, the days are evil—full of all sorts of evil. The believer must understand what God’s will is in order to conquer the evil. If he does not, then he is as a fool and acting unwisely. How can a person know what the will of the Lord is?

⇒ By knowing the Word of God—by knowing it so well that he can apply it to the situations that confront him every day.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn.8:31-32).

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn.17:17).

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Ps.40:8).

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Ps.119:9).

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Ps.119:11).

⇒ By being sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn.14:26).

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn.16:7-8).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you” (Jn.16:13-14).

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Ro.8:4-5).

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Ro.8:13-14).

“Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness” (Ps.143:10).

**4** (5:18) **Drunkennes:** walk carefully and strictly by not becoming drunk with wine. Drunkennes means to be intoxicated with drink or drugs (cp. Lk.21:34; Ro.13:13; Gal.5:21; cp. Pr.20:1; Is.28:7; Ezk.23:32; 39:19). The word “excess” is excessive behavior. The Greek means...

- the dissipation and wasting away of the body.
- uncontrolled behavior
- rioting, debauchery, wild and outrageous behavior and conduct.

Drunkennes is a work of the flesh and it often leads to other sins of the flesh: partying, loose behavior, immodest clothing, exposure of the body, sexual thoughts, immorality, wicked or evil and unjust behavior or violence and physical abuse, notions of grandeur, strength or power. The Bible says several things about drunkennes.

1. Drunkennes excludes a person from the kingdom of God.

“Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor.6:10).

**“Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:21).**

2. Drunkenness leads to other forms of misbehavior and sin.

**“And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living” (Lk.15:13).**

**“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph.5:18).**

3. Drunkenness makes it impossible to grasp the fleeting opportunities of time.

**“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine” (Eph.5:16-18).**

**5** (5:18-21) **Holy Spirit, Infilling:** walk carefully and strictly by being filled with the Spirit. This command is in the present tense which means that the believer is to be constantly filled with the Spirit; he is to keep on being filled. The Holy Spirit is to infill the believer continuously (Eph.5:18; cp. Acts 2:4; 4:29-31). The Spirit’s filling is the personal manifestation of Christ to the believer who walks obediently day by day (Jn.14:21). It is a consciousness of His presence, of His leadership—moment by moment. This consciousness is the believer’s privilege. But the Spirit’s filling is not an automatic experience. The responsibility of being filled with the Spirit rests upon the shoulders of the believer. He is filled only as he walks obediently to Christ. (See notes—Acts 2:1-4 for more discussion.)

In understanding the infilling of the Spirit, it is helpful to reweiv what the Lord had to say about the manifestations of the Spirit in the Gospel of John.

**“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” (Jn.14:21-22).**

Note that the Holy Spirit is the very *special manifestation* of Christ within the believer. Apparently, this refers to very special manifestations of the Lord to the heart of the believer, those very special times when there is a deep consciousness of love between the Lord and His dear follower (see note—Jn.14:21). This is bound to be what Christ means, for He has already spoken about His personal presence within the believer (Jn.14:18-20). When believers go through terrible trials and severe crises, God knows and He loves and cares; so He moves to meet the need of His dear children. He moves within the believer’s heart, manifesting His presence and giving a deep sense of His love and care, helping and giving confidence, forgiveness, and assurance—giving whatever the believer needs. The depth of the experience and the intensity of the *special manifestation* depends upon the need of the believer. God knows and loves His dear child perfectly, so He gives whatever experience and depth of emotion are needed to meet the need of His child. We must always remember that God loves each one of us so much He will do whatever is needed...

- to lift us up.
- to strengthen us.
- to conform us to the image of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note that the *special manifestations* of the Lord’s presence are given only to the believer who does two things.

- ⇒ The believer who receives the commandments of Christ. To have the commandments of Christ means that the believer has searched the commandments of Jesus Christ. He has them in his heart, knows them and has made them his own (Jn.14:21-22 above; cp. Ps.119:11).
- ⇒ The believer who keeps the commandments of Jesus.

The believer who does these two things shows that he *truly* loves the Lord Jesus. And it is he who loves and obeys the Lord Jesus who receives the very special manifestations and infillings of the Holy Spirit.

Note an important fact: the special manifestation is questioned. Judas asked the question for the first time, but the special manifestation of Christ’s presence has been questioned and doubted by thousands ever since. Judas was thinking like all men think—in terms of a physical manifestation, a visible appearance.

The word “manifestation” (phaneroo; emphanizo) means unveiling or revelation. It suggests that a new thing has come to light; that something never known by man before is made known. Some mystery has now been revealed. It is something that cannot be discovered by man’s reason or wisdom. It is a mystery that is hidden from man and beyond his grasp. In Jn.14:21-22 it means that Jesus’ presence is revealed (brought to light), illuminated, manifested, quickened in the life of the believer. It means that He *manifests* Himself to His disciples in a very special way. He discloses His person, His nature, His goodness. He illuminates Himself *within* their hearts and lives. He gives a very special consciousness within their souls. (See notes—Jn.14:21-22; Acts 2:1-4.)

**“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive)” (Jn.7:38-39).**

**“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).**

**“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).**

**“And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 13:52).**

**“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph.5:18).**

Now, note the three traits of a Spirit-filled person.

1. A Spirit-filled person has a singing spirit. This is in contrast to the drunken person. The mention of singing is the picture of joy and happiness. The worldly person often seeks joy and happiness in drink and partying. This is not to be the case with the true believer. He is to seek his joy and happiness by being filled with the Spirit of God and by singing to himself. Note a crucial point: singing to oneself helps a person to experience the fullness of the Spirit. What do we sing? God tells us:

⇒ *Psalms*: the psalms of the Old Testament. We need to learn them—yes, by memory—so that we can sing them. Think how victoriously we could walk through life if we knew the Psalms.

⇒ *Hymns*: the great hymns of the church. Again we must learn them.

⇒ *Spiritual Songs*: F.F. Bruce suggests that these may refer to songs being made up by the person as he walks along singing praise to the Lord throughout the day (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p.111). We have all experienced walking along making melody in our hearts to the Lord; therefore, his suggestion makes sense.

⇒ It is certainly a good practice.

**“What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor.14:15).**

**“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph.5:19).**

**“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms” (Jas.5:13).**

**“Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob” (Ps.81:1).**

**“O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation” (Ps.95:1).**

2. A Spirit-filled person has a thankful spirit. Note the words “always” and “for all things.” Our lives are in God’s hands. He guides and directs us through all things. Therefore, we can thank Him for all things—no matter what the things are. He controls all. Giving thanks as we walk along throughout the day—always giving thanks—helps us to experience the fullness of God’s Spirit.

**“Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Ph.4:6).**

**“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col.3:17).**

**“In every thing give thanks” (1 Th.5:18).**

**“Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people” (1 Chron.16:8).**

3. A Spirit-filled person has a submissive and respectful spirit. A Spirit-filled person does not have a spirit of criticism, dissension, envy, divisiveness, or selfishness. He has a spirit of submissiveness. The same is true of churches: a Spirit-filled church has a body of people who are submissive—going out of their way to minister and serve each other. There is no dissension or divisiveness, no envy or selfishness among its people. In the fear of God, they submit to each other before they break the fullness of God’s Spirit.

**“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:4).**

**“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).**

**“That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth” (1 Cor.16:16).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb.13:17).**

**“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pt.5:5).**

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| <p><b>1 The wife is to walk in a spirit of submission</b><br/> a. To submit is God's will<br/> b. To submit is God's order for the family<br/> 1) The husband is the head<br/> 2) The husband is the savior<br/> c. It means to submit is a spiritual mystery; comparable to Christ &amp; the church, v.23-24</p> <p><b>2 The husband is to love his wife</b><br/> a. To submit to give yourself for her—to sacrifice yourself totally<br/> 1) Involves being set apart &amp; cleansed<br/> 2) Involves having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing</p> | <p><b>H. The Believing Wife &amp; Husband are to Walk in a Spirit of Submission &amp; Love, 5:22-33</b></p> <p>22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.<br/> 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body.<br/> 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.<br/> 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;<br/> 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,<br/> 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle,</p> | <p>or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.<br/> 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.<br/> 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:<br/> 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.<br/> 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.<br/> 32 This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church.<br/> 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.</p> | <p>3) Involves being holy &amp; without blemish</p> <p>b. It means to love her as you love your own body<br/> 1) To nourish &amp; cherish her<br/> 2) To become one body, one flesh, one set of bones</p> <p>c. It means to leave your parents<br/> 1) To cleave<sup>ps1</sup> to your wife<br/> 2) To become one flesh</p> <p>d. It means a mystery—a spiritual love like the love of Christ for the church<sup>ps2</sup></p> <p>e. The conclusion<br/> 1) Husband: Love your wife<br/> 2) Wife: Respect your husband</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9**

**H. The Believing Wife & Husband are to Walk in a Spirit of Submission & Love, 5:22-24**

(5:22-33) **Introduction:** when dealing with wives and husbands, we must always remember that God's instructions are not grievous. In fact, they are easy and light. God instructs and guides us down the easiest and lightest path possible. As Christ said:

**“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mt.11:28-30).**

If we walk down the path God has laid for us—if we do just what He says—we experience the most loving and peaceful, the richest and fullest life imaginable. This is *doubly true* for husband and wife, for they have the companionship of each other as well of the Lord.

1. The wife is to walk in a spirit of submission (v.22-24).
2. The husband is to love his wife (v.25-33).

**1** (5:22-24) **Wife—Family:** the wife is to walk in a spirit of submission. There are three reasons why the wife is to be submissive to her husband.

1. To submit is God's will. In fact, it is a commandment of God. There is to be no equivocation, no argument, not even a question about it: “Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands.”

God is God, and as God, He has the right to demand anything of us. But note the words “as to the Lord.” When we do anything, we are to do it *as to the Lord*. Why? Because we love Him. The Lord has loved and given Himself for us, given Himself that He might save us. He loved us; therefore, we love Him. This is always the first reason we obey Him. We love Him; therefore, when He says to do something, we do it *as to Him*—to please Him.

Now, let us ask ourselves: What kind of spirit is the Christian wife to have as she obeys God?

- ⇒ A spirit of slavery or love?
- ⇒ A spirit of grudging or love?
- ⇒ A spirit of resentment or love?
- ⇒ A spirit of reaction or love?

The answer is obvious: she acts out of love. She loves the Lord; therefore, to please Him she submits herself to her husband. The point is this: God instructs wives to walk in a spirit of submission with their husbands. Therefore, Christian wives do not obey the Lord out of resentment and reaction because of the commandment. They obey the Lord out of love because they love both the Lord and their husbands. Therefore, they focus and set their lives upon pleasing the Lord and their husbands. If the Lord says do it, then they do it because they love the Lord and want to please Him above all else.

2. To submit is God's order for the family (v.2). There is to be a *partnership* and order within the family. This is basic for the family and society to exist. In fact, no organization, no matter what it is, can survive and exist without a spirit of partnership and order. Note three important facts.

- a. The husband is the head of the wife. The word “head” in Scripture refers to authority *not being*. Neither man nor woman is superior to the other in being. Men and women are equal in God’s eyes.  
 ⇒ There is an essential partnership between men and women. Neither is independent of the other. Both are from the other, and the relationship that exists between them has come from God.

**“Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God” (1 Cor.11:11-12).**

- ⇒ There is neither male nor female in God’s eyes. He sees both men and women as one, each as significant as the other.

**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28).**

When God talks about man being the head of the woman, He is not talking about ability or worth, competence or value, brilliance or advantage. God is talking about function and order within an organization. Every organization has to have a head for it to be operated in an efficient and orderly manner. There are no greater organizations than God’s universe, His church, and His Christian family. Within God’s order of things there is a partnership, but every partnership must have a head, and God has ordained that man is the head of the partnership.

- b. The great pattern for the wife to follow is Christ and the church. Christ is the head of the church. This simply means that Christ has authority over the church. So long as the church lives by this rule, the church experiences love and joy and peace—orderliness—and it is able to carry out its function and mission on earth to the fullest. So it is with the husband; he is the head of the family, the ultimate authority in the family. The wife is to be submissive to that authority just as the church is to be submissive to Christ. So long as she and the rest of the family live by this rule, the family experiences love, joy, and peace—orderliness—and it fulfills its function and purpose on earth. This, of course, assumes that the husband is fulfilling his part in the family. As in any organization, each member must do his part for the organization to be orderly and accomplish its purpose.
- c. The husband is the savior of the body just as Christ is the Savior of the church. Christ is the great Protector and Comforter of the church. So the husband is to be the *protector and comforter* of the wife. By nature, that is, by the constitution and build of the body, the husband is stronger than the wife. Therefore, in God’s order of things, he is to be the main protector and comforter of the wife. These two functions are two of the great benefits which the wife receives from a loving husband who is faithful to the Lord.

3. To submit is a spiritual mystery (v.23). The wife’s submission is comparable to Christ and the church. Again, Christ is the pattern for the wife:  
 ⇒ as she submits to Christ, so she is to submit to her husband.  
 ⇒ as she depends upon Christ for help and protection, so she is to depend upon her husband for help and protection.  
 ⇒ as she depends upon Christ for companionship and comfort, so she is to depend upon her husband for companionship and comfort.

In summary, the submission that wives are to show to their husbands is an example of the submission that all believers are to show to one another (Eph.5:21). It does not mean that women are inferior to men. It simply means that there is to be an arrangement, an order in the household. Every *body* must have such order, and every *body* must have a head. Two heads in any body or organization would be a monstrosity and make for disorder. Therefore, in God’s order of things for the family, the husband is the head over the family. He arranges things in a spirit of *tenderness and love* and the wife is to submit herself in a sweet spirit of *understanding and reasonableness*. (Cp. Pr.31:10-31.)

**“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband” (1 Cor.7:10).**

**“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord” (Col.3:18).**

**“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve” (1 Tim.2:11-13).**

**“Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things” (1 Tim.3:11).**

**“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Tit.2:4).**

**“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [behavior, conduct] of the wives” (1 Pt.3:1).**

**“She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness” (Pr.31:27).**

**“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen.3:16).**

**2** (5:25-33) **Husband—Family:** the husband is to love his wife. Note five significant points.

1. The love which the husband is to have for his wife is the very love of God Himself (agape love). *Agape* love is a selfless and unselfish love, a giving and sacrificial love. It is the love of the mind and will as well as of the heart. It is not only a love of affection and feelings; it is a love of the *will and commitment*. It is a love that wills and commits itself to love a person. It is the love that works for the highest good of the person loved...

- that loves even if the person *does not deserve to be loved*.
- that loves even if the person is *utterly unworthy of being loved*.

**Thought 1.** Just imagine! What would happen in most marriages if the husband so loved his wife, loved her...

- with a *selfless and unselfish love*.
- with a *giving and sacrificial love*.
- with a love of the *will as well as of the heart*.
- with a love of *commitment as well as of affection*.

One thing that would happen in most marriages would be this: the wife would willingly accept his authority as the head of the family.

Note that the standard of the husband's love is the love of Christ for the church. The love of Christ for the church can be described in one simple statement: Christ *gave Himself* for the church. Christ loved the church so much that He gave Himself—*sacrificed Himself totally*—gave all He was and had for it. This is the love the husband is to have for his wife. Chrysostom, a great minister in the early church, said:

*“If it be needful that thou shouldst give thy life for her, or be cut to pieces a thousand times, or endure anything whatever, refuse it not....He brought the Church to His feet by His great care, not by threats nor fear nor any such thing; so do thou conduct thyself towards thy wife.”* (Quoted by Barclay. *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.206.)

The sacrificial love of the husband involves three things. Note that the very things said about Christ and the church are to be true of the husband and wife.

a. The husband's love involves being *set apart and cleansed*. The word *sanctify* means to be set apart. When a young man asks a young lady to be his wife, he sets himself apart for her and for her alone. His word, his act, his promise of marriage also causes her to set herself apart. When he speaks the word and makes the promise of marriage, he and she both are thereafter set apart and cleansed for each other.

A dirty bride or groom—a dirty, defiled marriage—is unthinkable. The one thing above all else that will keep the marriage sanctified and cleansed is the husband's sacrificial love. If the husband will love his wife to the point that he gives himself sacrificially, his love will not only protect him, but it will go a long way in protecting the sanctity and purity of his wife.

b. The husband's love involves having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Spots would mean the mistakes that tarnish one's life and marriage, mistakes so serious that they are very difficult to wash off one's body and out of one's mind. They would include such things as...

- mistreatment and abuse.
- loose and immoral behavior.
- withdrawal and avoidance.

Wrinkles would mean things that cause friction and rattle the nerves and that need ironed out. They would include such things as...

- temper and reaction.
- broken promises and serious neglect.
- severe selfishness and rejection.

c. The husband's love involves being holy and without blemish. The word “holy” (*hagia*) means to be separate and untouched by evil. The husband's love—if it is a real love—will stir him to be holy and unblemished and go a long way in stirring his wife to be holy and without blemish.

**Thought 1.** This point is striking—a real eye-opener. It shows just how dependent the marriage is upon the love of the husband—how much effect the husband's love has upon the marriage. Few wives could reject such love; few wives would refuse to walk hand in hand with their husbands if they truly loved them with the love that is unselfish and sacrificial.

**“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph.5:25).**

**“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pt.3:7).**

2. The love which the husband is to have for his wife is the very same love he has for his own body. This is a startling statement. Note again what it says: the husband is to love his wife just as much as he loves *his own body*.

a. This means that he is to nourish and cherish his wife as he does his own body.

⇒ The word “nourish” (*ektrephei*) means to feed, clothe, nurture, and look after until she is mature in the marriage and then to continue nourishing her as long as she lives.

⇒ The word “cherish” (*thalpei*) means to hold ever so dear within the heart; to treat with warmth, tenderness, care, affection, and appreciation.

**Thought 1.** What a difference would exist in marriage if the husband just *nourished and cherished* his wife as he does his own body. Think through the meaning of the two words for just a moment and imagine the difference that could exist.

- b. This means that he is to become one body, one flesh and one set of bones with his wife. Two people could never become any closer. This is complete absorption and assimilation of each into the other—a complete union and oneness...
- of body and spirit.
  - of mind and thoughts.
  - of objective and purpose.
  - of behavior and activity.

The husband becomes one with his wife, and the wife becomes one with her husband. The two become one flesh. (This is dealt with more fully in the following point.)

3. The love which the husband is to have for his wife is to be the love that will stir him to leave his parents and be joined to his wife (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Joined*—Eph.5:31 for discussion).

4. The love which the husband is to have for his wife is a spiritual mystery—a *spiritual love*—a love just like Christ's love for the church (see DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Spiritual Union*—Eph.5:32 for discussion).

5. The conclusion is simple and straightforward: the husband is to *love his wife as himself*, and the wife is to *revere (respect and esteem) her husband* (v.33).

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(5:31) **Joined** (proskollao): to join fast together; to glue together; to cement together; to be joined in the closest union possible; to be bound together; to be so totally united that two become one. Therefore, to join means a spiritual union. It is a union higher and stronger than the union of parent and child. It is a union that means more than living together, more than having sex and bearing offspring. Animals do this. It is a union that can be wrought by God alone (v.11). It is a spiritual union that places man above the physical plane of animals. It is a spiritual fulness, a spiritual sharing of life together: a dedication, a consecration, a completeness, a satisfaction that makes a person the exclusive possession of God and of the spouse. As said, such a cleaving or spiritual union is wrought by God alone. Both husband and wife must be willing and submissive for God to bring about such a cleaving in their lives. "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear [trust] of God" (Eph.5:21; see outlines and notes—Eph.5:22-33).

There are three unions within a true marriage, that is, a marriage that *really cleaves* and is *really joined together* by God (Mt.19:6).

1. There is the physical union: the sharing of each other's body (1 Cor.7:2-5). But note: physical sharing cannot reach its ultimate fulness unless it is experienced while conscious of God's warm and tender mercies (Eph.5:25-33).

2. There is the mental union: the sharing of each other's life and dreams and hopes, and the working together to realize those dreams and hopes. It is important to note that this union still deals only with the physical and material world.

3. There is the spiritual union: the sharing and melting and moulding of each other's spirit (see Eph.5:25-33). This can be wrought only by God. Therefore, there has to be a sharing together with God for there to be a *nourishing and nurturing* of the spirit.

Now here is the point: the greatest thing in the world is to know God personally and to be perfectly assured that we shall live now and eternally—to have life abundant with all the love, significance, meaning, and purpose humanly possible. But a man and a woman cannot experience abundant life of and by themselves. They can only nurture the mind and mesh themselves together mentally and physically. To be meshed together spiritually, the couple must share God and His saving grace together. When a couple shares God together day by day, God works supernaturally within their spirits, *melting* their beings and *moulding* them into what He calls *one flesh*. They actually become as *one person*. This is what is meant by "God hath joined together." The Greek word for "joined together" (sunzeugen) actually means to *yoke together*. It is God's yoking, joining, and binding the couple together into such a spiritual union that causes them to become one person.

A couple who is spiritually united does two very practical things.

1. The couple "submits themselves one to the other in the fear of God" (Eph.5:21). They submit, yield, surrender, sacrifice, give themselves up to the other as they live day by day in the fear (trust) of God. Day by day they deliberately set out to nourish and cherish the other, even as the Lord nourishes and cherishes the church (Eph.5:29). They work to become part of each other—so deliberately that they seek to become part of each other's body, each other's flesh, each other's bones (Eph.5:30). They seek to be joined "as one flesh," no matter the surrender and sacrifice required. The meshing together is done by God. God takes such deliberate purpose and behavior, such a melting of one's being, and moulds it into the flesh of the other—so much so the two actually become as one, not only physically and mentally, but spiritually as well.

2. The couple shares the presence of God and His saving grace together. As a result God gives them a spiritual assurance and strength which they share together throughout life. They share the knowledge and confidence...

- that God shall care for and look after them now and forever.
- that God shall carry them through the devastating trials of life that confront every human being every so often.
- that God shall bless them with all that is necessary as they walk through life together.
- that God shall give them an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ—forever and ever.

Again, the point is this: God takes such deliberate sharing of spiritual things and melts and moulds the man and woman into *one flesh* spiritually—so much so that they actually become one. A man and a woman being spiritually united by God as one person is what cleaving means. Cleaving to one another in God's Spirit is true marriage—the glorious gift of God.

**Thought 1.** No more beautiful picture of marriage could be painted, yet two serious problems exist in far too many marriages.

- 1) The problem of one or both of the spouses being unwilling to be bound together by the Spirit of God.
- 2) The problem of one or both of the spouses being unwilling to break away from dependency upon the parents.

#### DEEPER STUDY # 2

(5:32) **Spiritual Union—Marriage:** marriage is a spiritual union that can be wrought by God and by God alone (see note—Mt.19:10-11). It is much more than two people merely agreeing to live together and to be loyal to one another. It is much more than natural affection or infatuation. It is much more than a mere piece of paper, more than a legal contract, more than bearing offspring. After all, animals do the same. Marriage, when it is brought together and honestly committed to God, is a totally unique union that is unlike any other relationship in life. When consummated by God and placed into the hands of God day by day, it is a *spiritual union* lifted ever so high and full of splendor and warmth and tenderness. It is the real experience of love and warmth and tenderness—the full preciousness and richness of sharing all with one another. In reality, a true marriage is indescribable. For a true marriage is a *spiritual experience* that is beyond anything known in the physical world. It is a spiritual union mutually experienced only by the couples who truly know the love of Christ for His church.

*A true marriage is love* (v.25). It is sacrificial love (v.25); a love for another person that is just as great as one's love for oneself (v.28, 33). It is a love that cherishes (v.29).

*A true marriage is a union* (v.30). It is a union so completely and spiritually wrought that two persons become as one body and as one flesh (v.30-31).

*A true marriage is a mystery* (v.32). It is a spiritual fact that has to be revealed by God if it is to be experienced by couples (v.32). It is a spiritual mystery that can be illustrated only by the great love Christ has for His church (v.23-33).

Christ and His love are the symbolic example for the husband. The church and its love for Christ are the symbolic example for the wife. This picture says several practical things.

1. The Christian home is to be lived in the very presence and atmosphere of the Lord.
2. The Christian home is to be governed by the Lord. Its decisions are to be made in light of the Lord and His will.
3. The Christian home is not to have two partners, but three—husband, wife, and Christ.

| CHAPTER 6   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Believing children are to obey</b></p> <p>a. To obey “in the Lord”<br/>b. To obey is to honor</p> <p>1) Assures the care of God<br/>2) Assures long life</p> <p><b>2 Believing parents are not to provoke their children, but to nurture them in the Lord</b></p> | <p><b>I. Believing Children &amp; Parents are to Walk Under God’s Authority, 6:1-4</b></p> <p>Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.<br/>2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)<br/>3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.<br/>4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.</p> |

## DIVISION IV

### THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9

#### I. Believing Children & Parents are to Walk Under God's Authority, 6:1-4

(6:1-4) **Introduction:** this is an important passage, not only for the day of Paul, but for every generation. It is particularly crucial for our day and time. Our generation is a generation of *problem children and problem parents*, and one of the major causes of the tension is the failure to heed the instructions of God’s Word. Children and parents are to walk together under God’s authority.

1. Believing children are to obey (v.1-3).
2. Believing parents are not to provoke their children, but to nurture them in the Lord (v.4).

**1** (6:1-3) **Children—Obedience:** children are to obey their parents. The word “obey” (*hupakouo*) means to submit to; to comply with; to hearken; to heed; to follow the directions or guidance of some instruction. When a parent guides and directs a child, the child is to obey the parent. But what about the problems that are so repulsively evident in society: the problems of parental abuse—the problems of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and mental abuse? Is a child to obey a parent when the parent is so devilishly wrong? No! A thousand times no!

1. First, to obey means to obey *in the Lord*. Note the command again: “Children, obey your parents *in the Lord*.” The phrase “*in the Lord*” means at least two things.

- a. There is a limit to the child’s obedience. When a parent is not acting in the Lord, he is not to be obeyed. The Lord has nothing whatsoever to do with the filth of unrighteousness and abuse of precious children. If a child can break away and free himself from such parental corruption, he has every right to be freed from his parent. The Lord came to set men free from the abuse and the filth of sin, not to enslave men to it, and especially not to enslave children to it.

One of the most severe warnings ever issued in all of history was issued by the Lord Jesus to adults who abuse children:

“And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee [by abusing a child], cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee [by abusing a child], cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee [by lusting after a child], pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mk.9:42-48).

The abusing parent had better heed, for one of the things that God will not tolerate—absolutely not tolerate—is the abuse of a child. We must proclaim the Word of God: children are to obey their parents, but they are to obey only if the parents’ desire and instructions are *in the Lord*. If a parent is beating a child black and blue or sexually abusing a child, the child should go to some other adult he feels close to and ask for his help. And we as ministers of the Lord—ministers who are called to proclaim Christ and to do what we can to bring His righteousness to earth—must teach the truth from the pulpits of the world.

- b. The phrase “in the Lord” also tells why the child is to obey his parents. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord”—obeying your parents is right; it is of the Lord; it pleases the Lord; therefore, obey them. When they guide and instruct you, follow them (cp. Col.3:20).

Lehman Strauss points out that obedience is the first law of the universe—that the law of obedience regulates everything in the world: the stars, the planets, the seasons. Even man himself tries to govern the world by the law of obedience. He wants obedience in the state, at work, at play, and at home. (*Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians*, p.212.) The point is simply this: the law of obedience is the very nature of things, at the very core of the universe and of man’s life and behavior upon earth. Therefore, it is to be expected that God would command children to obey their parents. Children are to obey—obey because it pleases the Lord and it is the right thing to do.

Note the emphasis here; it is striking. Children are not told to obey parents because it pleases the parent, but because it pleases the Lord. Pleasing one’s parents is, of course, a reason for obeying them. But the *first* reason for obeying parents is that it pleases the Lord. The child is to know the Lord to such a degree that he is continually thinking about the Lord and about pleasing Him. The child is to walk so closely to the Lord that his mind is constantly upon the Lord—upon what he can do to please the Lord. When the child so knows the Lord, then obeying his parents will become an automatic response.

**“For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death” (Mk.7:10).**

**“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right” (Eph.6:1).**

**“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Col.3:20).**

**“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother” (Pr.1:8).**

**“My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of the mother” (Pr.6:20).**

**“My son keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee” (Pr.7:1).**

**“A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother” (Pr.10:1).**

**“Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right” (Pr.20:11).**

**“Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old” (Pr.23:22).**

**“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Eccl.12:1).**

2. Second, to obey parents means to honor one’s father and mother. The word “honor” (timao) means to “esteem and value as precious” (The Amplified New Testament); to show respect, reverence, kindness, courtesy, and obedience (Wuest. *Ephesians and Colossians*, Vol.1, p.136). Scripture is not speaking to any certain age child. It is speaking to all of us who are children with parents still living. We are to honor our fathers and mothers: *to esteem and value them as precious*—to respect and reverence them. Tragically, this is a rarity today. Too often a child’s response to his parent is that of...

- talking back
- cutting the parent
- ignoring
- grumbling
- disregarding the instruction
- speaking disrespectfully
- not listening
- acting like a “know it all”
- calling the parent a cute, *but disrespectful name*
- putting off the instruction

In addition to these, there is the dishonor of delinquency, crime, drugs, alcohol, and the abuse of property; and the list could go on and on. And when it comes to adult children with aged parents, there is the dishonor of neglect, the ignoring of their needs and the shuffling of them to the side and failing to adequately care for them. Too many adult children forget how much their parents have done for them—bringing them into the world and taking care of them for years. Too many children forget the rich experience and knowledge that their parents have gained through the years and that could be put to great use in meeting community and world needs. And even if the parents failed to be and to do all they should have, we as Christian children are instructed to honor them as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right” (Eph.6:1).**

**“But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite [repay, pay back] their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God....But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim.5:4, 8).**

**“Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness” (Pr.20:20).**

**“The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it” (Pr.30:17).**

**“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Ex.20:12).**

**“Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the Lord your God” (Lev.19:3).**

**“Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD” (Lev.19:32).**

**“Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother: and all the people shall say, Amen” (Dt.27:16).**

Note the two promises made to children who honor their parents.

- ⇒ Things will go well for the child. Does this mean that the child will never have problems or have to suffer? No! This is not what the Scripture means. God means that He will be with the child, strengthen and take care of him so that he can *walk through* the trials of life victoriously. The child will be strengthened and made strong *where it counts—in the inner man*. He will be enabled to conquer and be victorious over whatever confronts him as he journeys through life.
- ⇒ The child is assured that he will live a long life on earth. Frankly, there is little question but that Paul meant this and that we should take it for what it says. If a child honestly obeys and honors his parents faithfully—really obeys and honors from the depths of his heart—God will give him a long life on earth.

Is there ever an exception to this? And what about small babies and children who are taken on to heaven? Does this violate the promise? No! If a child was really obedient, then all we can say is that God knows what is best, and for some reason, God wanted the precious little life with Him now. God just could not wait for the fellowship and joy which the precious little life would bring Him.

**2** (6:4) **Parents—Children:** parents are not to provoke their children to wrath. Parents are bound to upset and irritate their children sometimes; we all upset and irritate people sometimes. Discipline, correction, and reproof are seldom enjoyable experiences. Their very nature is that of disturbance and irritation. This is not what this instruction means. The word “provoke” (*parorgizo*) means to arouse to wrath or anger, to provoke to the point of utter exasperation and resentment. Note two significant discussions.

1. Four things will provoke a child.

- a. Failing to accept the fact that things do change. Time and generations do change. This does not mean that a child should participate nor be allowed to do everything that his generation does. But it does mean that parents need to be alert to the changes between generations and allow the child to be a part of his own generation instead of trying to conform the child to the parent’s childhood generation. The parent’s childhood generation does not exist nor will it ever exist again.

What changes should and should not be allowed by a Christian parent? Three words provide a good guideline: *rebellion*, *immorality*, and *injustice*. Open defiance or resistance to authority and immorality and injustice are contrary to God’s Word. Any change that involves rebellion, immorality or injustice needs to be dealt with and controlled by the parent. We are probably safe to say that any change not involving one of these areas should be allowed. Whether true or not, these three areas provide a good practical guideline.

The point is this: a parent must not resist normal and natural change that takes place between generations. If he resists and forbids his child to grow up in his own generation, the parent is asking for trouble. Most likely the child will be provoked to wrath—to react.

- b. Overcontrolling a child will also provoke a child to wrath. Overcontrol ranges all the way from stern restriction and discipline to child abuse (dealt with above in footnote two, point one). Disciplining and restricting a child *too much* will either stifle the growth of a child or stir him to react and rebel, causing the child to flee from the parent. What is too much discipline? How much should a child be restricted? Should he be allowed to do everything he wants? No! There is a limit, and the limit must be placed upon the child and discipline must be exercised when the limit is crossed over. What Christian parents need to remember is this:

⇒ *Some parents allow their children* to participate in every function and activity offered to the child. They are usually the ones without *proper parental guidance*.

The point is this: there must be a balance between family life and the child’s community life. The child should be allowed to do his own thing sometime, and should be required to share with the family at other times. As he grows older, he should, of course, be allowed to break away from the family more and more in order to prepare him for the day when he will step out into the world on his own. A child needs free time away from the parent and family as well as some family time in order to grow into a healthy person.

**“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph.6:4).**

**“Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Col.3:21).**

- c. Undercontrolling a child can provoke a child. It should be noted that this is the most prevalent problem in an industrialized society. There is a tendency for those with plenty or with wealth to pamper, indulge, and give a child everything imaginable—well beyond what a child needs and what is really best for him. Parents pamper and indulge children for five reasons.

⇒ A parent indulges and pampers—gives in to the child—in order to escape responsibility for the child: to keep a child from interrupting the parents’ time or schedule or desires; to get a child out from under the parents’ feet. The parent, of course, needs some free time; but too many parents live selfishly, wanting nothing interfering with their own desires and needs. Too many parents push their children out and away and allow their children to run around too much. Too few sacrifice their own time and desires to look after their children as much as they should.

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- ⇒ A parent indulges and pampers—gives in to a child—in order to gain social standing or to relive his own childhood. The parent did not have and was not allowed to do what he wanted as a child; therefore, he sees to it that his child has everything and does everything that everyone else does. He is determined that his child will have everything no matter what it costs.
- ⇒ A parent indulges and pampers—gives in to a child—because he has a false understanding or philosophy of child-rearing. He gives in to ill behavior, whining, pouting, sulkiness, and temper tantrums just to secure peace and quiet.
- ⇒ A parent indulges and pampers—gives in to a child—because of misguided devotion and love: to keep from losing the loyalty, quietness, cooperativeness, and affection of the child.
- ⇒ A parent indulges and pampers—gives in to a child—because of insecurity and lack of purpose. For example, some pamper and cling to a child because they (the parents) are insecure in the world. Others cling and pamper because they lack any other purpose. The child fills the need for security and purpose. *Playing house* is lived to the limit: the parent plays house with his child, clinging and pampering to the limit.

**“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him be-times” (Pr.13:24).**

**“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (Pr.19:18).**

**“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Pr.22:15).**

**“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die” (Pr.23:13).**

**“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Pr.29:15).**

**“For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not” (1 Sam.3:13).**

- d. Living an inconsistent life before a child can provoke a child. A parent who tells a child one thing and then turns around and does the opposite thing himself is full of hypocrisy and false profession. Yet, how common! How many children are doing things because their parents do them:
- ⇒ drinking alcohol
  - ⇒ taking drugs
  - ⇒ watching sexual scenes on television or movies
  - ⇒ reading immoral stories
  - ⇒ looking at magazines exposing the human body
  - ⇒ eating too much
  - ⇒ wasting time
  - ⇒ dressing or exposing the body to attract attention
  - ⇒ attending socials or parties that are loose on decency, morality, marital faithfulness, and on and on

Seeing an inconsistent life in a parent can provoke children.

**“And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin” (1 Ki.22:52).**

**“He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly” (2 Chron.22:3).**

**“But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them” (Jer.9:14).**

**“And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist’s head in a charger” (Mt.14:8).**

2. A parent is to bring up a child in the ways of the Lord, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- ⇒ The word “nurture” (paideia) means “the whole training and education of children which [involves]...the cultivation of mind and morals...commands and admonitions...reproof and punishment...correcting mistakes and curbing the passions...the increase of virtue” (Thayers Greek - English Lexicon).
  - ⇒ The word “admonition” (nouthesia) means counsel, exhortation, correction.

Note that the parent is not to rear the child after his own ideas and notions of what is best for the child, but after the nurture and admonition *of the Lord*. The Lord’s Word is to be the guide for Christian parents in rearing their child. The benefits in bringing up a child in the Lord are innumerable. Just a few are as follows:

- a. A child who is brought to Christ grows up learning love: that he is loved by God and by all who trust God. He grows no matter how evil some may act, knowing that he is to love even those who do wrong.
- b. A child who is brought to Christ grows up learning power and triumph: that God will help His followers through all; that there is a supernatural power available to help, a power to help when mother and dad and loved ones have done all they can.

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- c. A child who is brought to Christ grows up learning hope and faith: that no matter what happens, no matter how great a trial, we can still trust God and hope in Him. He has provided a very special strength to carry us through the trials of this life (no matter how painful); that He has provided a very special place called heaven where He will carry us and our loved ones when we face death.
- d. A child who is brought to Christ grows up learning the truth of life and endurance (service): that God has given us the privilege of life and of living in a beautiful earth and universe; that the evil and bad which exists in the world is caused by evil and bad people; that despite such evil, we are to serve in appreciation for life and the beautiful earth upon which God has placed us. We are to work and work diligently, making the greatest contribution we can.
- e. A child who is brought to Christ grows up learning trust and endurance: that life is full of temptations and pitfalls which can easily rob us of joy and destroy our lives and the fulfillment of our purposes; that the way to escape the temptations and pitfalls is to follow Christ and endure in our work and purpose.
- f. A child who is brought to Christ grows up learning peace: that there is an inner peace despite the turbulent waters of this world; that peace is knowing and trusting Christ.

**“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph.6:4).**

**“Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Col.3:21).**

**“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (1 Tim.3:4).**

**“Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well” (1 Tim.3:12).**

**“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Tit.2:4).**

**“Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons” (Dt.4:9).**

**“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Dt.6:6-7).**

**“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Pr.22:6).**

**“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts” (Is.28:9).**

**“The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth” (Is.38:19).**

**“Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street” (Lam.2:19).**

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| <p><b>1 The workman: To obey</b><br/> a. With fear &amp; trembling<br/><br/> b. In singleness of heart—as to Christ<br/><br/> c. Not with eyeservice—as menpleasers<br/> d. As the servants of Christ—</p> | <p><b>J. Believing Slaves and Masters (Employers—Employees) are to Walk Under God’s Authority, 6:5-9</b><br/><br/> 5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;<br/> 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the</p> | <p>will of God from the heart;<br/> 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:<br/> 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.<br/> 9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.</p> | <p>doing the will of God<br/> e. With good will—for the employer<br/><br/> f. Result: Shall be rewarded—receive a reciprocal reward<br/><br/> <b>2 The employer</b><br/> a. Is to do the same things as the Christian workman<br/> b. Is to forbear threats<br/> c. The reason: God is his master &amp; God is going to judge everyone</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 4:1-6:9**

**J. Believing Slaves & Master (Employers-Employees) are to Walk Under God's Authority, 6:5-9**

(6:5-9) **Introduction:** this passage points out in strong terms what the world’s problem really is. It is not an economic problem; it is a spiritual problem. Hunger and economic relationships between individuals and nations can only be solved when men turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is Lord, and when men serve Him as Lord, they serve Him in all they do. This means they work for Him; and in working for Him, they work not only to provide for themselves, but also to secure enough to give to others (Eph.4:29). They work and partake of the fruits of their labor; then they give to others. Such is the will of God for every man and for the world which He made. But remember what it is that stirs men to live such sacrificial lives: Christ—commitment to Him.

There were millions and millions of slaves in the Roman Empire during the days of Paul. One source says that there were over sixty million (Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p.212). The gospel was bound to reach many of these, and the churches all over the Empire were bound to be filled with slaves. For this reason the New Testament has much to say to slaves (1 Cor.7:21-22; Col.3:22; 4:1; 1 Tim.6:1-2; Tit.2:9-10; 1 Pt.2:18-25 and the whole book of Philemon is written to a slave). However, slavery is never directly attacked by the New Testament. If it had been, there would have probably been so much bloodshed the scene would have been unimaginable! The slave owners and government would have...

- attacked the church, its preachers and believers, seeking to destroy such a doctrine.
- imprisoned and executed any who refused to be silent about such a doctrine.
- reacted and killed all of the slaves who professed Christ.

The Expositors Greek Testament has an excellent statement on how Christianity went about destroying slavery:

*“Here, as elsewhere in the NT, slavery is accepted as an existing institution, which is neither formally condemned nor formally approved. There is nothing to prompt revolutionary action, or to encourage repudiation of the position...the institution is left to be undermined and removed by the gradual operation of the great Christian principles of...*

- *the equality of men in the sight of God*
- *a common Christian brotherhood*
- *the spiritual freedom of the Christian man*
- *the Lordship of Christ to which every other lordship is subordinate”* (Salmond, SDF. *The Epistle to the Ephesians*. “The Expositor’s Greek Testament,” Vol.3, ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970, p.377.)

The instructions to slaves and masters in the New Testament are applicable to every generation of workman. As Francis Foulkes says, “...the principles of the whole section apply to employees and employers in every age, whether in the home, in business, or in the state” (*The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, “Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,” ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, p.167).

1. The workman: to obey (v.5-8).
2. The employer (v.9).

**1** (6:5-8) **Employees—Workmen—Labor—Slaves:** the workman is to obey; that is, he is to follow the instructions of the employer. Note the phrase “according to the flesh.” This means that employers are to be obeyed in matters involving the workplace. The employer has no authority in the spiritual realm. That authority belongs to Christ and to Christ alone. Six specific instructions are given to the Christian workman.

1. The Christian workman is to work with fear and trembling. As F.F. Bruce says, this does not mean working with the slavish fear of men, but with the fear of God in the heart (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p.123). Fear and trembling is

## EPHESIANS 6:5-9

to be the mark of the Christian workman, but not the fear of a superior nor the trembling that something unpleasant might happen. The Christian workman...

- is to fear and tremble before God lest he perform some irresponsible work and bring reproach upon his Lord's name.
- is to respect and be eager to serve his employer.

**“And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation” (Lk.1:50).**

**“But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).**

**“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).**

**“What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose” (Ps.25:12).**

**“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!” (Ps.31:19).**

2. The Christian workman is to work in singleness of heart, as to Christ. “Singleness of heart” means with purpose and focused attention, in sincerity and without any pretense or hypocrisy or slack. It means that the workman does not beat time; he is totally committed to his work. There is no *fakiness*, no pretending to be a good workman at all. The Christian workman is a good workman. His heart is single-minded and focused upon doing his job and doing it well. And note why: because he offers his labor *to the Lord*.

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land” (Is.1:19).**

3. The Christian workman is not to work with eyeservice as a manpleaser. He is not to work just when the boss is looking. There are those who seek to *curry the favor* of the boss. There are those who slow down when the boss is not looking and speed up when the boss is looking. They are guilty of seeking favor they do not deserve. Such standards rob labor of its dignity and bring ill repute to the name of Christ. When a man returns home from a day's work there is only one question to ask: Has he pleased his Lord?

**“For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (Jn.12:43).**

**“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe” (Pr.29:25).**

4. The Christian workman is to work as the servant of Christ doing the will of God *from his heart*. “From the heart” (*ek psyches*) means with interest and energy. It is the opposite of routineness and listlessness, of having no energy or heart for the work. The Christian workman must always remember this: even if the boss is not looking, Christ sees what kind of work he is doing. Therefore, he must work as though he is working for Christ. In fact, the very drive of his heart and life must be to work for Christ. He must work...

- to serve Christ
- to do the will of God
- to do both *from the heart*

**“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptable with reverence and godly fear” (Heb.12:28).**

**“And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee” (Ex.23:25).**

5. The Christian workman is to work *with good will*, and he must do it as to the Lord, and not to men. Again, the drive and energy of his life must be to work as the servant of Christ. It could be stated no clearer: the Christian workman serves the Lord, not other men. No matter where he works and no matter what he does—if it is not immoral or unjust labor—the Christian workman is to work and work diligently. He is to work as though his boss is the Lord Jesus Christ, and not man.

**“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:2).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pt.4:10).**

6. The result of such diligent labor is to be a *reciprocal reward*. The Lord is going to give the Christian workman *exactly* what he labored for, no more and no less. There is no respect of persons with God. Everyone is going to get exactly what he has labored for upon this earth...

- regardless of his profession.
- regardless of his wealth.
- regardless of his position.
- regardless of his poverty.

A person may have been honest or dishonest, a good or poor workman, a white collar or blue collar workman, a professional or laborer, a business man or workman, disabled or gifted—it matters not. Everyone is going to receive from God exactly what he has put into his day to day work. If he has diligently worked as though he were working for Christ, he shall be abundantly rewarded. If he has been working for men and for self, he shall go the way of all men and end up eternally lost. If he has been sometimes slack and sometimes diligent, then he is going to receive a piecemeal reward. “Whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord.”

**“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10).**

**“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt.25:23).**

**“But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (Col.3:25).**

**2** (6:9) **Employer—Business Man—Managers—Masters:** the employer or manager is given two clear commandments governing how he is to treat the workmen under him.

1. The manager is to do the very same things that are required of the workman. He is to treat the workman just like he expects the workman to treat him. (What a difference this would make in labor-manager relations if it were really practiced by both parties!)

The manager or employer must realize that he lives and works...

- to serve both the Lord and the employees with fear and trembling, that is, managing with respect and eager concern (The Amplified New Testament).
- to serve in singleness of heart, managing *as to Christ*.
- to serve not with eye-service, as menpleasers.
- to serve as the servants of Christ, managing and doing the will of Christ from the heart.
- to serve with good will, managing as to the Lord, and not to men.
- to serve knowing that he is to receive a reciprocal reward for how well he managed.

The employer or manager expects at least two things from his workmen: diligence and loyalty. The charge to the employer is the same: be diligent in your management and in your loyalty to the workmen under you. Demonstrate your loyalty with fair wages and job security.

2. The manager is to forbear threats. This does not mean a workman cannot be corrected or released if he is not diligent and loyal. God does not encourage slothfulness nor license nor indulgence. God chastens and disciplines when needed. But note: stern measures are taken only after all other corrective measures have been taken. Every person—no matter how sorry a worker—is worth saving and developing into a conscientious workman if possible. He is a fellow human being who is on earth with the rest of us and as long as he is on earth, God will continue to reach out to him. Therefore, he is worth reaching if we can. For this reason alone, every step should be taken to reach and train even the most unproductive workman.

The point is this: employers and managers must guard against unwarranted threats, for they too have a Master in heaven, and He has no favorites and shows no favoritism. As employers and managers, we hold every workman accountable to us; so the Lord holds us accountable to Him. Therefore, threats should always be issued courteously and carefully.

**“And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph.6:9).**

**“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven” (Col.4:1).**

**“Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning” (Lev.19:13).**

**“At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD” (Dt.24:15).**

**“If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me” (Job 31:13).**

**“Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work” (Jer.22:13).**

**“And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling [the hired workman] in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts” (Mal.3:5).**

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| <p><b>1 The soldier's charge</b><br/> a. Be strong in the Lord—in the power of His might<br/> b. Put on the whole armour of God</p> <p><b>2 The soldier's enemy: The devil &amp; his strategies</b></p> <p><b>3 The soldier's warfare: Not human, but spiritual</b></p> <p><b>4 The soldier's duty: To take the whole armour of God</b><br/> a. That he may withstand in the evil day<br/> b. That he may stand</p> <p><b>5 The soldier's armour</b><br/> a. The belt of truth</p> | <p><b>V. THE WARFARE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 6:10-24</b></p> <p><b>A. The Armour of the Christian Soldier, 6:10-20</b></p> <p>10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.</p> <p>11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.</p> <p>12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.</p> <p>13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.</p> <p>14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with</p> | <p>truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;<br/> 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;<br/> 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.<br/> 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:<br/> 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;<br/> 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,<br/> 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.</p> | <p>b. The breastplate of righteousness<br/> c. The sandals of the gospel</p> <p>d. The shield of faith</p> <p>e. The helmet of salvation<br/> f. The sword of the Spirit</p> <p><b>6 The supernatural provision: Prayer—always praying</b><br/> a. With all kinds of prayer<br/> b. In the Spirit<br/> c. Being sleepless or watchful<br/> d. For all saints &amp; for ministers in particular</p> |
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## DIVISION V

### THE WARFARE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 6:10-24

#### A. The Armor of the Christian Soldier, 6:10-20

(6:10-20) **Introduction--Spiritual Warfare:** Paul has been discussing the believer's walk (Eph.4:1-6:9). Now suddenly he jolts the reader and hearer; he changes course. He says there is another way to look at the believer's life in Christ. The believer's life is a battlefield. Immediately upon receiving Christ, the believer finds himself in a constant struggle. He is engaged in an unceasing fight, an unending war. He is a combatant, a soldier in conflict. His calling is not to a life of enjoyment and ease, but to a life of hard conflict. There are foes within and foes without. From the cradle to the grave there is constant struggle against the corruptible lusts of the flesh and the imposing temptations offered by the world and Satan--a struggle against an excessive corruption that inevitably leads to death (Ro.7:21; Gal.5:17; 6:8; Eph.4:22<sup>b</sup>; 6:10).

1. The soldier's charge (10-11).
2. The soldier's enemy: the devil and his strategies (v.11).
3. The soldier's warfare: not human, but spiritual (v.12).
4. The soldier's duty: to take the whole armour of God (v.13).
5. The soldier's armour (v.14-17).
6. The supernatural provision: prayer--always praying (v.18-20).

**1** (6:10-11) **Spiritual Warfare:** there is the charge to the Christian soldier. Note the word "brothers." It is Christian believers who need the charge, not the world. Christian believers must diligently heed what is about to be said. There is no other way to conquer the enemies who stand so violently opposed to the Christian believer. Unless the believer heeds the charge and message of this passage, he will cave in to temptation and sin and end up walking through life just as most men do:

- ⇒ not experiencing the abundance and joy of life.
- ⇒ not experiencing the power and deliverance, care and concern, love and fellowship of God's daily presence.
- ⇒ being uncertain and unsure of the future.
- ⇒ not having the confidence of being acceptable to God.
- ⇒ not being assured of living forever with God.

A believer must heed what God says in this passage; he must do exactly what God says in order to conquer the great enemies of life. The charge is twofold.

1. The believer must be strong *in the Lord* and in the power of His might. Note the stress upon power and strength. Three different words are used:
  - ⇒ be *strong*
  - ⇒ in the Lord's *power*
  - ⇒ in the Lord's *might*

Each of these words is used to stress the utter necessity of the believer being strong and possessing power.

- ⇒ The word “strong” (endunamoo) means power, might, strength. The believer must possess power, might, and strength as he walks through the course of this life.
- ⇒ The Lord’s “power” (kratos) means His sovereign unlimited power and dominion over all.
- ⇒ The Lord’s “might” (ischuos) means strength, force, ability. It means His ability to use His strength and force wisely, that is, in perfection.

The believer is to be strong in the sovereign unlimited power of the Lord--in the power of His might--in His ability to use His power exactly as it should be used. (See outline and notes--Eph.1:19-23 for more discussion on the power of God.)

But note the critical point: the believer’s strength is not human, fleshly strength; it is not the strength of anything within this world. The believer’s strength is found *in the Lord*--in a living, dynamic relationship with Him. The Lord is the source of the believer’s strength. There is no other source that can give man the strength to overcome this world with all its trials and temptations and death.

2. The believer must put on the armour of God. Once the believer is *strong within*, then he is ready to be clothed with the armour of God. But note: no amount of armour is worth the material it is made of unless the soldier has the heart to fight. The believer must--absolutely must--be strong in the Lord before he can be clothed with the armour of God and begin to wage war against the foes of life. Once a man has the presence and power of God within his heart, it is then that he begins to arm himself to wage war against the spiritual enemies of life. But note a most critical point: he must put on the *whole armour* of God, leaving nothing out. If he leaves a piece of the armour off, he exposes himself to the enemy and stands a good chance of being wounded, perhaps killed.

The charge is to be *strong in the Lord, in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God.*

**“For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Lk.1:37).**

**“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph.3:16).**

**“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).**

**“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col.1:11).**

**“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim.1:7).**

**“For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me” (2 Sam.22:40).**

**“Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).**

**2** (6:11) **Satan--Spiritual Warfare:** there is the enemy of the Christian soldier. The enemy is the devil and his strategies. The word “wiles” (methodei) means the deceits, craftiness, trickery, methods, and strategies which the devil uses to wage war against the believer. He will do everything he can to deceive and capture the believer.

1. There are the strategies that appeal to the lust of the eyes. Satan will see to it that something crosses the eyesight of the believer, something that is very appealing to the flesh and pride of life:

- ⇒ some delicious food
- ⇒ some attractive person
- ⇒ some person who is exposing the body
- ⇒ some possession: clothing, land, cars, houses, whatever
- ⇒ some position
- ⇒ more authority and power

Satan will present something to the eyes that is so appealing, the believer is doomed unless he is clothed in the *full armour* of God. Satan will entice the believer to eat the second helping, take the second look, buy the unneeded possession, or begin to selfishly seek more power and more position. He will use all the strategies he can to appeal to the flesh and pride of the believer.

**“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (Jn.8:44).**

**“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Ro.6:16).**

**“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Ro.6:19).**

**“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph.2:2-3).**

**“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the**

friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas.4:1-4).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).

2. Another strategy of the devil is to send a false teacher, a very impressive teacher, across the path of the believer. We must never forget that Satan is not a fiery red person with horns, a pointed tail, and a pitch fork in his hands. He is a living being in the spiritual world--a being who is transformed into a *messenger of light*. And he has ministers who walk about as ministers of righteousness, but they proclaim a righteousness other than that of Christ. Their message is that of self-righteousness, that of...

- human goodness and works.
- ego and self-image.
- personal development and growth.
- self-improvement and correction.
- mind and will.

Such messages appeal to the flesh of man, and they are helpful. This must be realized and acknowledged, but such messages are not the basic power needed by man. They cannot deliver man *from* the great trials and sufferings of life or death. They can only lead man down the path of all flesh--that of death, decay, and eternal judgment.

The point is this: one of the most prominent strategies of the devil is to deceive man with false teachers and ministers and their appealing but false messages. The believer is doomed unless he is clothed in the *full armour* of God.

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor.2:11).

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor.11:3).

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor.11:13-15).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph.6:11).

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Th.2:9).

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Rev.12:9).

**3** (6:12) **Spiritual Warfare:** third, there is the warfare of the Christian soldier. The warfare is not human or physical, but spiritual. Wuest has a descriptive picture of the believer’s great spiritual struggle:

“In the word ‘wrestle’ [pale], Paul uses a Greek athletic term. Thayer defines as follows: ‘a contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other, and which is decided when the victor is able to press and hold down his prostate antagonist, namely, hold him down with his hand upon his neck.’ When we consider that the loser in a Greek wrestling contest had his eyes gouged out with resulting blindness for the rest of his days, we can form some conception of the Ephesian Greek’s reaction to Paul’s illustration. The Christian’s wrestling against the powers of darkness is no less desperate and fateful” (*Ephesians and Colossians*, Vol.1, p.141).

The point to see is that the believer’s struggle is not against flesh and blood. His foes are not human or physical: they are spiritual--spiritual forces that possess unbelievable power. Note exactly what is said: the believer fights...

- against principalities
- against power
- against the rulers of darkness
- against spiritual wickedness

This reveals some very clear things to us.

1. The forces of evil are powerful forces. The thrust of this verse is to stress the enormous power of evil forces which stand against the believer.

2. The forces of evil are numerous. Principalities, powers, rulers--all convey the idea of a large number of evil forces who are struggling against the believer.

3. The forces of evil are apparently organized into a government or a hierarchy of evil. Again, principalities, powers and rulers of this world in high places--all point toward a ranking of spiritual forces with enormous authority, position, and rule.

4. The forces of evil are the rulers of the darkness of this world. Darkness in the Bible means the ignorance of truth and reality, of the real nature and purpose of things. For example...

- What is the source of man and his world?
- Where have man and his world come from?
- What is the purpose of man and his world? Why are man and his world existing?

- What is the end of man and his world? Is there even a place to go after this life--another world, another life?

Darkness is not knowing these things; it is being ignorant of them. Light is knowing God and His Son, Jesus Christ--that God and Christ stand as the Source and Purpose and end of man and his world. Light is knowing the truth and reality of man and his world: that God created all for Himself, and that He loves and saves all to live with Him eternally--if all will only believe and trust Him.

The forces of evil are the rulers of darkness, the rulers who blind the minds of men lest they believe the glorious gospel of eternal salvation.

5. The forces of evil are spiritual forces of wickedness. They seek to receive the loyalty and devotion that is due God. Therefore, they are after the spirit of man--that part of man that is destined to worship and serve God and exist forever. If they can capture the spirit of man, they have him eternally--his life and presence forever and ever. Therefore, they do all they can to lead *man's spirit* into wickedness. They are the *spiritual forces of wickedness*.

**Thought 1.** Some persons have always scoffed at the idea of a personal devil or demons who actually exist in a so-called spiritual world. They feel they are too educated and intelligent to believe such nonsense. They proclaim that such ideas are outdated and belong to the dark ages of man's ignorance and superstitions. But note a significant fact: man is ever so conscious of what he terms...

- *sub-conscious horrors* that affect both his mind and body.
- *unseen and uncontrollable forces* that greatly affect his behavior.
- *unregulated behavior* that he cannot control even when he knows better and wills to do differently.
- *cosmic forces* that affect and determine his behavior.
- *blind fate* that controls his life like a puppet.

F.F. Bruce words it well:

Satan and his demonic forces "*rank among the highest angel-princes in the hierarchy of the heavenly places, yet all of them owe their existence to Christ, through whom they were created [Col.1:16], and who is accordingly the head of all principality and power' [Col.2:10]. But some at least of the principalities and powers have embarked upon rebellion against God and not only seek to force men to pay them the worship that is due to Him, but launched an assault upon the crucified Christ at a time when they thought they had Him at their mercy. But He, far from suffering their assault without resistance, grappled with them and overcame them, stripping them of their armour and driving them before Him in His triumphal procession [Col.2:15]. Thus the hostile powers of evil which Christians must encounter are already vanquished powers, but it is only through faith-union with the victorious Christ that Christians can make His triumph theirs*" (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p.127f).

Think for a moment and be honest. Think of all the wickedness and evil and wrong-doing and selfishness in the world--all the...

- |              |               |              |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| • division   | • war         | • arrogance  |
| • prejudice  | • killing     | • stealing   |
| • favoritism | • arguing     | • lying      |
| • anger      | • selfishness | • cursing    |
| • hate       | • immorality  | • bitterness |
| • pride      |               |              |

The list could go on and on, ad infinitum. The evil of man consumes the news reports every day. Just think about it! Do we not know better? Do not enough of us know better--enough of us that we could change things? Yes we do. Why then do we not change the world? This passage tells us why:

**"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph.6:12).**

God--because He is God--has to tell us the truth. He cannot do otherwise. Therefore, God reveals to us a fact that is as clearly evident as any other single fact on earth: there is an evil force that has access to the spirit of man and can influence and enslave man to do evil. He is called Satan, who rules over *the darkness and spiritual wickedness of this world*. The only hope for the believer is to put on the *whole armour of God*.

**"And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Lk.4:6).**

**"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Lk.22:31).**

**"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor.4:3-4).**

**"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph.6:12).**

**"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pt.5:8).**

**Thought 2.** The great Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest identifies the forces of evil as follows:

- ⇒ The *principalities* (arche): “the first ones, preeminent ones, leaders.”
- ⇒ The *powers* (exousias): “the authorities,” the demons of Satan in the lower atmosphere who constitute his kingdom in the air.”
- ⇒ The *rulers of the darkness of this world* (kosmokrator): Satan and his demons.
- ⇒ The spiritual wickedness in high places (pneumatika tes ponerias): Satan and all his demonic forces. (*Ephesians and Colossians*, Vol.1, p.141.)

**4** (6:13) **Spiritual Warfare:** there is the duty of the Christian soldier. His duty is to take the whole armour of God.

Note how the believer’s need for the *whole armour* of God is again stressed. This shows how essential the armour is. We must put on the armour of God. It is an absolute necessity. Why? Because of the “evil day.” What is the “evil day?”

- ⇒ It refers to *today*--to the onslaught of evil that is in the world today: “the days are evil” (Eph.5:16).
- ⇒ It refers to *any day*--to the onslaught of temptations and trials that confront us at any given moment during a day.
- ⇒ It refers to the *day of unusual temptation and trial*--to a special onslaught and barrage of evil that is thrown against us.

We must withstand the day of evil. But we cannot withstand unless we have done our duty--unless we have obeyed and prepared ourselves--unless we have taken the *whole armour* of God.

**“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light” (Ro.13:12).**

**“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds” (2 Cor.10:4).**

**“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim.6:12).**

**5** (6:14-17) **Spiritual Struggle--Warfare--Armour of God:** there is the armour of the Christian soldier. Remember that Paul was in prison and under constant guard when writing the Ephesian church. He was forced to stare at the soldier’s armour day in and day out. He had an ideal picture of the armour needed by the Christian believer to combat the forces of evil.

1. *The belt of truth.* The belt was used to hold the soldier’s clothing next to his body. This kept his clothing from flapping about and allowed him freedom of movement. The belt was also used to strengthen and support the body. The sign of the Christian soldier is the belt of truth...

- not truth individually or subjectively thought out.
- not truth as a man or a group of men see it.
- not truth that is found in a man’s novel idea.
- not truth that is taught by religion.

Such truth is self-centered and restrictive. Such truth is only from finite man--a being so small, so impure, and so frail that he cannot possibly discover enough truth to embrace all men. He cannot discover enough truth to bring life to man, not eternal life. God and God alone can possess and give enough pure truth to embrace all men. God alone can share the truth of abundant and eternal life.

a. What specifically is the belt of truth? What is God’s truth that the believer is to put on?

- ⇒ First, Christ is the truth. The believer is to put on Christ (see DEEPER STUDY # 3--Eph.4:24).

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

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

- ⇒ Second, the Word of God is truth. The believer is to put on the Word of God. He is sanctified by the Word of God.

**“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn.17:17).**

**“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph.5:26).**

- ⇒ Third, speaking and living a life of truthfulness is the truth.

**“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Eph.4:25).**

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).**

**“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” (Zech.8:16).**

**“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Mal.2:6).**

b. Truth does several things for the Christian soldier.

⇒ It keeps him from flapping about from one thing to another, from being tossed to and fro by every attack of the enemy.

**“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).**

⇒ It keeps him from becoming entangled with the affairs of this life.

**“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim.2:3-4).**

⇒ It supports him in the battles and trials of life.

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

**“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb.2:17-18).**

**“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:15-16).**

2. *The breastplate of righteousness.* The breastplate covered the body of the soldier from the neck to the thighs. It was used to protect the heart. The believer’s heart is focused upon the Lord Jesus Christ and His righteousness, and that focus must be protected. The sign of the Christian soldier is righteousness. When a man is saved, God imputes the righteousness of Jesus Christ to him, or to say it another way, God counts him righteous (see notes--Gal.2:15-16 for discussion). However, it is not enough to stand in the righteousness of Christ. The Christian soldier must protect his heart. This he does by living righteously. Righteousness keeps the heart from ever being wounded and losing its focus. The Christian soldier is...

- to strive after the very righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- to live righteously in this present world.

**“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:20).**

**“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Ro.3:21-22).**

**“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor.15:34).**

**“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).**

**“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Ph.1:11).**

**“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit.2:11-12).**

3. *The sandals of the gospel.* The sandals were a sign of readiness--readiness to march and to do battle. The Roman sandals were made with nails that gripped the ground firmly even when it was sloping or slippery. The sign of the Christian soldier is readiness--a readiness to march and to bear witness to the gospel. Wherever the Christian soldier’s feet take him, he shares the gospel that can firmly ground a world reeling under the weight of desperate need and conflict.

**Thought 1.** Lehman Strauss makes a statement about this point that startles the mind of modern man: “The soldier’s shoes are not the dancing slippers of this world or the lounging slippers of the slothful, but the shoes of the Christian warrior who knows Christ and makes Him known” (*Galatians and Ephesians*, p.232f).

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Ro.1:16).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).

4. *The shield of faith in God.* The word “shield” does not mean the small round shield which the soldier held in his hand to fight off the weapons of the enemy. It means the great oblong shield worn by the soldier to protect his body from the fiery darts thrown by the enemy. The darts were dipped in pitch or some other combustible material and set afire. When they struck, they served the purpose of small incendiary bombs. Satan has his fiery darts--those things that cause the believer...

- to question his salvation
- to question his call
- to question if he is worthy
- to question if he can really serve
- to question if the project can really be done
- to question, doubt, and wonder
- to become discouraged, depressed, and defeated
- to burn with passion and desire

Such fiery darts often assault the mind--one doubting and evil thought after the other--fighting against the will--struggling to get hold of the mind and subject it to doubt or evil.

However, the sign of the Christian soldier is that of the shield of faith, faith in God--a complete and perfect trust that God will quench the darts of doubt and evil that attack him, that God will help him control his mind and conquer the evil doubts and thoughts. The Christian soldier's consciousness of God's presence is so great that *God's presence* itself becomes his shield and defender (Gen.15:1). As Scripture says, God is his help and shield (Ps.33:20; 84:9), his sun and shield (Ps.84:11).

“But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill” (Ps.3:3-4).

“Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield” (Ps.33:20).

“The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate” (Ps.34:22).

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass” (Ps.37:5).

“Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed” (Ps.84:9).

“For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Ps.84:11).

“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man” (Ps.118:8).

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe” (Pr.29:25).

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength” (Is.26:3-4).

“And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God....Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mk.11:22, 24).

“Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me” (Acts 27:25).

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).

5. *The helmet of salvation.* The helmet covered the head and the mind of the soldier. The head, of course, was the core of a soldier's power to wage war. His thinking ability was the most important factor in determining his victory or defeat. Therefore, the soldier needed a helmet to protect his head and mind. The sign of the Christian soldier is the helmet of salvation (deliverance). He must protect his mind and its thoughts, keeping all thoughts focused upon the Leader, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His objective of reaching the world with the glorious news that men can live forever.

The helmet that protects the mind of the Christian soldier is *salvation*. Unless a man has been saved, his mind cannot be protected from the fiery darts of temptation. The mind of an unsaved man is focused upon this earth; it is normal and natural for him...

- to seek more and more.
- to possess more and more.
- to look at the opposite sex with desire.
- to taste and indulge the good things of the earth.
- to feel and experience, satisfying his desires and passions.
- to have and hoard even when others have little or nothing.

The unsaved man sees nothing wrong with being his own person and doing his own thing just so he is reasonably considerate of others. His mind and thoughts are upon the earth; and the fiery darts of extravagance, indulgence, pleasure, self-centeredness, worldliness, license, hoarding, and immorality are a part of the unsaved world's daily behavior.

But this is not so with the saved man. The mind of the saved man is focused upon Christ and His mission of sharing the good news of life, both life abundant and life eternal. Because of this, Satan launches his fiery darts of temptation against the mind of the believer, trying to get his thoughts and attention off of Christ and the conquest and ministry to souls. The Christian soldier desperately needs the helmet of salvation. The *helmet of salvation* means the knowledge and hope of salvation. Knowing that we are saved and hoping for the glorious day of redemption...

- stirs us to keep our minds and thoughts upon Christ and off of sin and this world.
- arouses us to focus upon Christ and His mission to carry the gospel to a needy and dying world.

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).**

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).**

**“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).**

**“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:22-24).**

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Ph.4:8).**

**“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Is.26:3).**

**“And he saw that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head” (Is.59:16-17).**

6. *The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.* The sword was a weapon used for both defense and offense. The sword was used both to protect and to fight off and slay the enemy. The sign of the Christian soldier is his use of the Word of God. By living in the Scriptures, he protects himself from the onslaught of the enemy; and he fights and wins battle after battle, day after day. Remember: Jesus Christ Himself overcame the onslaught of the devil by using Scripture (Mt.4:4, 7, 10). The written Word is the one weapon that assures victory for the Christian soldier, for the “Word of God is living and active and sharper than any twoedged sword.”

**“For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb.4:12).**

**“And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword [God’s Word]: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” (Rev.1:16).**

**“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges....repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth” (Rev.2:12, 16).**

**“Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Ps.119:9).**

**“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Ps.119:11).**

**6** (6:18-20) **Prayer--Spiritual Warfare:** there is the supernatural provision of the Christian soldier--prayer--*a constant spirit* of prayer. The soldier enters the conflict fully dressed and armed, but something else is essential: great confidence and assurance and courage. Such comes from a spirit of prayer.

The following things need to be noted about the soldier's prayer.

1. He must pray--always pray. The soldier who is not always praying is not assured of God's protection. The Christian soldier must pray all the time to maintain a constant unbroken consciousness of God's presence and care. Such infuses the needed assurance, confidence, and courage.

**“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Mt.7:7).**

**“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).**

**“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Ph.4:6).**

**“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col.4:2).**

**“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms” (Jas.5:13).**

**“Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually” (1 Chron.16:11).**

## EPHESIANS 6:10-20

2. He must pray “in the Spirit,” that is, in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the only living and true God. Prayer to any other god or to one’s own thoughts or to some other man-made *god* is empty and useless.

**“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Ro.8:26-27).**

3. He must be *sleepless in prayer*. The Christian soldier must concentrate and persevere in prayer. He must go to the point of being *sleepless* in prayer--sometimes so intensely involved in prayer that he actually goes without sleep in order to pray.

**“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mt.26:41).**

**“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk.18:1).**

**“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Lk.22:26).**

**“Pray without ceasing” (1 Th.5:17).**

4. He must pray unselfishly. The soldier is not in battle alone; many are engaged in the same warfare. The outcome of the battle is determined by the welfare of all involved. The Christian soldier must pray for those who fight with him. The Christian soldier must pray as much and as intensely for his fellow soldiers as for himself.

**“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers” (Eph.1:15-16).**

**“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).**

5. He must pray for leaders in particular. Leaders, their decisions and example, often determine the outcome of the battle. The Christian soldier has leaders who teach and preach and administer throughout the church and around the world. Boldness and decisiveness and purity are needed to put the enemy to flight and to capture souls for the gospel (Acts 28:20).

**“Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me” (Acts 8:24).**

**“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me” (Ro.15:30).**

**“Brethren, pray for us” (1 Th.5:25).**

**“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you” (2 Th.3:1).**

**“Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly” (Heb.13:18).**

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|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>1 There was the soldier Tychicus<sup>DS1</sup></b><br/> a. A beloved brother<br/> b. A faithful minister<br/> <br/> c. A friend of believers, a</p> | <p><b>B. The Examples of Faithful Christian Soldiers, 6:21-24</b><br/> <br/> 21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:<br/> 22 Whom I have sent unto</p> | <p>you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.<br/> 23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.<br/> 24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.</p> | <p>messenger of encouragement<br/> <br/> <b>2 There was the soldier Paul</b><br/> a. A spiritual brother: Concerned for the peace, love, &amp; faith of others<br/> b. A prayer warrior: Prayed that God's grace would rest upon others</p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE WARFARE OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 6:10-24**

**B. The Examples of Faithful Christian Soldiers, 6:21-24**

(6:21-24) **Introduction:** this passage presents two Christian soldiers who were faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. They are a dynamic example for every person who has enlisted in the great army of the Lord.

1. There was the Christian soldier Tychicus (v.21-22).
2. There was the Christian soldier Paul (v.23-24).

**1** (6:21-22) **Tychicus—Believers:** there was the Christian soldier Tychicus (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Eph.6:21-22 for more discussion). Paul says three significant things about this great soldier of Christ.

1. He was a beloved brother: he was a man who had believed in Jesus Christ and demonstrated it by loving others ever so deeply. He treated others as brothers, loving and helping them as he could. Therefore, others counted him as dear to their heart—as a beloved brother.

**“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate [give]” (1 Tim.6:17-18).**

**“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).**

**“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn.3:16).**

2. He was a faithful minister: a man called and gifted by Christ to preach the gospel and to minister to the needs of God's dear people. He was a man who had a world-wide vision: he gave his life to reach the people of the world with the glorious news that living forever was now possible. And note: he was faithful. There was no slack or slumber, no routine-ness or slothfulness, no complacency or neglect, no questioning or weakening; he did not fail in his ministry. He was a faithful minister—faithful *in the Lord*. He knew where his strength came from, and he drew his strength from the Lord day by day.

**“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:2).**

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor.9:16).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

3. He was a friend of believers, a messenger of encouragement. Paul was in prison. The believers of Ephesus were concerned about Paul's welfare, and Paul was concerned that they know that he was doing well through the strength of the Lord. But how was Paul going to communicate with the church which was so far away? The answer lay in a dear, dear friend and fellow minister, Tychicus. Note this: Tychicus had his own ministry. He could have been out preaching, witnessing and ministering on his own. Remember he was a world-wide minister, having given his life to world evangelism and missions. Yet, here he was giving his time and energy to helping Paul and serving in Paul's ministry. He is seen giving up a separate ministry in order to serve as a dear friend and fellow minister with Paul. Apparently he was the ideal minister and messenger of encouragement.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas.1:17).

“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor.4:7).

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).

“But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee” (Lk.14:10).

“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Lk.22:26).

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Jas.4:10).

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pt.5:5).

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(6:21-22) **Tychicus:** Tychicus was a native of Asia. He was a companion of Paul who often travelled with him (Acts 20:4).

- ⇒ He was commissioned by Paul as a messenger to various churches (Eph.6:21f; Col.4:7; 2 Tim.4:12; Tit.3:12).
- ⇒ He was entrusted to deliver the letters of Paul to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon (Eph.6:21-22; Col.4:7-8).
- ⇒ He was sent on a special mission to Ephesus (2 Tim.4:12).
- ⇒ He was to be sent to Crete for the purpose of relieving Titus (Tit.3:12).
- ⇒ He was called not only Paul’s beloved brother and faithful minister, but also his fellow-slave (Col.4:7).

**2** (6:23-24) **Paul—Believers:** there was the Christian soldier Paul. A glimpse into Paul’s heart can be gleaned from these two verses.

1. Paul was a spiritual brother to other believers. Note that his concern was for the spiritual welfare of others.
  - a. He invoked *peace* upon them (see note, *Peace*—Eph.2:14-15; Gal.1:3; 5:22-23 for discussion).
  - b. He invoked *love* upon them (see note, *Love*—Eph.2:4-5; Gal.5:13-15; 5:14; 5:22-23 for discussion).
  - c. He invoked *faith* upon them (see note, *Faith* or *Faithful*—Eph.1:1-2; 2:8-10; Gal.5:22-23; cp. Gal.2:15-16; 2:16; 2:19-21; 3:6-14 for discussion).
2. Paul was a prayer warrior for other believers. He prayed that God’s *grace* would rest upon them. (See note, *Grace*—Eph.2:8-9; 2:8-10 for discussion.)

**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE**

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**PHILIPPIANS**



# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

## INTRODUCTION

**AUTHOR:** Paul, the Apostle.

Clement of Rome, who lived in the first century, wrote a letter to the Corinthians and referred to Paul's letter to the Philippians. Polycarp, who lived in the second century, wrote the Philippians and mentioned Paul's letter. Ignatius, another early church leader, alluded to it. There are other references to Paul's authorship by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian—all early church writers (Ralph P. Martin. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. "Tyndale Bible Commentaries," ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959, p.28, 36).

**DATE:** Uncertain. Probably somewhere around A.D. 60-63 while Paul was in prison at Rome.

The letter has been listed among Paul's Prison Epistles along with Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. Paul says, "My bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Praetorian Guard and to all the rest" (Ph.1:13), and he conveys a greeting from those "that are of Caesar's household" (Ph.4:22). The Praetorian Guard seems to be the Praetorian Guard of Rome, the elite soldiers who were hand-chosen to guard and serve the emperor.

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** "To all the saints in Jesus Christ which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Ph.1:1). The message is certainly applicable to all the saints of every church.

**PURPOSE:** Paul wrote Philippians for several reasons.

1. He wished to prevent any criticism against a very dear friend and servant of Christ, Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus had been sent by the Philippian church to deliver a gift and to encourage Paul while he was a prisoner in Rome. But Epaphroditus became extremely sick, almost to the point of death, while with Paul. His return to Philippi was delayed, apparently for a long time. Because of this, Paul feared criticism of Epaphroditus by the church. They might think he was a weakling or a quitter. So Paul wrote to ease the path for Epaphroditus and to prevent any criticism of him (Ph.2:25-30).

Paul wished to thank the Philippian church for its help throughout his ministry. They had sent him a gift right after he had founded the church and moved on (Ph.1:5; 4:15; 2 Cor.8:1f). They had also sent gifts to him at Thessalonica (Ph.4:16) and at Corinth (2 Cor.11:9). And now they sent him not only a gift, but even more, a dear, dear saint to minister to his needs while he was in prison (Ph.2:25-30; 4:18).

3. Paul wished to call the church to unity and harmony. There were two ladies who quarreled and were causing a disturbance (Ph.4:2; cp. 1:27; 2:2-4, 14). It is this disturbance that calls forth one of the greatest pictures of Christ in the Holy Scriptures (Ph.2:5-11).

4. Paul wished to deal with some false teachers who were just beginning to arise in the church (Ph.3:2f).

### SPECIAL FEATURES:

1. The City of Philippi. Philippi was the gateway to Europe. It lay on the great Roman road known as the Egnatian Way. The city was named after Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great. The site was a natural fortress, sitting on a range of hills that separated Europe from Asia, the East from the West. The city was a strategic center commanding the great Egnatian Way.

Philippi was also a proud Roman colony. In fact, it was famous as a miniature Rome. A city became a Roman colony in one of two ways. At first Rome founded colonies throughout the outer reaches of the Empire to keep the peace and to guard against invasions from barbaric hordes. Veteran soldiers, ready for retirement, were usually granted citizenship if they would go out and settle these colonies. Later on, however, a city was granted the distinctive title of a Roman Colony for loyalty and service to the Empire. The distinctive thing about these colonies was their fanatic loyalty to Rome. The citizens kept all their Roman ties, the Roman language, titles, customs, affairs, and dress. They refused to allow any infiltration of local influence whatsoever. They totally rejected the influence of the world around them. They were Roman colonists within an alien environment.

A picture of the loyalty of the Philippian Colony to its Roman citizenship is seen in Acts 16:20-21. Paul draws an illustration from the loyalty of these colonies and says to the Philippian church, "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Ph.3:20).

The city of Philippi fit right into Paul's master plan. Its strategic location on the Egnatian Way assured the spread of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. As Paul carried on his ministry, he was moving toward Rome and the regions beyond into Spain. He knew that the converts from Philippi, whose employment took them from Philippi throughout the Empire, could move on out ahead of him. Some time could be gained and some ground could be laid to assure world evangelization sooner (cp. Acts 28:13f).

2. The Church at Philippi. Acts 16:1-40 describes the founding of the Philippian church on Paul's second missionary journey. It is one of the most exciting adventures in all of literature. Philippi witnessed the entrance of the gospel into Europe. Paul had made several attempts to go elsewhere, but the Holy Spirit prohibited him (Acts 16:6-7); therefore, he made his way to Troas, not really knowing why. While in Troas Paul experienced the incredible vision of a man in Macedonia crying out, "Come over and help us." Through that one vision, the Holy Spirit changed the cradle of society. He thrust Paul forth into Europe with the glorious gospel of Christianity, and since that day, the world has never been the same.

From Troas, Paul landed at the European or Macedonian port of Neapolis and immediately made his way to the strategic city of Philippi. When Paul arrived in Philippi he found what he calls "a crooked and perverse generation" (Ph.2:15). He also found a small nucleus of women who had a Jewish background to which he could appeal. From this group there were two significant conversions: Lydia, a prominent business woman, and an unnamed slave girl who was possessed with a spirit of

fortune-telling. Later on there was also a Roman jailer and his household who were converted. Paul was soon attacked and imprisoned and forced to leave Philippi. Consequently, the church had only a small beginning under Paul's personal leadership.

When Paul left, Luke remained with the handful of converts (Acts 17:1). The church met at Lydia's house and continued to grow (Acts 16:40). The converts came primarily from the pagan Gentile world (Ph.2:25; 4:2-3; Ro.15:26-27).

The strength of the Philippian church is seen in the fact that the church continued to support Paul throughout his ministry despite the little time he had with them. They supported him even while they themselves were suffering and being persecuted (cp. Ph.1:7, 27-30; 2:15; 3:10-11; 4:1). No wonder Paul called them "brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown" (Ph.4:1) and boasted of them to other churches (2 Cor.8:1f).

3. Philippians is "The Most Personal of Paul's Epistles." It is written to a church dearly loved by the minister (cp. Ph.4:1).

4. Philippians is "The Epistle of Stewardship" (see Purpose, point 2).

5. Philippians is "The Epistle of Joy." The words "joy" and "rejoicing" are used sixteen times in four short chapters.

6. Philippians is "The Epistle That Stresses the Little Phrase 'In Christ' or 'In the Lord'." The whole thesis of Paul is that life is "*in Christ*" and that Christ is to be "*in life*" (cp. Ph.1:13, 14, 26, 29; 2:1, 5, 19, 24, 29; 3:1, 4, 9, 14; 4:1, 4, 6-7, 10, 13, 17, 21).

## OUTLINE OF PHILIPPIANS

**THE PREACHER'S OUTLINE & SERMON BIBLE™** is *unique*. It differs from all other Study Bibles & Sermon Resource Materials in that every Passage and Subject is outlined right beside the Scripture. When you choose any *Subject* below and turn to the reference, you have not only the Scripture, but you discover the Scripture and Subject *already outlined for you--verse by verse*.

For a quick example, choose one of the subjects below and turn over to the Scripture, and you will find this marvelous help for faster, easier, and more accurate use.

In addition, every point of the Scripture and Subject is *fully developed in a Commentary with supporting Scripture* at the bottom of the page. Again, this arrangement makes sermon preparation much easier and faster.

Note something else: The Subjects of Philippians have titles that are both Biblical and *practical*. The practical titles sometimes have more appeal to people. This *benefit* is clearly seen for use on billboards, bulletins, church newsletters, etc.

A suggestion: For the quickest overview of Philippians, first read *all the major titles* (I, II, III, etc.), then come back and read the subtitles.

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### OUTLINE OF PHILIPPIANS

#### I. THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, 1:3-30

- A. The Marks of a Healthy Church, 1:1-2
- B. The Marks of Mature Believers, 1:3-11
- C. The Marks of a Mature Witness, 1:12-20
- D. The Marks of the Great Christian Believer, 1:21-26
- E. The Marks of the Great Christian Church, 1:27-30

#### II. THE STEPS TO UNITY, 2:1-18

- A. Christ--The Traits of His Life in Us, 2:1-4
- B. Humbling One's Self, 2:5-11
- C. Working Out One's Own Salvation or Deliverance, 2:12-18

#### III. THE EXAMPLES OF SOME CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, 2:19-30

- A. The Example of Timothy--a Young Man Who Willingly Served in Second Place, 2:19-24
- B. The Example of Epaphroditus--a Man Who Was Not a Quitter Nor a Coward, 2:25-30

#### IV. THE "PRESSING ON" OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 3:1-21

- A. Pressing On: Guarding Oneself, 3:1-3
- B. Pressing On: Paul's Personal Testimony--Rejecting Self-Righteousness & Seeking Perfection, 3:4-16
- C. Pressing On: Marking Those Who Walk as Examples, 3:17-21

#### V. THE SECRET OF PEACE--THE PEACE OF GOD HIMSELF, 4:1-9

- A. The Steps to Peace (Part I): Standing Fast, Unity, Rejoicing, & Gentleness, 4:1-5
- B. The Steps to Peace (Part II): Prayer & Positive Thinking, 4:6-9

#### VI. THE APPRECIATION FOR GOOD CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS, 4:10-23

- A. Appreciation: For a Church That Revives Its Sacrificial Giving, 4:10-19
- B. Appreciation: For God & for Fellow Christians, 4:20-23



**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE  
PHILIPPIANS**

**I. THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, 1:1-30**

**A. The Marks of a Healthy Church, 1:1-2**

**CHAPTER 1**

- 1 A healthy church discip-  
ples young people
- 2 A healthy church serves Christ
- 3 A healthy church is full  
of true saints
- 4 A healthy church has lead-  
ers who lead by example
- 5 A healthy church experi-  
ences grace & peace

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

**DIVISION I**

**THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, 1:3-30**

**A. The Marks of a Healthy Church, 1:1-2**

(1:1-2) **Introduction:** this is a most unusual greeting to a church from Paul. He does not refer to himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Why? There was no need for him to defend his call from God. His relationship with the church at Philippi was just what it should be: a relationship founded and rooted in Jesus Christ and in the love and respect for each other. The church held its minister, Paul, ever so closely to its heart; they loved and cared for him as few churches love and care for their ministers. This greeting gives some outstanding distinctives of Christian believers.

1. A healthy church discip-  
ples young people (v.1).
2. A healthy church serves Christ (v.1).
3. A healthy church is full of true saints (v.1).
4. A healthy church has leaders who lead by example (v.1).
5. A healthy church experiences grace and peace (v.2).

**1** (1:1) **Discipleship—Young People:** a healthy church discip-  
ples young people. In the words “Paul and Timothy” we see a *father and son in the faith*—the adult and the young person together. There was deep affection that bound Paul and Timothy together. That affection found its root and purpose in the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul contributed the wisdom of experience, and Timothy the hope and vibrant energy of youth. It should be noted that the adult, Paul, is mentioned first. The adult always holds the primary responsibility and privilege for taking hold of young people and making disciples of them. This was the command of the Lord’s *great commission*; therefore, the believer must always keep his focus upon finding young people and making disciples of them (see note, *Discipleship*—Mt.28:19-20 for more discussion). (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Timothy*—Acts 16:1-3 for discussion on Timothy’s life.)

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching [making disciples] them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim.2:2).**

**2** (1:1) **Servants—Slaves** (doulos): a healthy church serves Jesus Christ, really serves Him. The word “servant” (doulos) is the word *bond-slave* in Greek. There is a distinct difference between a servant and a slave. A servant is free to work for whomever he wishes; a slave is bought and purchased—completely and totally owned by a master. A slave is bound by law to his master.

Paul calls himself and Timothy the *slaves of Jesus Christ*. A look at the slave market of Paul’s day shows more clearly what Paul meant when he said he was a “slave of Jesus Christ.”

1. The slave was owned by his master; he was totally possessed by his master. This is what Paul meant. Paul was purchased and possessed by Christ. Christ had looked upon him and had seen his degraded and needful condition. And when Christ looked, the most wonderful thing happened: Christ loved him and bought him. Therefore, he was now the possession of Christ.

2. The slave existed for his master and he had no other reason for existence. He had no personal rights whatsoever. The same was true with Paul: he existed only for Christ. His rights were the rights of Christ only.

3. The slave served his master and he existed only for the purpose of service. He was at the master’s disposal any hour of the day. So it was with Paul: he lived only to serve Christ—hour by hour and day by day.

4. The slave’s will belonged to his master. He was allowed no will and no ambition other than the will and ambition of the master. He was completely subservient to the master and owed total obedience to the will of the master. Paul be-

longed to Christ. In fact, he even said that he fought and struggled to bring *every thought* into captivity “to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:3-5, esp. 5).

5. There is a fifth and most precious thing that Paul meant by his being “a slave of Jesus Christ.” He meant that he had the highest and most honored and kingly profession in all the world. Men of God, the greatest men of history, have always been called “the servants of God.” It was the highest title of honor. The believer’s slavery to Jesus Christ is no cringing, cowardly, or shameful subjection. It is the position of honor—the honor that bestows upon a man the privileges and responsibilities of serving the King of kings and Lord of lords.

- ⇒ Moses was the slave of God (Dt.34:5; Ps.105:26; Mal.4:4).
- ⇒ Joshua was the slave of God (Josh.24:9).
- ⇒ David was the slave of God (2 Sam.3:18; Ps.78:70).
- ⇒ Paul was the slave of Jesus Christ (Ro.1:1; Ph.1:1; Tit.1:1).
- ⇒ James was the slave of God (Jas.1:1).
- ⇒ Jude was the slave of God (Jude 1).
- ⇒ The prophets were the slaves of God (Amos 3:7; Jer.7:25).
- ⇒ Christian believers are said to be the slaves of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:18; 1 Cor.7:22; Eph.6:6; Col.4:12; 2 Tim.2:24).

**Thought 1.** The great need today is for men and women to become *slaves* of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must become His slaves and do what He says. Then and only then will the world be reached with the glorious news of eternal life. Then and only then will the desperate needs of the world be met.

“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour” (Jn.12:26; cp. Ro.12:1; 1 Cor.15:58).

“[Laboring] not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph.6:6-7).

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col.3:23-24).

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb.12:28).

“And ye shall serve the Lord your God” (Ex.23:25).

“What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Dt.10:12).

“Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling” (Ps.2:11).

“Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing” (Ps.100:2).

**3** (1:1) **Saints—Sanctified—Holy:** a healthy church is full of *true saints*. The Bible never uses the word *saint* to refer to a few people in the church who have achieved unusual spiritual maturity. The word *saints* refers to the sanctified or holy ones. It simply means to be set apart and to be separated. Therefore, every believer who has truly trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior is separated from the world and set apart to live for God. Every true believer is a “saint,” a person set apart unto God. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Pt.1:15-16 for more discussion.) There are three stages of sanctification.

1. There is initial or positional sanctification. When a person believes in Christ, he is immediately set apart for God—once and for all—permanently.

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Heb.3:1).

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb.10:10).

2. There is progressive sanctification. The true believer makes a determined and disciplined effort to allow the Spirit of God to set him apart day by day. The Spirit of God takes him and conforms him into the image of Christ more and more—for as long as he walks upon this earth.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn.17:17).

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor.3:18).

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph.5:25-26).

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Th.5:23-24).

3. There is eternal sanctification. The day is coming when the believer will be perfectly set apart unto God and His service—without any sin or failure whatsoever. That day will be the great and glorious day of the believer’s eternal redemption.

## PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2

**“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph.5:27).**

**“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).**

**Thought 1.** We are the property of the Lord Jesus, set apart as His holy possession. Let us, therefore, live as the possession of the Lord. Let us walk as the separated people of God, living holy and righteous and pure lives.

**Thought 2.** Lehman Strauss points out the following (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1959, p.32f).

1) God is a thrice-holy God.

**“And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Is.6:3).**

**“And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” (Rev.4:8).**

2) The Lord Jesus Christ who saved us is holy.

**“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together” (Acts 4:27).**

**“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus” (Acts 4:29-30).**

3) The Spirit of God who indwells our bodies is holy.

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

4) The Bible, which is to be the guide of our lives, is called the Holy Scripture.

**“Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures” (Ro.1:2).**

5) One of the names given to us is that of *holy brothers*.

**“I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren” (1 Th.5:27).**

**“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Heb.3:1).**

6) One of the great gifts of God is to make us a *holy priesthood* before God.

**“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.2:5).**

7) The great call of God to us is a *holy calling*.

**“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim.1:9).**

8) The great purpose for the Lord’s return is to present us *holy before God*.

**“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight” (Col.1:21-22).**

9) One of the great inheritances we shall receive when the Lord returns is the *holy city*.

**“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev.21:2).**

In light of all that God has done for us, how can we do anything less than to live a sanctified, holy life before God? How can we be lethargic and complacent, sleepy-eyed, and unmotivated? How can we allow ourselves to live lives of routine and unconcern? How can we live lives of indulgence, license, selfishness, immorality, perversion, wickedness, and evil?

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [behavior] and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?” (2 Pt.3:10-12).

**4** (1:1) **Bishops—Deacons:** a healthy church organizes for ministry and has leaders who lead by example. Note that both bishops and deacons are mentioned as being in the Philippian church. What Paul is doing is addressing the leaders of the church and setting them apart from the membership whom he addressed as “saints.” This is significant, for it means that the leadership or officers of the early church are here named: they were bishops and deacons. A complete discussion of these two offices is given elsewhere (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Bishop*—Tit.1:5-9; note, *Deacons*—Acts 6:1-7; DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Tim.3:8-13). The point to see in this passage is that believers organize for ministry.

1. The bishops (episkopois) were apparently the same as the elders (presbuteros) or ministers of a church. The two words are used interchangeably to refer to the same men (Acts 20:17, 28; Tit.1:5, 7). The word “bishop” means to oversee, look after, manage. The instructions in the *Epistle of Titus* say that his duties included primarily exhortation and overseeing the lives of the believers. The bishop was the person whom we call the minister of the church. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Tit.1:5-9 for full discussion.)

2. The deacons (diakonoi) were spiritually minded men who had dedicated their lives to the Lord to minister to the *saints* of God. They were persons who were chosen to minister to the widows and widowers and to the poor and sick of a church *in order to free the minister to concentrate on prayer and preaching*. But note a significant fact:

⇒ Preachers are sometimes called deacons, that is servants.

“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers [diakonoi] by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” (1 Cor.3:5).

“Who also hath made us able ministers [diakonous] of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Cor.3:6).

⇒ The first deacons preached as well as ministered to the needy of the church.

“And Stephen [a deacon], full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people” (Acts 6:8).

“Then Philip [a deacon] went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them” (Acts 8:5).

**Thought 1.** Two significant points need to be stressed.

- 1) The church must organize for ministry and must always be careful to ordain only persons who have proven to be spiritually mature in the Lord.
- 2) The two ordained officers of the church must be diligent in both their duty and in sharing the Word of the Lord. Every believer is needed to bear witness for the Lord Jesus and the *leadership must take the lead*. How can we expect others to be witnessing and ministering if we, the leadership, are not witnessing and ministering?

“But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all” (Mk.10:43-44).

“She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying” (Mk.14:8).

“For unto whosoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Lk.12:48).

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet” (Jn.13:14).

“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:16).

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building” (1 Cor.3:9).

“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor.6:1).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb.12:28).

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ: to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever” (1 Pt.4:11).

**5** (1:2) **Grace—Peace:** a healthy church experiences grace and peace (see notes, *Grace*—Gal.1:3; Eph.2:8-9; *Peace*—Gal.1:3; 5:22-23 for discussion).

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|---|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1 The mark of a thankful heart</b></p> <p><b>2 The mark of prayer</b></p> <p><b>3 The mark of joy</b></p> <p><b>4 The mark of fellowship</b></p> <p><b>5 The mark of confidence in God's salvation</b></p> <p>a. Is a good work</p> <p>b. Is incomplete</p> <p>c. Is to be completed at Christ's return</p> <p><b>6 The mark of partnership</b></p> | <p><b>I. THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, 1:3-30 .</b></p> <p><b>B. The Marks of Mature Believers, 1:3-11</b></p> <p>3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,</p> <p>4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,</p> <p>5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;</p> <p>6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:</p> <p>7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, be-</p> | <p>cause I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.</p> <p>8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;</p> <p>10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;</p> <p>11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.</p> | <p>a. Partners in heart</p> <p>b. Partners in suffering</p> <p>c. Partners in the gospel</p> <p>d. Partners in grace</p> <p>e. Partners with Christ</p> <p><b>7 The mark of a growing &amp; discerning love</b></p> <p>a. To approve the excellent</p> <p>b. To live pure lives</p> <p>c. To cause no one to stumble</p> <p><b>8 The mark of righteousness</b></p> |
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**DIVISION I**

**THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, 1:3-30**

**B. The Marks of Mature Believers, 1:3-11**

(1:3-11) **Introduction:** What are the marks of a mature Christian believer? What are the marks of a dynamic, mature Christian church? This passage answers these questions. Concisely and clearly, the marks so desperately needed by believers and churches are spelled out.

1. The mark of a thankful heart (v.3).
2. The mark of prayer (v.4).
3. The mark of joy (v.4).
4. The mark of fellowship (v.5).
5. The mark of confidence in God's salvation (v.6).
6. The mark of partnership (v.7-8).
7. The mark of a growing and discerning love (v.9-10).
8. The mark of righteousness (v.11).

**1** (1:3) **Brotherhood—Fellowship—Church:** there is the mark of a thankful heart. Paul did not stand alone in the world. He was not the only person living for God and sharing Christ. He belonged to a great family, a family of believers who constituted the family of God. They, too, were living for God and sharing Christ with a lost and needful world. Remember that Paul was in prison in Rome and that he was a great distance from the Philippian believers. He did not have their presence; all he had was the memory of their time together. And sitting there in prison, remembering their love and care and support, his heart swelled up with thanksgiving for them, and he thanked God for them.

**Thought 1.** What a lesson for us! If Paul thanked God for believers who were so far away from him, how much more should we thank God for each other. We have the love and care and support of each other week by week and day by day, and we can call upon each other for help any hour of any day. Yet how often do we thank God for each other?

Another point is this: we should be following Paul's example and thanking God for all believers every day. We are not alone in the world. God is building a body of people world-wide—a body of people who are just like us—committed to live for the Lord Jesus Christ and to carry His gospel of salvation and love and care to a world that reels under the weight of desperate need.

**“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col.1:12).**

**“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Col.3:15).**

**2** (1:4) **Prayer:** there is the mark of prayer. Paul says that he always prayed for the church. The idea is that he prayed all throughout the day for them. They were constantly on his mind and in his prayers. As Matthew Henry says, Paul prayed by name for all the churches he knew, and he had seasons of prayer for each church (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol.6. Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, no date listed, p.724.

**Thought 1.** What a dynamic lesson in prayer!

- 1) To pray by name for all the churches we know.
- 2) To take blocks of time (seasons of prayers) to pray for each church.
- 3) To always—all day long—pray for the churches of our living Lord.

**“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word” (Jn.17:20).**

**“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you [the Roman church] always in my prayers” (Ro.1:9).**

**“[I] cease not to give thanks for you [the Ephesian church], making mention of you in my prayers” (Eph.1:16).**

**“For this cause [the church] I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph.3:14).**

**“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you [the church]” (Col.1:3).**

**“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Col.4:12).**

**“We give thanks to God always for you [the church] all, making mention of you in our prayers” (1 Th.1:2).**

**3** (1:4) **Joy:** there is the mark of joy. Remember that Paul is in prison, yet his heart is filled with joy. Joy (chara) means an inner gladness; a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful and rejoicing heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful and rejoicing behavior.

The joy of the Lord is not the same as the joy of the world. The joy of the world is more of a temporary pleasure than joy. The world’s joy is always nagged by some incompleteness, some lack, some unfulfilling thing, some missing ingredient, some need still existing. There is not a completeness—not a complete sense of assurance, confidence, and satisfaction. There is the knowledge, the haunting awareness, that something can go wrong: circumstances can change or some situation can arise to disturb the joy (sickness, death, financial loss, war). The *haunting awareness* always keeps the world’s joy from being full and complete, assuring and satisfying.

Several things need to be said about the believer’s joy.

1. Joy is divine. It is possessed and given only by God. Its roots are not in earthly or material things or cheap triumphs. It is the joy of the Holy Spirit, a joy based in the Lord. It is His very own joy (Jn.15:11; Acts 13:52; Ro.14:17; Gal.5:22; 1 Th.1:6).
2. Joy does not depend on circumstances or happiness. Happiness depends upon happenings, but the joy that God implants in the believer’s heart overrides all, even the matters of life and death (Ps.5:11; 2 Cor.6:10; 7:4).
3. Joy springs from faith (Ro.15:13; Ph.1:25; 2 Tim.1:4; cp. Mt.2:10).
4. Joy of future reward makes and keeps the believer faithful (Mt.25:21, 23; Acts 20:24; Heb.12:2).

The source of the believer’s joy is severalfold.

1. The fellowship of the Father and His Son brings joy (1 Jn.1:3-4).
2. Victory over sin, death, and hell brings joy (Jn.14:28; 16:20-22).
3. Repentance brings joy (Lk.15:7, 10).
4. The hope of glory brings joy (Ro.14:17; Heb.12:2; 1 Pt.4:13).
5. The Lord’s Word—the revelations, commandments, and promises which He made—brings joy (Jn.15:11).
6. The commandments of Christ and the will of God bring joy. Obeying and doing a good job stirs joy within the believer’s heart (Jn.15:11, 32; 17:13; Acts 13:52).
7. Prayer brings joy (Jn.16:24).
8. The presence and fellowship of believers brings joy (1 Jn.1:3-4).
9. Converts bring joy (Lk.15:5; Ph.4:1; 1 Th.2:19-20).
10. Hearing that others walk in the truth brings joy (3 Jn.1:4).
11. Giving brings joy (2 Cor.8:2; Heb.10:34).

**“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:17).**

**“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pt.1:8).**

**“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps.16:11).**

**“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Is.12:3).**

**“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Is.61:10).**

**4** (1:5) **Fellowship:** there is the mark of fellowship. Note two significant points.

1. The source of fellowship is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great salvation of God. The gospel of Christ is the glorious news that He has died for our sins, risen again, and conquered death that we might live with God eternally,

never having to die (cp. 1 Cor.15:3). Christian believers have *fellowship*, a spiritual bond, a spiritual union because...

- they have experienced the *same salvation*, the salvation of God.
- they have embraced the *same faith*.

Forcefully stated, *genuine believers*—believers who have totally committed their lives to the gospel of Christ—live and proclaim the gospel. Therefore, true believers are bound together around the gospel—all living the same kind of life and doing the same kind of things. They live, serve, and bear witness to the same Lord; therefore, their lives are bound together in the Spirit of Christ and His fellowship.

2. The fellowship of believers is to exist from the very first day of salvation. What a glorious testimony the Philippian church had! It had been about ten years since some of the members had given their lives to follow Christ and had founded the church. And note: the fellowship of the church had continued from the very first day of its founding. As all churches experience, there must have been differences and problems which had arisen, but the believers handled them *in Christ*—just as they should have. Therefore, the peace and unity of the Spirit was kept alive and the fellowship of the church remained strong. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Fellowship*—Acts 2:42 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** One of the most critical needs facing the church today is the need for peace and unity in the Spirit of God—a strong fellowship rooted around the gospel of Christ. Lehman Strauss gives the secret: “There was no conflict, no confusion, but continuance. A continuing fellowship is a *prayer fellowship*. Today a very narrow conception of fellowship prevails. If we attend the same church, recite the same creed, say the same prayers, eat at the same church supper, and socialize with the same crowd, we call this Christian fellowship. But is it? For years I have watched all of these things going on among professing Christians where there was often little conception of *true fellowship in the gospel*. Among Christians there may be difficulties and disappointments along the way, but never a disruption where there is *prayer fellowship*” (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.42).

**“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).**

**“That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me” (Ro.1:12).**

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).**

**“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” (Ps.119:63).**

**“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Mal.3:16).**

**5** (1:6) **Power, God’s—Confidence—Assurance:** there is the mark of confidence in God’s salvation. God will complete His good work in believers. Confidence and assurance are two of the striking traits of genuine believers. Believers know God, know Him personally. God’s Spirit actually lives within the heart and body of the believer (Jn.14:16-17; 14:26; 1 Cor.19:20; etc.). The Spirit of God actually bears witness with the spirit of the believer, that he is going to be redeemed someday—presented perfect before God. In fact, the presence of the Holy Spirit within the believer’s body is the very guarantee of the believer’s salvation (cp. 2 Cor.1:22; 5:5; Eph.1:14).

1. The believer has absolute confidence in the work of salvation or redemption which God has begun in his life. He has confidence through the presence of God’s Spirit who dwells within him.

2. The work begun by God is a *good work*; that is, it is a work that revolutionizes or radically changes the life of the believer. No matter what kind of life a person was living, once God converts him, the new believer begins to live a *good life: a life of..*

- righteousness, purity, and holiness.
- love, joy, and peace.
- faith, humility, and control.

3. The good work is incomplete as long as the believer lives on this earth. He is never perfected, not while a man. There is always work for God to do; therefore, God is always working within the life of the believer to mature him more and more. God is always working to make the man more and more pure and more and more faithful in his service to the Lord Jesus.

4. The good work is to be completed when Jesus Christ returns to this earth. At that time, the believer will be transformed into a perfect man and given a perfect body. He will become a perfect man who will live in the new heavens and earth with Christ. And he will worship and serve the Lord Jesus in perfection throughout all eternity.

**“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are” (Jn.17:11).**

**“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Ph.1:6).**

**“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:7).**

**“...I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim.1:12).**

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim.4:8).

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pt.1:5).

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness [the Holy Spirit] in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son” (1 Jn.5:10).

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever” (Jude 24-25).

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev.3:10).

“And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of” (Gen.28:15).

“O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful” (Ps.31:23).

“For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever” (Ps.37:28).

“The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands” (Ps.138:8).

**6** (1:7-8) **Sympathy—Service—Ministry:** there is the mark of “Christian partnership” (Barclay, William. *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*. “The Daily Study Bible.” Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1957, p.21.) Note how closely bound together Paul and the church were.

1. They were partners in heart. Paul loved them as he loved himself; he held them ever so dear to his heart and they constantly filled his thoughts.

2. They were partners in the sufferings of Paul. This means...

- that they were sympathizing with Paul in his imprisonment.
- that they were sending hope to Paul while he was in prison.
- that they had or were themselves suffering because of the gospel just as Paul was.

The point is this: the affection between Paul and the Philippians was so tender that their hearts went out to each other. What one experienced, the other felt, even the sufferings of each other.

**Thought 1.** What a striking picture of the kind of sympathy needed for those who suffer. We must learn to be partners in suffering. Then and only then can we bear each other’s burdens and truly minister to each other.

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb.2:17-18).

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:15-16).

“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” (Heb.13:3).

3. They were partners in the gospel. The Philippians had not given up the gospel, nor had they become silent or complacent in sharing the gospel. They were actively defending and proclaiming the truth of the gospel. The church and its members were busy for Christ—actively bearing witness to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were taking the great commission of our Lord seriously.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).**

4. They were partners in the grace of God. Paul was expressing the wonderful grace of God—the favor and blessings of God. And the Philippian church was expressing the same grace. God was pouring the richest blessings upon both Paul and the church. Why? What was it that was causing God to so richly bless these two? Their faithfulness: as this passage shows, they were bearing the marks of mature believers.

**“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph.1:7).**

**“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).**

**“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.1:14).**

**“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.2:1).**

5. They were partners with Christ. The word “bowels” (splanchnois) means tender mercies, compassion, deep affection. And note: it is the tenderness of Jesus Christ that Paul says he has for the Philippians. He longs for them with the very affection and tenderness of Christ Himself.

**Thought 1.** How desperately the minister and church need such tenderness and affection for each other! What a tremendous difference would exist in churches if believers held each other ever so tenderly—held each other with the tenderness and affection of Christ Himself.

**Thought 2.** The great need of the church today is for partnership—partnership among its members. Believers desperately need to become partners with each other and with the minister of God:

- ⇒ partners in heart
- ⇒ partners in suffering
- ⇒ partners in proclaiming and defending the gospel
- ⇒ partners in the grace of God
- ⇒ partners with the Lord Jesus Christ

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if we have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).**

**“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn.15:12).**

**“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).**

**“Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone” (1 Th.3:1).**

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).**

**7** (1:9-10) **Love:** there is the mark of a growing and discerning love. Note this: love in the Bible never focuses upon *good feelings*. Feelings may and usually do come to the person who truly loves another person, but feelings are never the focus—not with true love. What then is the focus?

- ⇒ The focus of love is knowledge. If we truly love someone, we want to know that person. In fact, we want to know all we can about the person.
- ⇒ The force of love is judgment (aisthesei). The word means intelligence or discernment. If we truly love someone, we not only want to know a person but we want to learn all we can about the person. We want to gather all the intelligence and facts possible and discern them so that we can please the person.

Note that Paul wants the believer’s love to grow more and more. We need to know more and more about Christ and each other; we need to gather more and more understanding, more and more discernment, more and more intelligence about each other. The more we know about Christ and each other, the more our love for each other will grow.

There are three reasons why we need a love that grows more and more.

1. A growing love is needed to approve things that are excellent. It is not enough just to know what is right and wrong. It is not enough just to do what is right. Sometimes the choice is between the good and the excellent, the acceptable and the best. Only a *growing love* will stir us to choose the excellent and the best.

⇒ The more we love the Lord, the more we will choose the excellent and best for Him.

⇒ The more we love each other, the more we will choose the excellent and best for each other. A growing love will not want to do anything that would even come close to causing a person to stumble.

2. A growing love is needed to be sincere and pure. The word sincere (eilikrineis) means to sift about through a sieve in order to make pure. Therefore, the word means pure, uncontaminated, not polluted, untainted. Note that we are to stay pure until the return of Christ. Only a growing love will keep our eyes focused upon Christ. If we do not love Him, we will not look to Him. If we love Him, we will keep our eyes fastened upon Him, longing to see and be with Him. Only love—true love—will keep us pure waiting for His return.

**Thought 1.** A good illustration of this point is found in the young lady who loves the soldier and is awaiting his return. If she truly loves him, she will keep her eyes fastened upon him and keep herself pure.

3. A growing love is needed to keep us from causing others to stumble. We must always guard against being an offense (aproskopoï) or a stumblingblock to others. Note: we must be willing to choose the best and the excellent for the sake of others. We may be able to control, but others may not be able to control...

- drinking
- television
- movies
- dancing
- social functions
- eating
- the latest fashion and dress
- makeup

The list could go on and on with almost everything we do. We must control everything we do, not slipping over into the questionable—sometimes not even doing the acceptable and good, but we must choose the best. Approve only the things that are excellent. Why?

⇒ To keep from causing a brother to stumble.

⇒ To offer up to the Lord the very best we can. This point should *break our hearts*. Just think how often we have chosen to do less than the best for our Lord. We have offered up to Him behavior, words, thoughts, deeds, works that were second best—and we knew it! How His heart must have been cut—especially when He went to the ultimate limit in loving and giving Himself for us.

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).**

**“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Ro.14:21).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

**“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth” (1 Cor.10:24).**

**“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Mt.19:21).**

**8** (1:11) **Righteousness:** there is the mark of righteousness. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Righteousness*—Eph.5:9; 6:14-17, pt.2 for discussion. Cp. also Gal.2:15-16; 3:6-14.)

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| <p><b>1 He shares the gospel regardless of circumstances</b></p> <p>a. Paul faced dark circumstances: He was a prisoner in Rome</p> <p>b. Paul used his dark circumstances to spread the gospel</p> <p>1) Spread thru the elite guard of Rome: In the palace &amp; everywhere else</p> <p>2) Spread by encouraging believers to be more fearless witnesses</p> <p><b>2 He holds no personal</b></p> | <p><b>C. The Marks of a Mature Witness, 1:12-19</b></p> <p>12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;</p> <p>13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;</p> <p>14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.</p> <p>15 Some indeed preach</p> | <p>Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:</p> <p>16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:</p> <p>17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.</p> <p>18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.</p> <p>19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,</p> | <p><b>jealousy nor desire for credit or prestige</b></p> <p>a. Others preached Christ with jealous &amp; contentious spirits, hoping to cause trouble for Paul</p> <p>b. Still others preached in love, supporting Paul</p> <p>c. Paul rejoiced in this one thing: Christ was being preached—whether from false motives or true, Christ was preached</p> <p><b>3 He possesses the assurance of a happy ending: Salvation</b></p> <p>a. Through prayer</p> <p>b. Through the Holy Spirit</p> |
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DIVISION I

THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, 1:3-30

C. The Marks of a Mature Witness, 1:12-19

(1:12-19) **Introduction:** circumstances often throw and defeat people. The maturity of a person can be seen by how well he handles the things that happen to him—the things that affect a person with mood changes ranging from mild to severe. The one thing that a believer must do is to learn to live above circumstances—to keep his witness for Christ strong and mature. This is the subject of the present passage: the marks of a mature witness.

1. He shares the gospel regardless of circumstances (v.12-14).
2. He holds no personal jealousy nor desire for credit or prestige (v.15-18).
3. He possesses the assurance of a happy ending: salvation (v.19).

**1** (1:12-14) **Witnessing—Believer:** a mature witness shares the gospel regardless of circumstances. Note two significant points.

1. Paul faced dark circumstances: he was a prisoner in Rome. The dark circumstances stared Paul right in the face. No circumstances could ever be any more severe—no matter what they were. Paul was waiting to appear before the Supreme Court of Rome: he was facing a trial before Nero, the Roman Emperor, and he was innocent. He had done nothing that should cause his arrest and imprisonment. Yet there he was, and he was having to wait the arrival of his Jewish prosecutors with their trumped-up and malicious charges. True, he had some privileges—renting his own house and receiving friends—but these privileges were minor when the strains of his sufferings are seen. He was imprisoned for over two years, and as is the case with all prisoners, the days wore on ever so slowly—hour by hour and day after day. Whatever pressures hang over a man's head who is awaiting a trial that is to determine whether he lives or dies hung over Paul's head. As he says in Eph.3:13, his tribulations were intense and protracted.

But note something: Paul...

- did not grumble and complain
- did not question God and wonder why
- did not whine and murmur
- did not fall to pieces
- did not curse God nor give up his faith

2. Paul used his dark circumstances to spread the gospel. Paul did not see himself as a prisoner of Rome nor of Nero. He saw himself as a prisoner *for Jesus Christ*. He did not see himself as a victim; he saw himself as a conqueror for Jesus Christ. In Acts 28:20 Paul says he was "bound with this chain," and in Eph.6:20 he calls himself an "ambassador in bonds." The word "halusis" is used. The "halusis" was a small length of chain that bound a prisoner to the wrist of a guard to prevent his escape. Just imagine! Paul was bound to a Roman guard every day and night for over two years. What do you suppose Paul talked about with the guards? He tells us: "The things which happened to me have fallen out to the furtherance of the gospel."

- a. Paul spread the gospel through the *Praetorian Guard*, the elite of the Roman army. These soldiers were the Imperial Guard of Rome, men who had been hand-picked to protect the emperor and to carry out the major armed functions of the state. There were sixteen thousand of them, most of whom were stationed in Rome at any given time (William Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.26). It was these soldiers who guarded and were chained to the wrist of Paul day and night for two years—young men who were the elite of Roman youth. How many Paul led to the Lord is unknown. But note: Christ was shared so much that the gospel spread throughout...
- the whole Praetorian guard.
  - the palace of the emperor.
  - all other places.

Paul—his imprisonment and stand for Christ and the gospel which he preached—became the conversation throughout Rome, the conversation among all the social circles including the upper strata, the very palace of the emperor himself.

**Thought 1.** The lesson for us is this: we must never let circumstances get us down—never let them defeat our testimony and witness for Christ, no matter what they are...

- |                  |                       |                |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| • persecution    | • bankruptcy          | • imprisonment |
| • accident       | • sin                 | • age          |
| • failure        | • loss of a loved one | • abuse        |
| • financial loss | • rejection           | • poverty      |
| • divorce        |                       |                |

If we are living for Christ, we must *know* that God is in control of our lives. He will strengthen us to bear whatever circumstances fall upon us. We must use the circumstances to witness to the saving power of Christ—to the eternal hope He gives of forgiveness and of living forever. We must witness to all around us when we...

- lie in the bed of sickness
- are in the midst of death
- are facing money problems
- are being abused and persecuted

And if we have sinned and failed—no matter how terribly—we must repent and get back to the task of witnessing, overcoming the circumstances of having failed and sinned so much. We must do all we can to conquer the circumstances for Christ and continue to witness, sharing all the good we can in order to reach all we can. All must be done for Christ, for He is worthy. He has died for us, bearing our sin and punishment and freeing us to live perfectly before God for all eternity. The world does not know this—the world does not know that the cure for the cancer of sin is now available. They cannot know unless we tell them. We must share the good news—share it *regardless of circumstances*. We must always remember:

- ⇒ we conquer circumstances for Jesus Christ.
  - ⇒ we are not the victim of circumstances; we are the conquerors of circumstances—all for Jesus Christ.
  - ⇒ we are not to allow our circumstances to discourage others; we are to use our circumstances to encourage others.
- b. Paul spread the gospel by encouraging other believers to be more fearless in witnessing. How was this possible? Note several things.
- ⇒ Paul’s dynamic witness and the converts among the Imperial guard were being noised about all over the city. Of course, the new converts among the soldiers were beginning to share Christ.
  - ⇒ Paul’s fellow ministers who visited him (Timothy and others) were sharing news about Paul and witnessing themselves.
  - ⇒ Paul was allowed visitors. While a prisoner, many of the believers throughout Rome visited him and he shared Christ with them—boldly shared Christ. Note what is said:

**“And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him” (Acts 28:30-31. Read the brief account for an encouraging picture of just how much Paul shared the gospel—no matter his circumstances, Acts 28:17-31.)**

Paul’s dynamic witness made a strong impact upon all those around him. His strong witness, despite his terrible circumstances, stirred *many* believers to become much more confident in their own witnessing. Many of the believers began to witness wherever they were—no matter their circumstances.

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).**

**“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21).**

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

**“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).**

**“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).**

**“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).**

**“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Tit.2:15).**

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).**

**2** (1:15-18) **Faithfulness—Jealousy—Self-seeking:** a mature witness holds no personal jealousy nor desire for credit or prestige. This is a strange experience shared by Paul, yet it is an experience that is so often and tragically repeated in the church and among believers. Some preachers in Rome were jealous of Paul and envious...

- of the results he was having.
- of the favorable attention and prestige he was gaining from society and the social circles of the community.
- of the support and loyalty believers were giving him.
- of the attention he was receiving from so many of their members.
- of the position he was gaining as the leader of the Christian community in Rome.

Note: the preachers were true followers of Christ. They were not the Judaizers, the false preachers who sometimes followed and opposed Paul. These were genuine preachers who were ministers in and around the metropolis of Rome. We know this because Paul agreed with their preaching; he just regretted their opposition to him. Instead of supporting him, they were speaking out against him, hoping to silence his influence and to get rid of him (v.16).

However, not all the preachers throughout Rome opposed Paul. Some were preaching Christ out of love, and they were encouraging their members to show their love for Paul by visiting and supporting him in his ministry of proclaiming Christ.

**Thought 1.** How often has this scene been repeated? How many are repeating the scene right now? How many believers and Christian workers are jealous and envious...

- of the position of someone else?
- of the attention, support, and loyalty that someone else receives?
- of the results that another worker is having?

How many of us begin to question and speak against a Lord's servant because of these things—speak quietly perhaps to only one or two others; nevertheless, we do speak out? God forgive us!

We must always remember: we are *all* ministers and workers if we have been truly called by Christ to preach and teach His gospel. Each one has his call, and no matter the call, the road is always difficult. Therefore, we must support each other. The Lord does not require *big ministries* and *big names* and *big followers* from us all. What he requires is faithfulness—only faithfulness in the ministry to which he has called us. Therefore, let us be *faithful* and support all the ministers of the gospel of Christ.

**“Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me” (Jn.21:21-22).**

**“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:1-2).**

**“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake” (2 Cor.4:5).**

**“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre [personal gain], but of a ready mind” (1 Pt.5:2).**

**“His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter” (Is.56:10-11).**

**“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jer.3:15).**

**“Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord” (Jer.23:2).**

**“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?” (Ezk.34:2).**

**3** (1:19) **Deliverance:** a mature witness possesses the assurance of a happy ending—that of deliverance. Again, remember Paul's circumstances: he was in prison, but he was, as always, preaching Christ. No matter his circumstances, he was always preaching Christ; and because he was so faithful to his call, God was honoring his preaching. Tremendous results were occurring: unbelievers from all over were being saved, and believers were being encouraged to step forward and become bolder witnesses for Christ. The result was that everyone throughout all of Rome, believers and non-believers, were talking about Paul, esteeming and holding him ever so highly in their minds. However, some were beginning to show so much attention and support and loyalty to him that some of the local preachers were becoming nervous, jealous, and envious, so they began to speak out against Paul and his ministry.

The point of the present verse is this: Paul is sure God will save and deliver him from their criticism and opposition. He is sure of God's help and deliverance because of two things:

1. There was the prayer of those who supported him—both those in Rome and those around the world who were praying for him daily. Note that he was writing to the Philippians, so he knew they would begin to pray for him immediately, and God answered their prayer. Therefore, he knew that God would deliver him from such antagonistic opposition because the Philippians were praying for him even if no one else was.

**Thought 1.** What a glorious teaching for a church—a church so strong in the Lord that the answer to its prayers are always answered.

2. The supply of the Holy Spirit would deliver him. Paul knew that the Holy Spirit would supply whatever he needed to get through his circumstances. No matter what our need is nor how great our need is, the Holy Spirit will deliver us. Strauss points out why the Holy Spirit has been given to believers, and Paul knew the reasons; therefore, he knew that he would be delivered (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.79).

- a. The Holy Spirit was given to be our compassion.

**“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (Jn.14:16).**

- b. The Holy Spirit was given to counsel us.

**“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn.14:26).**

- c. The Holy Spirit was given to give us courage for witnessing no matter the circumstances.

**“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning” (Jn.15:26-27).**

- d. The Holy Spirit was given to put conviction in our lives and ministry.

**“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn.16:7-8).**

- e. The Holy Spirit was given to share the deep things of God with us.

**“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor.2:9-10).**

- f. The Holy Spirit was given to pray and intercede for us and to help us pray.

**“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Ro.8:26).**

- g. The Holy Spirit was given to bear His fruit in us.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

- h. The Holy Spirit was given to fill us and to put a song and joy in our hearts despite circumstances.

**“...be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph.5:18-19).**

- i. The Holy Spirit was given to give us assurance that we are children and heirs of God.

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).**

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|--|--|--|---|
| <p><b>1 One great expectation &amp; hope: To magnify Christ in his body</b></p> <p><b>2 One great commitment in life &amp; death: Christ</b></p> <p><b>3 One great dilemma: To live or to depart to be with Christ</b></p> | <p><b>D. The Marks of the Great Christian Believer, 1:20-26</b></p> <p>20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.</p> <p>21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.</p> <p>22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot</p> | <p>not.</p> <p>23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:</p> <p>24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.</p> <p>25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;</p> <p>26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.</p> | <p><b>4 One great willingness: To serve sacrificially</b></p> <p>a. By promoting the believer's faith</p> <p>b. By fellowshiping with believers</p> |
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**DIVISION I**

**THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, 1:3-30**

**D. The Marks of the Great Christian Believer, 1:20-26**

(1:20-26) **Introduction:** if a man has ever lived a life of commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ, it was Paul. Remember, he was in prison facing a capital crime with his deliverance looking almost hopeless. Death was staring him in the face. This passage is one of the great passages of Scripture. Verse 21 has been adopted by many believers as their life verse. Many have committed their lives to pursue either verse twenty or twenty-one. This is the personal testimony of Paul: the marks of the great Christian believer.

1. One great expectation and hope: to magnify Christ in his body (v.20).
2. One great commitment in life and death: Christ (v.21).
3. One great dilemma: to live or to depart to be with Christ (v.22-23).
4. One great willingness: to serve sacrificially (v.24-26).

**1** (1:20) **Believer, Purpose—Hope:** the great Christian believer has only one great expectation and hope—to magnify Christ in his body.

1. Note the words “earnest expectation” (apokaradokian). It means to gaze into the distance with the head erect and outstretched just like a watchman on a tower. It is aiming one’s attention at an object with concentration, eagerness, and intensity. It is turning the eyes away from everything else and focusing upon one object and one object alone. It is total concentration upon a person’s desire.

2. Note what Paul’s expectation and hope was. Remember Paul was in prison being charged with a capital crime which carried with it the penalty of death. The one hope of most prisoners would be release from prison or else to have the death penalty reduced to a lesser punishment. But note Paul’s “earnest expectation and hope”: to magnify Christ in his body. Paul’s mind was not upon his terrible plight and circumstances; it was upon Christ—upon magnifying Christ in his body. As a prisoner he wanted to guard his body from...

- wondering and questioning God
- becoming discouraged and depressed
- becoming complacent and lethargic
- becoming inactive and undisciplined
- denying and turning away from God
- reacting and cursing God

Paul knew the weakness of the human body, how it tended toward doubt, questioning, self-centeredness, pride, boasting, self-satisfaction, indulgence, extravagance, habit, lethargy, complacency, laziness, enslavement, bondage, and neglecting and ignoring God. Since his conversion, Paul had totally committed himself to magnifying Christ. And there was only one place where Christ could be *magnified and seen*: that was in his body. The only place that men can see Jesus Christ living is in the body or life of a person. Jesus Christ was no longer on the earth; therefore, He could not be seen unless Paul and others allowed Christ to magnify Himself through their bodies. Paul knew this; therefore, he gave his body to Jesus Christ.

3. Note the reference to “by life, or by death.” Paul was facing death. He did not know if he was going to die or continue living. If he was to be executed, he wanted to be as faithful as ever and to magnify Christ in death. If he was to be declared innocent and set free, he wanted to continue to magnify Christ in his body.

4. Note why Paul wanted Christ to be magnified in his body: that he might not be ashamed in anything. Paul knew that he was going to face the same thing that every believer is to face: the judgment seat of Christ. He knew that everyone of us has to give an account for what we have done with our bodies while on earth. In fact, Lehman Strauss points out that it had been only about four years earlier that Paul had written the piercing words (*Devotional Studies in Philipians*, p.81):

**“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10).**

When believers face Christ in judgment, the experience will not necessarily be peaches and cream.

⇒ There will be some believers who will be ashamed.

**“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (1 Jn.2:28).**

⇒ There will be some believers who will suffer loss and look like a burned out building.

**“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor.3:13-15).**

This is what Paul meant: he did not want to be ashamed when he stood before Christ. He loved Christ with all of his heart, for Christ had done so much for him. Therefore, his one expectation and hope was for Christ to be magnified in his body. He wanted Christ to be honored both in his life and in his death. Above all, he did not want to be ashamed when he stood before his wonderful Lord. (See notes and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Body*—Ro.12:1 for more discussion.)

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Lk.9:23-24).**

**“Neither yield ye your members [bodily parts] as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Ro.6:13).**

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

**2** (1:21) **Believer, Purpose:** the great Christian believer has one great commitment in life and death—Jesus Christ. Paul declares two phenomenal statements:

1. First, “To me to live is Christ.” What did he mean by this? He meant at least five things.
  - a. He presented his body as a living sacrifice to Jesus Christ.

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Ro.12:1).**

- b. He struggled to yield the parts of his body—every member of his body—to Christ as a tool for righteousness.

**“Neither yield ye your members [bodily parts] as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Ro.6:13).**

- c. He struggled to control his mind—to control every thought and to focus every thought upon Jesus Christ and the great virtues of life.

**“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).**

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Ph.4:8).**

- d. He committed himself to work for love and justice within all of society.

**“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Mt.7:12).**

**“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mt.22:39).**

- e. He gave his life—every moment of it—to reach and minister to as many people as possible during his journey upon earth.

**“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn.20:21. Cp. Mt.20:28 and Lk.19:10, the two verses below.)**

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

**Thought 1.** What does life mean to you? Why are you living? What is your great purpose in life?

- ⇒ Are you living for money and possessions (clothes, houses, cars, property)? If so, what do you do in a few years when you die—if you escape accident or disease? What do you do if you lose it? When that day comes—and it is coming, there is nothing in heaven or earth that can stop it—if you have lived for money, what good will it do you?
- ⇒ Are you living for comfort (a good job, a nice place to live, plenty to eat, and enough money to do what you desire now and at retirement)? If so, what happens when disease or accident or tragedy strikes or old age comes? And one or the other is coming. It cannot be stopped. If you have lived for comfort, what good will it do you?
- ⇒ Are you living for a position? If so, what do you do when you are edged out, removed, demoted, transferred, by-passed, face disease or accident? What good will position do you?
- ⇒ Are you living for family? If so, what do you do when the family has transferred, moved away, or when the various family members die? And it happens to everyone of us. What good will family do you when you face Christ?
- ⇒ Are you living for recognition, honor, popularity, recreation, gratification, sensuality—whatever? What do you do when you face the crises of life and then in the end come face to face with death? At that moment if not before, what good will anything on this earth do you?

2. This brings us to the second point of Paul. He declares that “to die is gain.” He knew better than to base his life upon these things. He knew that everything upon earth was aging and passing away including man himself. Therefore, Paul reached out for a Savior, a Person who could save him and give him an eternal world that would never age or pass away. This is the reason he grabbed hold of Christ. Jesus Christ is God’s only begotten Son whom God sent into the world to reveal the truth of another world to us, a world that is permanent and that has no corruption—no aging—no passing away in it. Therefore, Paul grabbed hold of Christ when he found out...

- that Christ saved men from sin, death, and condemnation.
- that Christ made it possible for men to live forever with God in a new heavens and earth.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Ro.14:8).

“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Ph.1:21).

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb.11:13).

“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:13-14).

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 Jn.3:14).

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Rev.21:1).

**3** (1:22-23) **Believer, Life:** the great Christian believer has one great dilemma—to live or to depart and be with Christ. The word “depart” (anulusai) is descriptive. It has a twofold meaning that speaks to the believer’s heart.

1. It means to break up; to loosen as in breaking camp and loosening the ropes of the tent. It is the picture of breaking loose; packing up; and moving on to a new location. The same picture is true of the believer when he *departs* this life. He is not ceasing to exist; he is simply breaking loose and moving on to a new campsite, in fact, a perfect campsite.

2. It means to loosen the moorings of a ship, weigh anchor, and set sail for another port. Again, the believer does not cease to exist, he simply loosens the moorings of this life, pulls the anchor up, and sets sail for God’s eternal presence.

Paul says that he is caught between two great desires:

- ⇒ One desire is to live a life of fruitful service for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ⇒ The other desire is to depart and go on to be with Christ which is far better.

The natural mind wonders and questions how a person in his right mind could ever want to go ahead and die. The reason is simply answered: the genuine believer does not die; he never tastes death. He is transferred into the presence of Christ. Immediately—quicker than the blinking of an eye—the believer is transported into the perfect world of God which is named heaven. The believer is perfected—never again to experience pain, suffering, sin, corruption, infirmity, weakness, deformity, disappointment, fear, loss, or death. He will be perfected to work for Christ throughout the new heavens and earth, and he will serve and worship Christ for ever and ever. The promises of God to the believer are phenomenal; they just explode the human mind. It is for this reason that the believer can declare: “To die is gain.”

⇒ There is the promise of never dying and of living forever with Christ.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“[God’s grace] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).**

⇒ There is the promise that is most dear to the heart of every faithful believer, the promise of being with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself forever and ever.

**“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn.14:2-3).**

**“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor.5:8).**

**“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th.4:16-17).**

⇒ There is the promise of receiving a glorious body just like our Lord’s glorious body.

**“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor.15:50-53).**

**“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).**

**“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).**

**“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mt.13:43).**

⇒ There is the promise of being made an heir of God.

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).**

⇒ There is the promise of ruling and reigning with Christ forever and ever.

**“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt.25:23).**

**“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth the light; and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev.22:5).**

Promise after promise could be listed, and reason after reason could be given as to why the faithful believer sometimes aches to go on to be with the Lord. As Barclay so aptly says, it will be a glorious day of *union and reunion*—a glorious day of union with our wonderful Lord and a glorious day of reunion with all our loved ones who have gone on ahead of us (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.34). The only word that can adequately express all that God has prepared for us who know Him is the word that is the same in all human languages: *Hallelujah!*

**“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Mt.24:44).**

**“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning” (Mk.13:35).**

**“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding” (Lk.12:35-36).**

**4** (1:24-26) **Believer—Ministry:** the great Christian believer has one great willingness—to serve sacrificially. This is an interesting statement by Paul. Sitting there in prison waiting for the trial which would determine whether he lived or died, something happened to Paul. Either through thinking about the needs that existed in the world and in the churches, or through some sense from the Holy Spirit, Paul became convinced that he would be found innocent of the false charges and released from prison. But note why: it was not for his sake and enjoyment of life, but so that he could continue to minister.

The point to see is Paul’s heart—how it longed to reach people for Christ and to meet the needs of a world that reels under the weight of desperation.

**“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Ro.14:19).**

**“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Ro.15:2).**

**“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:11-12).**

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>1 <b>Mark 1: Christian conduct—heavenly citizenship</b><br/>                 2 <b>Mark 2: Honoring the gospel</b><br/>                 3 <b>Mark 3: Standing fast</b><br/>                 a. Must stand fast in one spirit &amp; with one mind<br/>                 b. Must stand fast in striving together for the faith of the gospel</p> | <p><b>E. The Marks of the Great Christian Church, 1:27-30</b></p> <p>27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.</p> | <p>28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.<br/>                 29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;<br/>                 30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.</p> | <p><b>4 Mark 4: Courage &amp; fearlessness</b><br/>                 a. Persecution is a sign of destruction<br/>                 b. Persecution is a sign of salvation<br/>                 c. Persecution is a privilege<br/> <br/>                 d. Paul left a dynamic example in bearing persecution</p> |
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## DIVISION I

### THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, 1:3-30

#### E. The Marks of the Great Christian Church, 1:27-30

(1:27-30) **Introduction:** Paul was in prison. He faced a capital crime and there was a strong chance he might be executed. He did not think so, but there was a possibility. He was not sure if he would ever see the Philippian church again, so he sat down and began to write to them. What would you say if you were writing to a group of God's people for the last time? One of the subjects that concerned Paul was the subject of this passage: the marks of a great church. The Philippian church was a great church, and Paul wanted it to remain great. Therefore, he reviewed with them the marks of a great Christian church.

1. Mark 1: Christian conduct—heavenly citizenship (v.27).
2. Mark 2: honoring the gospel (v.27).
3. Mark 3: standing fast (v.27).
4. Mark 4: courage and fearlessness (v.28-30).

**1** (1:27) **Citizenship, Heavenly—Believers, Duty:** the first mark of a great church is *Christian conduct* or heavenly citizenship. The word “conversation” or “conduct” (*politeuesthe*) is significant. A.T. Robertson points out that this word is used only twice in the New Testament (Acts 23:1; Ph.1:27) (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.441). Usually, when the New Testament refers to behavior or conduct, it uses a word meaning how a person should walk about day by day (*peripatein*). But Paul switches the word in writing to the Philippians. Why? The reason is significant. As stated in the introductory material, Philippi was a proud Roman colony. In fact, it was famous as a miniature Rome. A city became a Roman colony by one of two ways. At first Rome founded colonies throughout the outer reaches of the Empire to keep the peace and to guard against invasions from barbaric hordes. Veteran soldiers, ready for retirement, were usually granted citizenship if they would go out and settle these colonies. Later on, however, a city was granted the distinctive title or a Roman Colony for loyalty and service to the Empire. The distinctive thing about these colonies was their fanatic loyalty to Rome. The citizens kept all their Roman ties: the Roman language, titles, customs, affairs, and dress. They refused to allow any infiltration of local influence whatsoever. They totally rejected the influence of the world around them. They were Roman colonists within an alien environment.

This is the reason Paul uses the word *politeuesthe*. It means conduct and behavior, but more accurately it means the *conduct and behavior of citizenship*, of a person who is the citizen of a great nation. The Philippian church knew exactly what Paul was saying: they were citizens of heaven. Therefore, they must...

- keep their close ties with heaven.
- speak the clean and pure language of heaven.
- bear the title of heaven, Christian, and do so proudly.
- bear witness to the customs of heaven.
- carry on the affairs of heaven.
- dress as a citizen of heaven.
- allow no infiltration of worldly influence whatsoever.
- live and conduct themselves as a heavenly colony within a polluted and dying environment.

**“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Ph.1:9-10).**

**“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim.4:12).**

**“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation [behavior, conduct] his works with meekness of wisdom” (Jas.3:13).**

**“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according**

to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness”  
(2 Pt.3:10-13).

**2** (1:27) **Church—Believers:** the second mark of a great church is honoring the *gospel*. The word “becometh” or worthy (*axios*) means to fit, correspond, be suitable, be worthy. The believer’s behavior is to...

- fit the gospel he professes.
- correspond to the gospel he professes.
- be suitable to the gospel he professes.
- be worthy of the gospel he professes.

No church and no believer within the church is to bring dishonor to the gospel. If a person professes the gospel he is to live worthy of the gospel. His conduct and behavior is to fit and correspond to the gospel he professes.

Lehman Strauss points out that this is the picture of clothing which is so often stressed by Scripture (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.94). We often say that some piece of clothing is becoming to a person. What we mean is that the clothing matches and enhances the person’s looks and personality. The same with the gospel of Christ. If we put on the gospel, we are to wear the gospel. Scripture declares:

“Adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things” (Tit.2:10).

“But now ye also put off [as clothing] all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:8-10).

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness” (Col.3:12-14).

**3** (1:27) **Stedfastness—Church:** the third mark of a great church is standing fast. Remember that Paul was in prison, awaiting trial on a capital charge. There was a chance he would be executed for a false crime. He thought he would be released, but he was not absolutely sure. Therefore, whether he was able to return to the church or not, there was a much needed exhortation that the church must heed: the exhortation to stand fast.

1. The church must stand fast in *unity*: “in *one spirit*, with *one mind*.”

⇒ *One spirit* means that all the members of a church must be born again by the Spirit of Christ. All members must have a renewed spirit from the same source, from the same Person. They must all be committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. They must all have a heart given to Him.

⇒ *One mind* means that all members must be set upon the same purpose; they must all be focused upon the purpose of Jesus Christ.

The point is this: the world—its people, families, and nations—may be split and divided, arguing and differing, fussing and feuding, fighting and divorcing, warring and killing, seeking and grasping; but the church is not to live that way. The church is to be unified; it is to be one in spirit and one in mind; one in heart and one in purpose.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor.1:10).

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor.13:11).

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:3).

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Pt.3:8).

2. The church must stand fast in striving together for the faith of the gospel. The word “striving together” (*sunathlountes*) is the word taken from an athletic contest. It is the picture of a team working and struggling together against strong opposition (cp. a football team). The church—every member of it—is to strive for the faith of the gospel: strive, work, struggle, push, exert all the energy possible; everyone cooperating together, not a single person letting up or turning aside or walking off the field. The opposition is difficult; therefore, the faith of the gospel needs every member working and struggling together.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).

“This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Tit.1:13).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pt.5:8-9).

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

**4** (1:28-30) **Courage—Persecution:** the fourth mark of a great church is courage and fearlessness. Being a Christian believer in a corrupt world is hard. People oppose our stand for Christ and righteousness. It may be next door, in the office, at school or a hundred other places—the Christian believer is sometimes...

- |             |              |              |              |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| • avoided   | • ignored    | • cursed     | • slandered  |
| • ridiculed | • neglected  | • questioned | • persecuted |
| • mocked    | • overlooked | • abused     | • imprisoned |
| • isolated  | • by-passed  | • mistreated | • martyred   |

Note the exhortation: we are not to be terrified by our adversaries. There are four reasons why.

1. Persecution is a sign that the persecutors are doomed. And note: it is a sign *to them*. The Spirit of God is able to take their persecution of us and convict their hearts of the evil they are doing. Their persecution of a fellow human being strikes the fact of doom and judgment to their hearts: it convicts them, and by that conviction they stand a better chance of being saved.

2. Persecution is a sign of salvation for us. Of course, it is not the only sign, but it is one sign. If a believer stands fast in persecution, it is a clear sign that he is being strengthened by the Spirit of God and is a true believer.

3. Persecution is a privilege, not a terror. When we are persecuted, we are suffering for Christ, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. Christ is not some *insignificant rebel*, some *leader of men* hiding out in some remote spot who embarrasses us and of whom we should be ashamed. Christ is the Son of God, the Lord of lords, the God of the universe, the Sovereign Majesty of all. It is a privilege to be numbered among His followers and to represent Him. If we happen to be cornered by some who oppose and rebel against Him, we are not to deny Him, nor be ashamed to own His name. We are not to be terrified by persecution. It is the highest honor imaginable to represent and serve the Lord God of all. He is coming soon to subject all opponents and enemies and to rule and reign over all. We could have no greater privilege than preparing the way for Him—even if some do oppose us.

4. Paul (and others) had left the church a dynamic example to follow in bearing persecution. Paul had been arrested, beaten, and jailed when he was in Philippi; and the church had witnessed the whole scene. He bore it all for Christ. Therefore, we are to follow in his steps and bear whatever persecution is launched against us—all for Christ. The great Christian soldier can bear it—through the presence and power of Christ—bear it as a great Christian soldier for Christ.

“But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues” (Mt.10:17).

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” (Mt.24:9).

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn.15:20).

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).

“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto” (1 Th.3:3).

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (1 Pt.4:12-14).

“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1 Pt.4:16).

“All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me” (Ps.119:86).

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | <b>CHAPTER 2</b>  | bowels and mercies,<br>2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be<br>likeminded, having the same<br>love, being of one accord, of<br>one mind.    | <b>4 The trait of compassion</b>  |
|  | <b>II. THE STEPS TO UNITY,<br/>2:1-18</b>   | 3 Let nothing be done<br>through strife or vainglory;<br>but in lowliness of mind let<br>each esteem other better than<br>themselves. | <b>5 The trait of concern for<br/>one another's joy</b>                                 |
|  | <b>A. Christ—The Traits of<br/>His Life in Us, 2:1-4</b>  | 4 Look not every man on his<br>own things, but every man<br>also on the things of others.   | <b>6 The trait of humility or<br/>lowliness of mind<sup>DSI</sup></b>                   |
| <b>1 The trait of consolation</b>                  | If there be therefore any<br>consolation in Christ, if any<br>comfort of love, if any fel-<br>lowship of the Spirit, if any |   | <b>7 The trait of controlling<br/>self-interest or concen-<br/>tration upon oneself</b> |
| <b>2 The trait of love</b>                         |   |   |   |
| <b>3 The trait of fellowship in<br/>the Spirit</b> |   |   |   |

## DIVISION II

### THE STEPS TO UNITY, 2:1-18

#### A. Christ—The Traits of His Life in Us, 2:1-4

(2:1-4) **Introduction:** the Philippian church was a strong church—a very strong church. When a church is strong, it is always full of vision and planning, and it is always working out a strategy to carry forth the gospel. A strong church launches ministry after ministry and program after program. It is never still and never complacent—neither the minds of the people nor the hands of the people. Because of this, there is always the danger of differences of opinion: differences in vision, desires, concern, emphasis, and interest. There are always different ideas as to which ministry or project should be undertaken and supported and a host of other differences.

The point is this: the more strength and activity a church has, the more attention it must give to unity. Why? Because a strong church has more minds and bodies working, and where more people are working more differences are bound to arise. Consequently, the members must give more attention to unity.

Paul knew this; he knew that he had to put the Philippian church on guard. The church had to protect itself against disunity and division. This is the subject of chapter two: The Steps to Unity (2:1-18).

The first step to unity is Christ—allowing His life to be lived out in us. In particular there are seven traits that will hold the church together and keep it unified.

1. The trait of consolation (v.1).
2. The trait of love (v.1).
3. The trait of fellowship in the Spirit (v.1).
4. The trait of compassion (v.1).
5. The trait of concern for one another's joy (v.2).
6. The trait of humility or lowliness of mind (v.3).
7. The trait of controlling self-interest or concentration upon oneself (v.4).

**1** (2:1) **Consolation—Encouragement:** there is the trait of consolation (paraklesis). The word means many things throughout Scripture; but in the present context it means encouragement, comfort, solace, exhortation, and strengthening. Note that this trait is a characteristic of Christ Himself. The very beat of His Spirit is to encourage, comfort, and strengthen believers to be one in spirit and busy about the ministry of His church. Christ wants no murmuring, no grumbling, disturbance, or weakening of the unity within the church. The Spirit of Christ is to take the disturbed or upset person and...

- console him
- comfort him
- encourage him
- strengthen him

Now glance at the charge of verse two:

⇒ “Be likeminded”—be just like Christ: console, comfort, encourage, exhort, and strengthen each other.

Let absolutely nothing interfere with the spirit of unity in the church. But note, we are not only to help those who are disturbed, we are to let the comfort and encouragement of Christ flow in us when we are disturbed. When disturbed, we are to let Christ comfort us; and when others are disturbed, we are to comfort them. Just imagine the spirit of unity that would flow through a church if all the members would let the consolation of Christ flow through them. There would be no murmuring, grumbling, disturbance—no disunity whatsoever.

**“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (Jn.14:18).**

**“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do” (1 Th.5:11).**

**“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God” (Is.40:1).**

**2** (2:1) **Love:** there is the trait of love. There is a comfort (paramuthion) of love that is in Christ. The love of Christ stirs a person to keep the unity with other believers. The word “love” is *agape love*, the love that is selfless and sacrificial. *Agape love* is the love of the mind, of the reason, and of the will. It is the love that goes so far...

- that it loves a person even if he does not deserve to be loved.
- that actually loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.

Agape love is the love of Christ, the love which He showed when He gave and sacrificed Himself for us. We did not deserve it and were utterly unworthy of such love, yet Christ loved us despite all.

Imagine the spirit of unity that would exist within a church if every member would let the love of Christ flow through him. There would be no bitterness, anger, or strife—no action that would hurt another person whatsoever. If the person was wrong and deserved punishment, the church’s members would sacrifice and give themselves for him. Note verse two:

⇒ “Have the same love”—the same love Christ had for you.

**Thought 1.** This is the answer to unity: the Lord’s spirit of love! How desperately the church needs its members to let the love of Christ flow through them to each other!

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn.15:12).

“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).

“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).

**3** (2:1) **Holy Spirit, Fellowship:** there is the trait of fellowship in the Spirit. Once a person has trusted Jesus Christ as his Lord, God’s Spirit does two significant things to him.

⇒ The Holy Spirit enters the believer’s heart and life to comfort, guide, teach, equip, and use him as a witness for Christ.

⇒ The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual union between the new believer and other believers. He melts and moulds the heart of the believer to the hearts of other believers. He attaches all their lives together, and they become one in life and purpose. They have a joint life sharing their blessings and needs and gifts together—all focused upon their Lord and His purpose.

The mind of the Holy Spirit is set upon unity and fellowship—all centered around Jesus Christ and His mission. The church and its believers are to have the same mind. There are to be no discordant elements whatsoever in the church: no talk about differences; no sharing of bad news; no gossip, rumors, cliques, nothing whatsoever that would tamper with or disturb the fellowship of the Spirit in the church. Again, quickly glance at verse two:

⇒ “*Be of one accord*”—keep the unity of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Spirit.

**4** (2:1) **Compassion:** there is the trait of compassion. Compassion is the trait that stirred Christ to reach out for us. Compassion is the force that drives Him to keep after us time and again—even if we are in rebellion and stand opposed to Him. We may be cantankerous; we may even curse Him and take up arms against His movement. But His compassion drives Him to stay after us so long as we live.

If we allowed His compassion to flow through us, can you not see what would happen in the church? What would happen if we were driven by compassion to go after those...

- who have been hurt?
- who differed?
- who withdrew?
- who have been disturbed?
- who were critical?

The list could go on and on. But just think how many would have already been reconciled back into the fellowship of the church if we had been compassionate and gone after them. Just think how much less trouble would have happened if we had reached out in *compassion* when a difference first appeared.

The point is this: we are to let the compassion of Christ flow both in and through us. His compassion will comfort us when we differ and are disturbed; it will stir us to reach out in compassion when others differ and become disturbed. The compassion of Jesus Christ flowing in and through us keeps the unity of the church. It will also keep our minds together—keep them focused upon the needs of a world that must be reached and ministered to in compassion.

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:15-16).

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Pt.3:8).

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him” (Ps.103:13).

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Is.63:9).

**5** (2:2) **Joy:** there is the trait of joy. The believers in a church are to be concerned for each other’s joy. And note: the one thing that brings joy to a church quicker than anything else is unity.

“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (v.2).

Paul’s point is simple but direct: his joy in Christ would be fulfilled by only one thing—the unity of the Philippian church. The leaders and members of a church usually have joy in Christ, but their joy can be fulfilled only if unity exists between them. Joy is always disturbed when there is criticism, dissatisfaction, grumbling, murmuring, cliques, opposition, and a host of other divisive negatives. We are to worship, plan, organize, program, build, staff, finance, minister, and serve in the joy of Christ. But the only way we can do that is...

- to be likeminded.
- to have the same love.
- to be of one accord.
- to be of one mind.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (Jn.15:11).

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).

“For the kingdom of God [the church] is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:17).

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor.1:10).

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor.13:11).

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:3).

**6** (2:3) **Humility—Lowliness of Mind:** there is the trait of humility or lowliness of mind. Note two significant points.

1. A strong and active church will always have two problems to stick their ugly heads up: *strife and empty glory*.
  - a. Some people are just going to *strive* with others. They are not mature in the Lord, not yet; therefore, they give in to...

- |                             |                          |                   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| • talking about differences | • desire for position    | • loving flattery |
| • jealousy                  | • desire for recognition | • forming cliques |
| • envy                      | • opposition             |                   |

If they do not get their way or what they want, they strive against the church or other members. The result is disunity and divisiveness, one of the most terrible crimes within the church to God.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Ph.2:3).

“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Tim.2:14).

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim.2:24).

“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth” (Jas.3:14).

“Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm” (Pr.3:30).

“It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling” (Pr.20:3).

“Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame” (Pr.25:8).

“He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears” (Pr.26:17).

- b. Some people are going to *seek glory* within the church. But note what Scripture calls it: vainglory, which means empty glory. Some people just want the attention, the recognition, the position, the flattery, the praise, the honor. They want people seeking their advice and counsel and opinion. They want to be on the major committees and acknowledged as a leader of the church.

“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Mt.23:12).

“And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest” (Lk.22:24).

“How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” (Jn.5:44).

“He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction” (Pr.17:19).

“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High” (Is.14:13-14).

**“Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord” (Obad.4).**

2. The spirit that must prevail in a strong church is that of humility or lowliness of mind. In fact, the only way a church can remain strong and be blessed by God is for its people to walk in a spirit of humility (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Humility*—Ph.2:3).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(2:3) **Humility (tapeinophrosune)—Lowliness of Mind (tapeinos):** to offer oneself as lowly and submissive; to walk in a spirit of lowliness; to present oneself as lowly and low-lying in mind; to be of low degree and low rank; not to be high-minded, proud, haughty, arrogant, or assertive.

Note: a humble person may have a high position, power, wealth, fame, and much more; but he carries himself in a spirit of lowliness and submission. He denies himself for the sake of Christ and in order to help others.

Men have always looked upon humility as a vice. A lowly man is often looked upon as a coward, a cringing, despicable, slavish type of person. Men fear humility. They feel humility is a sign of weakness and will make them the object of contempt and abuse and cause them to be shunned and overlooked.

Because of all this, men ignore and shun the teaching of Christ on humility. This is tragic:

⇒ for a humble spirit is necessary for salvation (Mt.18:3-4).

⇒ for God’s idea of humility is not weakness and cowardice.

God makes people strong, the strongest they can possibly be. By humility God does not mean what men mean. God infuses a new and strong spirit within a person and causes that person to conquer all throughout life. He just does not want the person walking around in pride. He wants the person to do what the definition says: to offer himself in a spirit of submissiveness and lowliness; not to act highminded, proud, haughty, arrogant, or assertive.

Humility is to be developed. Scripture tells us how:

**“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Mt.11:29).**

**“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:3-4).**

**“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Mt.23:12).**

**“Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Ro.12:16).**

**“Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (Eph.4:1-2).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col.3:12-13).**

**“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Pt.5:6).**

Contrary to what the world thinks, humility reaps unbelievable benefits. A close study of the above verses shows this.

1. Humility results in a person coming to Christ and learning of Him. It leads to self-evaluation, an honest and courageous evaluation. When a person looks at Jesus Christ, he sees what he should be and it motivates him to become what he should be. He sees where he needs improvement and he is driven to fill in the gaps.

2. Humility results in conversion, assuring our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

3. Humility results in our being exalted by Christ in that glorious day of redemption.

4. Humility results in healthy relationships and in community and social benefits (cp. Ro.12:16; Eph.4:1-2; Ph.2:3-4; Col.3:12-13; 1 Pt.5:6). For example...

- It acknowledges and boosts others.
- It leads to better relationships.
- It encourages and helps others.
- It motivates others to grow and do more.

Christ demands that His followers walk in humility. Practicing humility demands two things.

1. Humility requires an honest evaluation of oneself. Barclay points this out (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.39). Humility comes from knowing ourselves, just who we really are. It comes from an honest appraisal of ourselves. It takes courage to look at ourselves and it takes honesty to see ourselves as we really are: basically self-centered, a bundle of self-admiration and self-love. We tend to dramatize ourselves. We tend to see ourselves unrealistically. We see ourselves...

- at the center of action.
- as the hero of some spectacular rescue.
- as the great politician marching to victory.

- as the reknown sportsman saving the game in the last second or bagging a record catch.
- as the beauty queen dazzling the crowds.
- as the laborer of brilliance.
- as Prince Charming or Cinderella sweeping others off their feet.

We are always at the center of the picture. Humility begins to come when we honestly face ourselves and admit our self-centeredness. Self-centeredness weakens and limits relationships and achievements. Humility reaches its height when we lose our lives in the cause of Christ and welfare of others.

2. Humility requires courage. It takes courage to be honest about our self-centeredness, and courage to convert or to change by coming to Christ as a small child (Mt.18:3-4). It takes courage to become Christ-centered and people-centered and to give ourselves to the cause of Christ and others.

**“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Ro.12:16).**

**“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor.8:2).**

**“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal.6:3).**

**“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:16).**

**“Thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down” (2 Sam.22:28).**

**“The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined” (Ps.10:2).**

**“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom” (Pr.11:2).**

**“Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom” (Pr.13:10).**

**“Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Pr.16:18).**

**“A high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin” (Pr.21:4).**

**“Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him” (Pr.26:12).**

**“He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat” (Pr.28:25).**

**“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Is.5:21).**

**“The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish” (Is.24:4).**

**“Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD” (Obad.4).**

**“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him” (Hab.2:4).**

**“In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain” (Zeph.3:11).**

**7** (2:4) **Humility:** there is the trait of controlling self-interest or what Barclay calls concentration on self (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.40). Very simply, a Christian believer must forget himself. He must quit looking upon his own things, his...

- |            |                    |                                |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| • ambition | • being neglected  | • not being recognized         |
| • desires  | • being overlooked | • not being honored            |
| • position | • being by-passed  | • not being given the position |
| • wants    | • being ignored    |                                |

Believers are to concentrate upon Christ and His ministry to people and reaching the world with the glorious gospel of salvation. They are not to be focused upon self. The world is too needful and too desperate for any believer to be focused upon himself. Every believer is needed to reach the lost and lonely, the shut-ins and helpless, the hungry and cold, the sinful and doomed of his community and city, country and world. Every believer does not need to be thinking on his own things, but on the things of others. He needs to be out...

- |               |            |                |              |
|---------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| • visiting    | • sharing  | • transporting | • counseling |
| • ministering | • feeding  | • listening    | • planning   |
| • helping     | • clothing | • advising     | • teaching   |

**“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Mt.19:21).**

**“I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not” (Mt.25:43).**

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Lk.9:23-24).**

**“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth” (1 Cor.10:24).**

**“Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved” (1 Cor.10:33).**

**“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor.8:9).**

**“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:4).**

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|   | <b>B. Humbling One's Self, 2:5-11</b>  | himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.   | <b>humiliation—to the very point of death</b>      |
| <b>1 Christ is the supreme example</b>                | 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:   | 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:                             | <b>5 Christ was rewarded—highly exalted by God</b> |
| <b>2 Christ is of the very nature of God</b>          | 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:                                      | 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; | a. Given a name above every name                   |
| <b>3 Christ emptied Himself &amp; became a man</b>    | 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: | 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.                        | b. Given supreme power & authority                 |
| <b>4 Christ humbled Himself to the point of utter</b> | 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled  |   | c. Given supreme worship as Lord <sup>DS1</sup>    |

**DIVISION II**

**THE STEPS TO UNITY, 2:1-18**

**B. Humbling One's Self, 2:5-11**

(2:5-11) **Introduction:** this is one of the greatest passages ever written about Jesus Christ. It paints the perfect picture of humility—the humility of Jesus Christ. No one has ever come close to humbling himself like Jesus Christ did, and no one ever will. Yet, if the problems of the church and of the world are to ever be solved, we must humble ourselves just as Christ did. The church is too often divided, too often rumbling with criticism, murmuring, differences, jealousy, envy, ambition, outside talk, negative feelings, and desires for position and recognition. The only answer is the declaration of this passage: humility—letting the humility of Jesus Christ flow in and out of our minds. Humility is the second step to unity. The unity of a church depends upon one thing: its members walking in humility—in the humility of Jesus Christ.

1. Christ is the supreme example (v.5).
2. Christ is of the very nature of God (v.6).
3. Christ emptied Himself and became a man (v.7).
4. Christ humbled Himself to the point of utter humiliation—to the very point of death (v.8).
5. Christ was rewarded—highly exalted by God (v.9-11).

**1** (2:5) **Jesus Christ, Humility:** Jesus Christ is the supreme example of humility. As stated, this is one of the greatest passages ever written about Jesus Christ. Very simply, the passage says that Jesus Christ is God, yet He humbled Himself and became Man. Jesus Christ is the Person who dwelt in all the glory of perfection, but He humbled Himself and came to this corruptible world that knows little else other than selfishness, greed and death. Just imagine the enormous step down that Jesus Christ had to take to become a Man. It is utterly impossible to grasp the humility it took. Yet, this is exactly what He did and it is what we are to do. The very same *mind* that existed in Jesus Christ—that led Christ to give up everything He was and had—that very mind is to be in us. The only way the problems of the world can be solved is for every person to let the mind of Christ flood his mind. Consider the problems of...

- war
- hate
- anger
- arguing
- abuse
- prejudice
- selfishness
- pride
- cockiness
- haughtiness
- arrogance
- cursing
- indulgence
- extravagance
- hoarding
- greed
- stealing
- envy
- hunger
- homeless
- poverty
- disease
- jealousy
- immorality

The list could go on and on. How can these problems ever be solved unless we step down from where we are to where needy people are? Unless we step down and humble ourselves—step down to where hurting people are—these problems will never be solved. Realistically, most people are not going to do this. Most people are not going to take all they are and have and get down to where the needs really are. But the Christian is to do this. This is the point of the present passage: Jesus Christ *set and focused His mind* upon humbling Himself. He took all He was and had and came down where we are and met our need. Now...

**“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”**

Take the mind of Christ and let it flow through you. Let the mind of humility and lowliness surge through your mind. Take all you are and have and get down where the needs really are. Do all you can to solve the divisiveness and cliques, grumbling and murmuring, selfish ambition and pride, desire for position and power, greed and selfishness, hurt and pain—both in the church and in the world. Humble yourself and do all you can to solve the awful problems that afflict the church and the world. Humble yourself as Christ did and become part of the solution instead of the problem. Look at the mind of Christ. Lay hold of it as it is descriptively pictured in the notes that follow. Do not miss out on the opportunity of an eternity—the glorious privilege of possessing the very mind of Christ Himself.

**2** (2:6) **Jesus Christ, Deity:** Christ is of the very nature of God. This is critical to note, for it means...

- that Jesus Christ was not *like God*; He is God.
- that Jesus Christ did not just *achieve a high level of righteousness* when on earth, He was the very embodiment of righteousness.
- that Jesus Christ did not just *walk more perfectly* than other men walk, He was the very *picture (essence) of perfection*.
- that Jesus Christ did not become God when on earth, He has been God throughout all eternity.

Three points in this verse clearly show that Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ is of the very nature of God.

1. Jesus Christ is of the “*being*” of God. The word “being” (huparchon) means existence, what a person is within and without. It is the very essence of a person, what a person is; that part of a person that cannot be changed. It is who a person is and all that he is.

This is a most glorious truth because it means that *Jesus Christ is God*; He is the very *being of God*.

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn.1:1).**

2. Jesus Christ is *in the form of God*. The word form (morphe) means the permanent, constant being of a person. It is the very essence of a person, that part of him that never changes. It is the unchangeable being. Barclay points out that there is another Greek word translated “form” (schema). In contrast, it means the fleeting, outward form of a person that is always changing. For example, a man is always changing (schema) in looks because of age and fashion. But his manhood (morphe) never changes. (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.44.)

This means a most glorious thing. Jesus is of the very essence and being and image of God. He is the divine, unchangeable God Himself. He dwells in the very perfection and essence of God; He possesses the very attributes of God Himself.

**“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:3).**

**“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Col.1:15).**

3. Jesus Christ is “equal with God” (Greek). The word “equal” (isa) means to be *on an equal basis with God*; to possess all the qualities and attributes of God Himself. Note also the word “robbery” (arpagmon). It is the picture of a thief seeking to snatch or take something that is not his. When Jesus Christ was on earth, He was constantly claiming...

- to be God.
- to be the Son of God.
- to have the nature of God.
- to be one with God.
- to be *on an equal basis with God*.

Was He a thief? Was He robbing and snatching the title of God or was He truly God?

The answer is a most glorious truth. Jesus Christ did not have to rob or snatch at equality with God. He did not have to rob and grasp after the deity of God; He was already on an equal basis with God.

**“I and my Father are one” (Jn.10:30).**

**“Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God” (Jn.10:32-33).**

**“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (Jn.8:58).**

**3** (2:7) **Jesus Christ, Humiliation; Condescension:** Christ emptied Himself and became a man. Remember that we are dealing with the subject of humility—the fact that Jesus Christ took one great step down from heaven to earth. The step down was so great and so far that theologians do not call it *the humility of Christ, but the humiliation of Christ*. The Sovereign Lord of the universe—He who existed...

- in eternity and perfection
- in glory and majesty
- in dominion and power

...stepped down and became a man. But more than this: He who was the Lord and Master of the universe—who deserved all the honor and service of all living creatures—took upon Himself the form of a servant. He became the Servant of men—not only of God, but the *servant of men*. Imagine!

- ⇒ The Lord whom we are to serve, came and served us.
- ⇒ The Lord whom we are to love, came and loved us.
- ⇒ The Lord whom we are to adore, came and adored us.
- ⇒ The Lord whom we are to wait upon, came and waited upon us.
- ⇒ The Lord whom we are to minister to, came and ministered to us.
- ⇒ The Lord whom we are to seek, came and sought us.

The great distance between the majesty of Christ in heaven and the humiliation of Christ upon earth can never be measured. Our understanding of the distance would amount to no more than a small bucket of water compared to the great ocean. But we are commanded to let *the same mind of humility* flow through us; therefore, we must study the deep humility of Jesus Christ and do our best to grasp and practice it. Two statements in this verse need diligent study.

1. Jesus Christ made Himself of no reputation; that is, He *emptied Himself*. The word “emptied” (ekenosen) means to completely empty. It is the picture of pouring water out of a glass until it is empty or of dumping something until it is all removed (Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.44). The very picture of being completely empty stirs a feeling of just how far Christ went in humbling Himself for us. What was it that was poured or emptied out of Jesus Christ when He left heaven and came to earth? (This is what theologians call the *kenosis theory*.) Note that this passage does not say. It only says that Christ *emptied Himself*. Other Scriptures, however, give some indication. (See note, pt.4—Mk.13:32 for more discussion.)

- a. Christ did not lay aside His deity when He came to earth. He could not cease to be who He was: God. No person can ever cease to be who he is. A person may take on different traits and behave differently; a person may change his behavior and looks, but he is the same person in being, nature, and essence. Jesus Christ is God; therefore, He is always God—He always possesses the nature of God (See notes—Jn.1:1-2 for more discussion.)
- b. Christ laid aside some of His rights as God:
  - ⇒ He laid aside His right to *experience only the glory* and majesty, honor and worship of heaven. In coming to earth as a man, He was to experience anything but glory and majesty, honor and worship. Men would treat Him far differently than a heavenly being.
  - ⇒ He laid aside His right to *appear only in heaven* and to appear only as the Sovereign God of heaven. In coming to earth as a man, He was, of course, to appear as a man on earth.

Matthew Henry has a brief but excellent statement of the fact:

*“He emptied Himself, divested Himself of the honors and glories of the upper world, and of His former appearance, to clothe Himself with the rags of human nature” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary, Vol.6, p.732f).*

As stated above, Jesus Christ emptied Himself of certain rights: the right to *appear only in heaven* and to *experience only the glory of heaven*. This is exactly what Jesus Christ Himself said when He was about to be crucified and return to heaven. He was praying to the Father when He said:

**“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (Jn.17:5).**

⇒ This is also the point of other Scriptures.

**“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham [the nature of man]. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Heb.2:16-18).**

**“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:14-16).**

2. Jesus Christ “*was made* in the likeness of men.” The word “was made” (genomai) means to become; a definite entrance into time. It is not a permanent state. Jesus became a man, but it was not to be a permanent state. It was only for a time, a particular period. In the fulness of time He made a definite entrance into the world as a man.

**Thought 1.** Note that Jesus Christ did not come to earth as a prince or some great leader upon earth. He did not come to receive the homage and service of men. He came as the humblest of men, as a servant to serve men. “He was brought up meanly, probably working with his supposed father at his trade. His whole life was a life of humiliation, meanness, poverty, and disgrace; he had nowhere to lay his head, lived upon alms, was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, did not appear with external pomp, or any marks of distinction from other men. This was the humiliation of his life” (Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol.6, p.732f).

**“For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth” (Lk.22:27).**

**“He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded” (Jn.13:4-5).**

**“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor.8:9).**

**“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Ph.2:7).**

**4** (2:8) **Jesus Christ, Death; Humiliation; Condescension:** Christ humbled Himself to the point of utter humiliation—to the very point of death—“even the death of the cross.” Note two significant points.

1. Jesus Christ humbled Himself to the Father. He was obedient to God the Father. It was the Father's will for Christ to come to earth and to die for the sins of men. And Christ did it; He obeyed God the Father.

**"No man taketh it [His life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (Jn.10:18).**

**"But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do [go forth and die]. Arise, let us go hence" (Jn.14:31).**

**"For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous" (Ro.5:19).**

**"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb.10:9).**

2. Jesus Christ humbled Himself to men. He willingly allowed men to kill Him. He did not have to bear such hostile humiliation and rebellion, but He did. Just picture what is involved in the death of the cross.

- ⇒ Christ humbled Himself to die.
- ⇒ Christ humbled Himself to come out of the spiritual and eternal world (dimension) into the physical and corruptible world in order to die.
- ⇒ Christ humbled Himself to lay aside His eternal glory and majesty and become a man for the purpose of dying.
- ⇒ Christ humbled Himself to suffer rejection, denial, cursing, abuse, arrest, torture, and murder at the hands of rebellious men—whom He had originally created for the joy of eternity—rebellious men whom He had come to save.
- ⇒ Christ humbled Himself to take all the sins of men upon Himself and to bear the weight and suffering of them all.
- ⇒ Christ humbled Himself to bear the judgment and condemnation and punishment of sin for every man.
- ⇒ Christ humbled Himself to suffer the awful experience of having God the Father turn His back upon Him.
- ⇒ Christ humbled Himself to suffer the terrible justice and wrath of God against sin.
- ⇒ Christ humbled Himself to bear the pain of suffering for sin eternally. Christ is eternal; therefore, His death is ever before the face of God. (Just imagine! It is beyond our comprehension, but the Lord's eternal agony is fact because of the eternal nature of God.)

The discussion could go on and on, but the point is well made by Scripture. Jesus Christ not only humbled Himself to become the servant of men, He humbled Himself to suffer the ultimate degree of humiliation:

⇒ *Jesus Christ became sin for men and died as their sin before the just wrath of God.*

In a sense, hanging there upon the cross Christ was not even a man; He was sin, the very embodiment of sin. In some way He embraced all the sin of the world and died for the sins of men.

**"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor.5:21).**

**"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one [all criminals] that hangeth on a tree" (Gal.3:13).**

**"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb.2:9).**

**"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pt.2:24).**

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pt.3:18).**

**Thought 1.** Remember the point of this passage: the fact that we must let the humility of Jesus Christ flow in and through us. We are to be humble—to walk in humility before each other—to go to the extreme of humility, even if it means humiliation before each other. Why? So that the church can be unified. Unity is to prevail among us. We are to live and breathe unity. There is to be no discord in God's church:

- no divisiveness
- no grumbling
- no murmuring
- no criticism
- no jealousy
- no personal ambition
- no self-seeking
- no prejudice
- no negative truth
- no downing of others
- no air of superiority

But note: the only way we can ever know such unity is to let the mind of Christ captivate our mind. We must study, think, and learn the humility of Christ. We must let His humility flow in and through us.

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Ph.2:3-5).**

**5** (2:9-11) **Jesus Christ, Exaltation:** Christ was rewarded—God highly exalted Him. Christ had humbled Himself in obedience to God the Father, and because He was faithful in being humble, God rewarded Him by exalting Him ever so highly. The point is well made: God will reward and exalt any believer who will walk as Christ walked—humbly before Him and men.

Note how highly God has rewarded and exalted Christ.

1. God has highly honored Christ. God has given Christ a name above every name. Right now, the name of Jesus Christ is cursed all over the world. In fact, at every passing tick of the clock, the name of Jesus Christ is being cursed thousands of times by hordes of people all over the world. But note: not everyone curses His name. Some of us love His name. To us His name is the most glorious name every uttered by human voice, for His name is...

- the name that forgives our sins.

**“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations” (Lk.24:47).**

- the name that gives us access into God’s presence.

**“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:23-24).**

2. God has given Christ supreme power and authority. God has destined every knee to bow before Christ—the knees of everything in heaven and earth and under the earth. Nothing shall be exempt. The day is coming when every creature in *all the worlds and dimensions of being* shall bow their knees in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church” (Eph.1:22).**

**“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (1 Pt.3:22).**

**“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Is.45:22-23).**

3. God has given Christ supreme worship. God is going to see to it that every creature confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father:

- ⇒ every nation, tongue, and language
- ⇒ every person, mind, and body
- ⇒ every race, color, and shape
- ⇒ every belief, creed, and religion
- ⇒ every man, woman, and child
- ⇒ every king, leader, and authority
- ⇒ every professional worker and laborer

Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be: the Son of the living God. Every creature is going to worship Him as Lord, the Lord God of the universe.

**“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Ro.14:11).**

**“Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev.5:12).**

**“Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev.15:4).**

**Thought 1.** The point is clear: God will exalt the man who humbles himself and works for the unity of the church.

**“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:4).**

**“But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee” (Lk.14 10).**

**“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Lk.22:26).**

**“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (Jas.4:6).**

**“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Pt.5:5-6).**

**“A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Pr.29:23).**

**“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Is.57:15).**

“For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Is.66:2).

“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic.6:8).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(2:11) **Lord** (kurios): means master, owner. Jesus was called *Lord* from the very first of His ministry (Mt.8:2) and He accepted the title. He even called Himself Lord (Mt.7:21). The word had been a title of respect throughout history. During the Roman empire it became the official title of Roman emperors. It was also a title given to the gods. The Hebrew title Adonai is translated Lord (Gen.15:2), so is Jehovah (Mt.1:20-22; 2:15; 3:3; 4:7, 10; 11:25; 21:9; Mk.12:29-30; Lk.1:68; 2:9). Both titles, Adonai and Jehovah, are translated Lord in Mt.22:44. Jesus Himself called God the Father, “Lord” (Mt.4:7, 10). But the title is more often given to Jesus. There is no question but that Jesus is recognized as Lord, being identical with the Old Testament Jehovah and Adonai (Mt.3:3; 12:8; 21:9; 22:43-45; Lk.1:43; Jn.14:8-10; 20:28; Acts 9:5). When Jesus is called Lord, it means that He is Master and Owner, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the only true God. He is Jehovah, Adonai, God Himself.

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|---|--|---|---|
| <p><b>1 The first work: To work out one's own salvation (deliverance) with fear &amp; trembling</b></p> <p><b>2 The second work: To work at obedience—to work out the stirrings of God within the heart</b></p> <p><b>3 The third work: To work at not murmuring</b></p> <p><b>4 The fourth work: To work</b></p> | <p><b>C. Working Out One's Own Salvation or Deliverance, 2:12-18</b></p> <p>12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.</p> <p>13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.</p> <p>14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:</p> <p>15 That ye may be blame-</p> | <p>less and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;</p> <p>16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.</p> <p>17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.</p> <p>18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.</p> | <p><b>at being pure</b></p> <p>a. Blameless</p> <p>b. Harmless, sincere</p> <p>c. Without rebuke</p> <p><b>5 The fifth work: To work at witnessing</b></p> <p><b>6 The sixth work: To follow the example of sacrificial labor</b></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE STEPS TO UNITY, 2:1-18**

**C. Working Out One's Own Salvation or Deliverance, 2:12-18**

(2:12-18) **Introduction:** this passage is still dealing with unity—unity in the church and unity among believers. But the passage is unique because it brings up the great subject of salvation. Keep in mind that salvation means deliverance and that salvation is of God. It is God who has saved and delivered you: “For by grace are ye saved” (Eph.2:8-9). But once you are saved, go to work—work out your own salvation and deliverance. Salvation is not stagnant and complacent. A saved person is not to be sitting around doing nothing and letting the chips fall where they may. A saved person is to get up and go to work. He is to do all he can to work out his own deliverance. This is the subject of the present passage. If the church is to be unified—if believers are to walk in a spirit of unity, then they must look at their salvation—at the whole scope of their life and the glorious salvation God has given them—and they must do all they can to work out their own deliverance.

1. The first work: to work out one's own salvation (deliverance) with fear and trembling (v.12).
2. The second work: to work at obedience—to work out the stirrings of God within the heart (v.13).
3. The third work: to work at not murmuring (v.14).
4. The fourth work: to work at being pure (v.15).
5. The fifth work: to work at witnessing (v.16).
6. The sixth work: to follow the example of sacrificial labor (v.17-18).

**1** (2:12) **Salvation—Deliverance:** believers are to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Remember Paul is in prison being held on false charges. There is a good chance he will be executed. He is not sure he will ever see and share with the Philippians again. Therefore, what he is now writing is carefully chosen. So far as he knows, these words could be his last words to the Philippian church. This is the reason we need to pay close attention to the instructions.

What does it mean to work out your own salvation? The word “work out” (katargazesthe) means to work on to the finish, to completion, to perfection. It always means to complete the effort and the work begun; to accomplish it perfectly; to bring it to completion. The point is: do not go half-way in salvation. Do not take bits and pieces when there is a whole parcel. Do not be satisfied with a little when you can have much. Go on, grow until salvation is completed in you. It is *your own* salvation. No friend, no pastor can work it out for you. You alone must do it.

The point is clearly stated: once God has saved a person, that person is to get busy obeying God. He is to take hold of the new life and salvation God has given him, and he is to work on it until it is completed and finished, that is, until God takes him home and perfects it.

Note that the Philippians are an excellent example. Paul says that they had always obeyed God, not only when he was with them, but also when he was away. Now, as he was facing death, he wanted them more than ever to work out their salvation—to continue obeying God until their salvation was completed and perfected.

Note also the words “fear and trembling.” Life is not a bed of roses. It is full of trial, pain, hurt, tragedy, disease, accident, loss, temptation, sin, evil, corruption, and death. Every human being experiences such things until he comes face to face with death. Life is sometimes beautiful and wonderful, but reality is what has just been listed: life is a journey of trials until the point of death. And no amount of denial or camouflage can hide or escape the fact. The only thing that can bring abundance of life is the *absolute confidence* that we shall live eternally in a perfect world. What is the point of mentioning all this? The point is forceful: we are expected to work out our own salvation and to do it with fear and trembling.

⇒ We are to fear and tremble because of the trials and temptations of life. Anyone of them can throw us or cause us to buckle under. The world and its temptations and trials are strong and the flesh is weak. We can slip into sin and failure before we know it unless we are constantly working out our deliverance—fearing and trembling lest we fail.

⇒ We are to fear and tremble lest we disappoint the Lord. He has saved us, and He has gone to the ultimate limit in order to do it. He has demonstrated a perfect love for us by taking all our sins upon Himself and bearing our punishment for us. Therefore, when we sin and fail, it cuts His heart to no end. For His sake—to keep from hurting Him—we must work out our salvation, fearing and trembling lest we do cut His heart.

⇒ We are to fear and tremble because we are to face the judgment seat of Christ. If we sin, we shall be judged and judged severely. Though we may try to reason away the fact, our thoughts about the judgment of God do not affect God's judgment one iota. Every one of us who sins and fails to work out his own salvation shall be judged and suffer loss—great loss. Scripture teaches nothing else. For this reason, the reason of judgment, we must work out our salvation—work it out with fear and trembling.

**“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt.10:28).**

**“But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit.2:11-12).**

**“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).**

**“And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Dt.10:12).**

**“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!” (Ps.31:19).**

**“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl.12:13).**

**“Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Is.8:13).**

**2** (2:13) **Salvation—Obedience:** the second work of salvation is to obey. Believers are to work out their salvation by *working at obedience*—by obeying the stirrings of God within their hearts.

**“It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (v.13).**

The word “worketh” (energon) means to energize. God arouses, stirs, and energizes the heart of the believer to do God's will. This is a most wonderful truth. Just think about it: we all experience movements and stirrings within our heart toward God. These stirrings are of God. God is working within us—energizing us—giving us both *the will and power* to do what pleases Him.

As stated, this is a most wonderful truth. Our duty is to grab hold of the stirrings—not to let them pass. We are to grab hold of them and do exactly what the *stirrings* are arousing and energizing us to do.

**Thought 1.** This is a most wonderful truth. It means that God does not leave us alone to work out our salvation and deliverance. He works within us: moves, stirs, energizes, and arouses us to get up and get to it. And whatever the energy points toward is what we need to do. God uses the energy and stirring to direct and guide us. The point to see is that God is forever working within us—never leaving us alone—working and stirring us to complete our salvation.

**Thought 2.** The tragedy is this: ignoring, neglecting, and refusing to respond to the stirrings and workings of God. When we feel the stirrings, we desperately need to respond and do whatever God is stirring us to do. Just think how often the stirrings are rejected, ignored, or neglected. How often we continue to sit or go about our own affairs instead of heeding the working and stirring of God. How complacent and lethargic we are. Just think how much growth we lose and how often we must cut the heart of God to the core—all because we choose the things, possessions, and activities of this world instead of Him and His stirrings.

**“For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth [makes alive] whom he will” (Jn.5:21).**

**“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn.6:63).**

**“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring [stir] all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn.14:26).**

**“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove [convict and stir] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn.16:7-8).**

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Ro.12:1-2).**

**“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know [be stirred to know] the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor.2:12).**

**“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.2:1).**

**“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col.3:1).**

**“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you ye shall abide in him” (1 Jn.2:27).**

**3** (2:14) **Murmuring—Division:** believers are to work out their salvation by working at not murmuring and disputing or arguing. The word “murmuring” (goggusmon) means to mutter, murmur, grumble, and complain. Note: it means the quiet, soft, behind-the-back, undertone of murmuring and grumbling. It is the kind of criticism, dissatisfaction, fault-finding and gossip that goes on within small groups or cliques.

The word “disputings” (dialogismon) means arguments, outward and vocal questionings, and expressions of doubt. Simply stated, it is just as Scripture says: disputes or arguments that have broken out into the open.

Note several significant facts.

1. Murmurings and disputes are not to be allowed in the church. As the verse says: *all things* are to be done without murmurings and disputings. If murmuring begins among a clique or even between two people, the spiritual leaders of the church are to deal with it just as Christ laid out (see outline and notes—Mt.18:15-20). It is not to be allowed to fester. Murmurings, unless they are stopped, will lead to disputes, turmoil, and divisiveness.

2. Murmuring and disputes are *never of God—never!* This is the very point of this charge. *All things*—nothing is left out—are to be done without murmuring and disputes.

3. Murmuring and disputes were the very sins that brought judgment upon so many Jews in the wilderness wanderings of Israel.

**“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer” (1 Cor.10:10; cp. Num.20:2f; 21:4).**

4. The person who murmurs and disputes is not working at his salvation or deliverance. He is doing the very opposite: working to bring judgment upon himself.

**Thought 1.** The results of murmuring are far worse than people ever think. This is the primary reason God forbids murmuring and disputes in no uncertain terms. Murmuring...

- |                  |                      |   |
|------------------|----------------------|---|
| • hurts          | • opposes God’s will | • says “look at me”                             |
| • damages        | • hinders progress   | • elevates selfish opinion                      |
| • divides        | • stymies growth     | • pushes people away from Christ and the church |
| • tears down     | • misleads people    |   |
| • downs a person | • is self-centered   |   |

**“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor.3:3).**

**“For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults” (2 Cor.12:20).**

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

**“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Tim.2:14).**

**“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim.2:24).**

**“Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame” (Pr.25:8).**

**4** (2:15) **Purity:** believers are to work out their salvation by working at being pure.

1. Believers are to work at being “blameless” (amempto): free from fault and censure; to be faultless; above reproach and rebuke. The believer is to live a blameless, faultless and pure life, both in the church and in the world. No one is to be able to point to the Christian and accuse or blame him with anything. The Christian is to be clean, unpolluted, spotless, holy, righteous, and pure before man and God.

2. Believers are to work at being harmless (akeraioi): unmixed and unadulterated. It is the idea of flour or grain passing through a sieve to separate the pure from the impure. It means that our thoughts and lives...

- are not to be polluted by watching, reading, and listening to worldly and sexual attractions.
- are not to be given over to worldly and sexual attractions.

Our thoughts and lives are to be pure, clean, uncontaminated, and unpolluted.

**“I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple [harmless] concerning evil” (Ro.16:19).**

**“That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Ph.1:10).**

**“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Ph.2:15).**

**“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:26).**

**“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (2 Tim.4:18**

**“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).**

3. Believers are to work at being “without rebuke” (amoma): without blemish, spot, or defect. This is a word that is taken from the Old Testament sacrifices made to God. The idea is that the believer is to live and walk upon earth under the eyes and scrutiny of God. He is to walk without any blemish, spot, or defect.

However, note a fact: the believer lives in a crooked and perverse generation. The world is wicked and evil, twisted and perverted; therefore, the believer has a difficult path to walk. But walk he must, for he is to be the light of the world. He is to shine as a light in the world. He is to reflect the purity and holiness of God Himself.

**“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Mt.5:14).**

**“For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47).**

**“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph.5:8).**

**“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Ph.2:15).**

**“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do” (1 Th.5:5-11).**

**5** (2:16) **Witnessing:** believers are to work out their salvation by working at witnessing. The wording is descriptive: “Holding forth the word of life.” Imagine! There is a *Word of life*. Men can live, truly live—both now and forever. Men never have to die.

⇒ It is like saying the fountain of youth has been discovered with one difference: the Word of life not only brings eternal youth, it brings perfection—a perfect world and a perfect life.

⇒ It is like saying the cure for cancer has been discovered with one difference: the Word of life not only cures the cancer, it injects the energy of everlasting life into the other cells of the body.

But note the terrible tragedy! So many of us do not hold forth the Word of life. We hold back. We do not share the message of the glorious gospel of life. The Word of life is just what it says: it is the message of life that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn.10:10).**

**“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (Jn.10:28).**

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (Jn.3:16-17).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed” (Jn.6:27).**

**“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Ro.6:22).**

**“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim.1:10).**

**“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Tit.1:2).**

**“And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life” (1 Jn.2:25).**

**“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 21).**

**Thought 1.** The one thing we must work at is holding forth the Word of life. The Word of life is the only hope for a world that reels under the weight of so many desperate needs, especially the desperate need to handle sin and evil and the terrible destiny of death.

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt.28:19-20).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor.4:13).

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Mal.3:16).

**6** (2:17-18) **Sacrifice—Labor:** believers are to work out their salvation by following the example of sacrificial labor. Very simply stated, Paul had offered himself as a sacrifice to serve men. The picture is that of the sacrifice and offerings made by people to the heathen gods. Paul had taken his body and offered it as a sacrifice and service for people. He lived for nothing else except to hold forth the Word of life to people. His body was totally sacrificed for that purpose and that purpose alone.

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).

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| <p><b>1 Timothy—a young man who willingly served in second place</b></p> <p><b>2 He had a kindred, bro-</b></p> | <p><b>III. THE EXAMPLES OF SOME CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, 2:19-30</b></p> <p><b>A. The Example of Timothy a Young Man Who Willingly Served In Second Place, 2:19-24</b></p> <p>19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.</p> <p>20 For I have no man like-</p> | <p>minded, who will naturally care for your state.</p> <p>21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.</p> <p>22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.</p> <p>23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.</p> <p>24 But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.</p> | <p><b>therly spirit in caring for others</b></p> <p><b>3 He was willing to deny himself—to be obsessed with the things of Christ</b></p> <p><b>4 He was willing to be a son, a disciple</b></p> <p>a. Willing to be tried &amp; proven</p> <p>b. Willing to go as sent</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE EXAMPLES OF SOME CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, 2:19-30**

**A. The Example of Timothy—a Young Man Who Willingly Served in Second Place, 2:19-24**

(2:19-24) **Introduction:** nothing challenges the human heart any more than the faithful example of others. This passage gives us the dynamic example of a man who was totally committed to Jesus Christ: Timothy. Timothy was a young man who willingly served in second place.

1. Timothy—a young man who willingly served in second place (v.19).
2. He had a kindred, brotherly spirit in caring for others (v.20).
3. He was willing to deny himself—to be obsessed with the things of Christ (v.21).
4. He was willing to be a son, a disciple (v.22-24).

**1** (2:19) **Timothy—Ministers, Associates—Assistants:** there is the example of Timothy, a young man who willingly served in second place. The scene is this. Paul is deeply concerned about the Philippian church and its believers. He loves them deeply and he longs to minister among them. Note that his pastoral heart reaches out to them: he mentions their state (condition, welfare) twice:

- ⇒ He wants to know their state or condition (v.19).
- ⇒ He wants to care for them, for their state or welfare (v.20).

But he is in prison; he cannot personally visit the church. What can he do? He does the next best thing. He plans to send his faithful companion and co-worker, Timothy, just as soon as he can.

The point to note is the pastoral heart of both Paul and Timothy, especially Timothy, for he is the subject of these verses. Timothy was a man who was called to serve in second place. However, of all the persons covered in Scripture, Timothy was as faithful to the Lord as any. He willingly and sacrificially served in second place.

**Thought 1.** Serving in second place is a privilege. The second man not only leads those under his responsibility, but he also contributes to the life and ministry of the first man.

**2** (2:20) **Timothy—Care—Church:** Timothy had a kindred, brotherly spirit in caring for others. In fact, he was unequalled. There were many excellent ministers of the gospel, but Timothy's spirit came closest to Paul's than all the others. Timothy cared for the churches and their believers just as Paul cared. His heart *naturally cared* (gnesios). His care arose from deep within: it was genuine and sincere—the same kind of care that a genuine brother would have. Timothy's ministry—his care and concern for the believers—would be deep and genuine, a true concern.

**“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jer.3:15).**

**“And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD” (Jer.23:4).**

**“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1 Pt.5:2).**

**3** (2:21) **Self-denial—Selfishness—Covetousness:** Timothy was willing to deny himself—to be obsessed with the things of Christ. In no uncertain terms, Paul says:

**“All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's” (v.21).**

What a sweeping indictment of believers and in particular ministers. Note what several commentators have to say about the issue:

Matthew Henry asks: *“Did Paul say this in haste, as David said, All men are liars? (Ps.116:11). Was there so general a corruption among ministers so early that there was not one among them who cared for the state of their people? We must not understand it so: he means the generality; all, that is, either the most,*

or all in comparison of Timothy. Note, seeking our own interest to the neglect of Jesus Christ is a very great sin, and very common among Christians and ministers. Many prefer their own credit, ease, and safety, before truth, holiness, and duty, the things of their own pleasure and reputation before the things of Christ's kingdom and his honour and interest in the world: but Timothy was none of these" (Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol.5, p.736).

Ralph P. Martin asks: "Does this verse represent the apostle's bitter complaint that, when he sought a fellow-believer to go to Philippi, there was none forthcoming because they were 'wrapped up in their own affairs' and did 'not really care for the business of Jesus Christ' [J.B. Philipps]. ...he remembers that, in a world of selfishness and self-seeking (cf. Mt.6:32), it is such a rare thing to find a man like Timothy who is really anxious to promote the welfare of other people, and to give himself to a fatiguing journey and to the resolving of personal quarrels in the Philippian church. This would be a delicate issue to handle, calling for tact, wisdom and patience" (The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians. "Tyndale Bible Commentaries," ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959, p.124f).

Lehman Strauss states: "This pathetic condition of self-seeking is the curse of Christendom in general and of the ministry in particular. Paul's words are a scathing indictment against the awful sin of selfishness. It must have been present in the early Church, for we remember his exhortation at the beginning of our chapter: 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others' [2:4].

"There are so few who devote their lives in selfless service. We are more concerned with our interests, our goods, our getting ahead, than we are with the needs of others. Genuine Christian love 'seeketh not her own' [1 Cor.13:5]. 'Let no man, then, set his own advantage as his objective, but rather the good of his neighbor' [1 Cor.10:24, Phillips].

"In spite of these holy admonitions, self-seeking and self-glorifying gain momentum with the passing of time. Few are seeking to follow closely in the steps of Christ and of Christlike men such as Paul. Most of us seek our own interests while we profess Christ's Name. One wonders if the claims of Christ ever enter the calculations of some Christians. The late William Lincoln of Beresford, London, said: 'Rest assured, that if you put Christ in the second place, and your own things in the first, you will hear of it at the Judgment Seat.' " (Devotional Studies in Philippians, p.133.)

The point is well made: Timothy did not seek his own things. He denied himself. He had not fallen into the trap of so many. His primary concern was for the mission and truth of Christ and the welfare of the church. But this was not true with most of the believers and ministers in Rome, and tragically, it has not been true with many believers and ministers down through the centuries. Many have sought their own things first; many have made the things of Christ second in order to protect their...

- |              |               |               |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| • livelihood | • recognition | • following   |
| • comfort    | • position    | • support     |
| • acceptance | • authority   | • possessions |
| • security   | • friendship  |               |

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Mt.19:21).

"I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" (Mt.25:43).

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Lk.9:23-24).

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Lk.12:15).

"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Lk.14:27).

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Ro.8:13).

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Ro.14:21).

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Ro.15:1).

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1 Cor.10:24).

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal.5:24).

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Ph.3:8).

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col.3:5).

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" (Ex.20:17).

"For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness: and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely" (Jer.6:13).

**“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezk.33:31).**

**4** (2:22-24) **Discipleship:** Timothy was willing to be a son, a disciple tried and proven. There was a close bond between Paul and Timothy. Timothy was as a son to Paul, and note: Timothy looked upon Paul as a father to him. Paul could never have said this if Timothy thought and acted otherwise.

Paul enlisted Timothy as one of his disciples and missionary partners on his second missionary journey (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Timothy*—Acts 16:1-3 for more discussion). From that time forth, Timothy became a dynamic minister of the Lord—a minister who was called to serve in second place. Barclay gives an excellent summary of the verses that connect Timothy to Paul (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.59).

1. Timothy was a close companion of Paul.
  - a. Paul called Timothy his son in the faith (1 Cor.4:17).
  - b. Timothy was with Paul...
    - in Philippi (Acts 16:1f).
    - in Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17:1-14).
    - in Corinth (Acts 18:1-5).
    - in Ephesus (Acts 19:21-22).
    - in prison in Rome (Col.1:1; Ph.1:1).
2. Timothy was involved in one way or another with seven of the writings of Paul.
  - 1 and 2 Thessalonians
  - 2 Corinthians
  - Romans (he sends greetings to the church)
  - Colossians and Philippians
  - 1 and 2 Timothy
3. Timothy was closely connected to Paul in ministering to the churches. Timothy was sent by Paul to minister...
  - in Thessalonica (1 Th.3:6).
  - in Corinth (1 Cor.4:17; 16:10-11).
  - in Philippi (Ph.2:19).

**Thought 1.** The point to see is how closely bound together Paul and Timothy were and how faithful Timothy was. He was a tried and proven minister, a minister willing to serve in the place the Lord had put him—the position of serving in second place.

**“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor.4:1).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim.2:3-4).**

**“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Mal.2:6).**

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| <p><b>1 He did not quit nor forsake his brother</b></p> <p><b>2 He did not quit nor forsake the church</b></p> <p><b>3 He did not quit nor</b></p> | <p><b>B. The Example of Epaphroditus—a Man Who Was Not a Quitter Nor a Coward, 2:25-30</b></p> <p>25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.</p> <p>26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.</p> <p>27 For indeed he was sick</p> | <p>nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.</p> <p>28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.</p> <p>29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:</p> <p>30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.</p> | <p><b>forsake God</b></p> <p><b>4 Conclusion: The appeal</b></p> <p>a. Paul is sending him back to the church so the church can joy &amp; rejoice in him</p> <p>b. Receive him: He builds his reputation; he gambles &amp; risks his life for Christ</p> |
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**DIVISION III**

**THE EXAMPLES OF SOME CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, 2:19-30**

**B. The Example of Epaphroditus—a Man Who Was Not a Quitter Nor a Coward, 2:25-30**

(2:25-30) **Introduction—Epaphroditus—Minister:** Barclay points to a dramatic story behind Epaphroditus. The Philippian church had heard that Paul was in prison, and that he was having an extremely difficult time. Their hearts went out to him, so they decided to do two things: to take up an offering to meet Paul’s material needs and to send a dedicated layman who could remain with him and help him. Such a man would have to be savagely brave, for by attaching himself to a man facing a capital crime, he would be leaving himself open to the charge of being an accomplice. By helping Paul the man would be risking his own life. The man chosen was Epaphroditus.

While in Rome, Epaphroditus fell seriously ill and came close to death. News of his illness reached Philippi. And in turn, news returned to Epaphroditus that his home church was worried over his welfare. He in turn began to worry over them. But God spared him, and after gaining his strength, Paul felt for some reason (perhaps to keep this illness from recurring or to eliminate the possibility of his being arrested) that Epaphroditus should return to Philippi.

But the possibility of a problem existed. If he returned before Paul’s fate was known, some would call him a quitter, a coward, a failure. (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.60f.) The answer to this criticism is the very reason for this passage. Paul gives a glowing appraisal of their messenger.

1. He did not quit nor forsake his brother (v.25).
2. He did not quit nor forsake the church (v.26).
3. He did not quit nor forsake God (v.27).
4. Conclusion: the appeal (v.28-30).

**1** (2:25) **Servant—Ministering:** Epaphroditus did not quit nor forsake his Christian brother. He had been sent to Rome to minister to Paul who was in prison. Epaphroditus became critically ill and almost died. He could have easily returned to Philippi after he recovered, but he did not. He stuck to his call and mission, and he completed it. Epaphroditus was so staunch a believer that Paul gives him five titles.

1. He was a *Christian brother*. Note the tenderness: Paul called him “my brother.” A brother is a person who has the same parent. Epaphroditus was born of God. He had placed his faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and God had honored his faith by giving him a new birth—a spiritual birth. God had made a *new creature* or *new man* out of him (2 Cor.5:17; Eph.4:24; Col.3:10). Therefore, he was a brother to Paul and a member of God’s family.

**“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn.1:12).**

**“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor.6:17-18).**

**“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph.2:19).**

2. He was a *companion in the work of the Lord*. Many persons serve in the work of the Lord, but not everyone is a true companion in labor. A true companion is *by the side* of his friend; he is there with him: understanding, feeling, supporting, consoling, comforting, encouraging, and helping whenever needed. There is nothing between true companions...

- no distance
- no envy
- no withdrawal
- no competition
- no neglect
- no forsaking

As stated, a true companion in the ministry is there by the side of his friend and he is always there. He never forsakes his friend regardless of the circumstances. Epaphroditus was a true example of a companion in labor. Paul was a prisoner about to stand trial for his life, and he had been forsaken by most believers (2 Tim.4:16). But note Epaphroditus: he stood by Paul de-

spite the severe circumstances. And remember: he had become deathly ill; but even then, when he had every reason to return home for recuperation, he stayed in Rome by Paul's side. Epaphroditus was a companion indeed. He was not a quitter! He was not a coward!

**“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (Jn.15:13-14).**

**“A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Pr.18:24).**

**“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up” (Eccl.4:9-10).**

3. He was a *fellowsoldier*. No doubt this refers to the hardiness and steadfastness of Epaphroditus. By sticking so closely to Paul, he ran the risk of being identified as a follower of Paul who was being falsely tried as an insurrectionist against the state. This danger was probably the reason so many believers forsook Paul (2 Tim.4:16). But not Epaphroditus; he stood fast—he stood as a fellowsoldier with Paul...

- despite the danger.
- despite his own ill health.

Epaphroditus was set on completing his ministry and on helping Paul in his ministry as much as possible—despite the terrible circumstances of imprisonment and illness that drug him to the brink of death. Epaphroditus was a true soldier—willing to risk his life for the sake of the gospel of God's people. He was not a quitter! He was not a coward!

**“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim.2:3-4).**

4. He was a messenger of the church. The word “messenger” is *apostolos* which is the very word for apostle. The word means messenger, an ambassador sent on a very special mission. Paul is saying that this dear saint of God had been called as a very special messenger and ambassador for God. He was a very special apostle, a very special messenger of God. He was far from being a quitter! Far from being a coward!

5. He was a very special minister (*leitourgon*). Barclay points out that this word would have great meaning to the Greek minds of the Philippian church. The word (*leitourgon*) was a great word and was used only of great men. The title was bestowed only upon great benefactors, men who loved their city, culture, arts, or sports so much that they gave huge sums of money to support these functions. The person was looked upon as a great servant or minister given over to his cause. (*The Letters to the Phillipians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.61.) Paul is here bestowing the great title of *minister* (*leitourgon*) upon Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus was an extraordinary minister of God who ministered to Paul's needs. He was not a quitter! He was not a coward!

**“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt.20:28).**

**“But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all” (Mk.10:43-44).**

**“He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded....If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet” (Jn.13:4-5, 14).**

**“Moreover it is required in stewards [ministers] that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:2).**

**“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph.6:7).**

**2** (2:26) **Dedication—Loyalty—Service:** Epaphroditus did not quit nor forsake the church. The Philippian church had sent Epaphroditus to help and minister to Paul. While there in Rome he had become deathly sick. At that point, Epaphroditus could have forsaken the mission of the church. He could have concluded that the mission was not worth losing his life over and returned home. The threat of being identified as a cohort of Paul would have been understood and accepted by many if not all, and his illness and the need to recuperate from a deathly illness would have definitely been understood by all. Epaphroditus had every human reason to return home and let someone else take up the gauntlet and resume the task.

But as a true soldier of Jesus Christ, he would not, and he did not. In fact, note the glorious testimony of this verse. Epaphroditus was not concerned over his welfare, but over the church's welfare. News of his illness had reached the church back home, and Epaphroditus was *concerned* about his family, friends, and the church worrying over him. What a heart of tenderness, warmth, softness, and of ministry! Just the kind of heart we all need—especially the ministers of the gospel.

The point to note is this: Epaphroditus was faithful to his call and to his church. He did not quit nor forsake the church. He had every reason to, but he did not. He stood fast despite the worst kind of circumstances and the threat to his own life.

- 3** (2:27) **Dedication:** Epaphroditus did not quit nor forsake God. It looked like God had forsaken him. It seemed as though God had blessed him ever so richly until he had arrived in Rome. God had led the church in Philippi...
- to appoint him as a special messenger for the Lord and for the great Philippian church.
  - to give him the coveted task of joining and ministering to the great evangelist and missionary Paul.

But when he arrived in Rome, he found out that by associating with Paul there was the danger of being judged as an insurrectionist—as a cohort of Paul. He was risking his own life by associating with Paul. And then, to top it off, he had become ill and almost died. God could have prevented it from happening. Why did He not stop it? A thousand questions flooded Epaphroditus' mind—each one tempting him to question and doubt God. He could have quit and forsaken the mission and not too many people would have questioned his decision. In fact, the vast majority would have agreed, thinking it the course of wisdom.

But not Epaphroditus. He was not a quitter! He was not a coward! He was a true minister of God! God had done so much for him—especially in saving him and giving him the assurance of living forever—he could never quit nor forsake God.

- 4** (2:28-30) **Dedication—Minister:** the conclusion is an appeal by Paul. Paul was sending Epaphroditus back to the church. The church was to joy in him and in his steadfast faithfulness. In no sense of the word were they to question him because he was returning. He was returning because Paul was sending him back, not because he was choosing to return.

Note the words “not regarding his life” (*paraboleusamenos*). A.T. Robertson points out that this is a gambling word, that it means to gamble one's life; to stake everything; to chance everything; to recklessly gamble. Epaphroditus staked his life for the ministry of Christ. He courageously risked his life. (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.449.)

**Thought 1.** Epaphroditus both challenges and rebukes a soft, easy going Christianity and ministry. His life shows that Christianity is stern and demanding. It calls for self-denial and self-effacing sacrifice. It gives little thought to personal comfort and safety.

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Lk.9:23-24).

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:26).

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth” (1 Cor.10:24).

“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:24).

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Ph.3:8).

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| <p><b>1 By rejoicing in the Lord</b><br/><b>2 By heeding what is writ-</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>IV. THE “PRESSING ON” OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 3:1-21</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A. Pressing On: Guarding Oneself, 3:1-3</b></p> <p>Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same</p> | <p>things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.</p> <p>2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.</p> <p>3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ten (the Scripture)</b></p> <p><b>3 By watching out for false teachers</b></p> <p><b>4 By knowing that you are the true (spiritual) circumcision<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE “PRESSING ON” OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 3:1-21**

**A. Pressing On: Guarding Oneself, 3:1-3**

(3:1-3) **Introduction:** this chapter is one of the great chapters of the Bible, a chapter that needs to be studied time and again. It includes the great personal testimony and ambition of Paul. It gives us some of the great principles that governed Paul’s life. The subject of the chapter is “The Pressing On Of The Christian Believer.” These are some things the Christian believer must do as he presses on for Christ. First, he must guard himself.

1. By rejoicing in the Lord (v.1).
2. By heeding what is written (the Scripture) (v.1).
3. By watching out for false teachers (v.2).
4. By knowing that you are the true (spiritual) circumcision (v.3).

**1** (3:1) **Rejoicing:** guard yourself by rejoicing in the Lord. A person who is always rejoicing in the Lord will not go astray. As the believer walks through life, two things are always confronting him: circumstances and false teaching. No matter where he goes, the trials of life, both minor and major, confront him. He has to stand face to face with the awful trials of life including...

- enticing temptations
- lust of the eyes
- lust of the flesh
- greed
- selfishness
- arguments
- divisions
- inhuman behavior
- criminal acts
- death
- accidents
- disease

The list could go on and on. No person escapes the trials of life—not if he walks upon this earth. He is confronted with the awful reality of trials every day of his life. Note another fact as well. No matter where he walks, the false teachings of this life confront him. No matter which way the believer turns, he is confronted with different ideas about how to handle life and its great trials.

- ⇒ There is the teaching that says, “Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. Ignore the trials and problems of life. Life is to be enjoyed by those who have the health and money to enjoy it, so get all the gusto out of life possible. Do your own thing.”
- ⇒ There is the teaching that says, “Discipline and control yourself. Take care of your body and mind. Don’t give in to the lusts and passions of this life. The abuse of a mind and body is a waste. Live as long and contribute as much as you can by walking a disciplined and controlled life.”
- ⇒ There is the teaching that says, “Don’t go overboard. Enjoy life—join in—do what you want; but do it within reason. Don’t overly abuse your mind and body. It’s all right to join and indulge occasionally; just don’t do it too often and hurt yourself.”
- ⇒ There is the teaching that says religion is the answer to both life and death, “Join a religious body, undergo its rituals, adopt its beliefs, and live the best you can. This will give you a strong self-image and confidence that God will accept you. Just be as good as you can and God will accept what goodness you are able to build up.”

The list of false teachings could go on and on. The point is this: the believer is bombarded by both trials and false teachings every day of his life. He must, therefore, guard himself; and the first guard is to rejoice in the Lord. If he walks throughout the day rejoicing in the Lord, his mind is upon the Lord. He rejoices over what Christ has done for him—rejoices over the Lord...

- justifying him
- adopting him
- reconciling him
- saving him
- loving him
- delivering him
- guiding and directing him
- securing righteousness for him
- dying for him—bearing his condemnation and judgment
- arising for him—giving him a new life
- looking after him
- giving him the privilege of knowing God
- giving him victory over sin
- giving him an eternal hope and the glorious confidence of eternal life

## PHILIPPIAN 3:1-3

The believer just walks about joying and rejoicing in all that the Lord has done and is doing for him. This is essential if the believer is to guard himself against the onslaught of trials and false teaching in this life. If the believer is to press on in his Christian life, he must walk about rejoicing in the Lord.

Now note: the great thing that rejoicing does is this: it places and keeps a person in the presence of Christ. No matter what confronts the believer—no matter how terrible the trial—he knows that he is being looked after by Christ Jesus his Lord. He knows that nothing can separate him from the Lord and His love—that he shall never die, but rather live eternally. Therefore, he knows that whatever comes upon him can never conquer and overcome him. Christ will give him supernatural power and strength to overcome it. And if he is called upon to lay down his body and move on to heaven, he knows that he shall never taste or experience death; he knows that Jesus Christ is going to escort him right on into God's presence immediately—quicker than the eye can blink—about 11/100 of a second. The believer is forever secure in the keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, he walks rejoicing in the Lord: he rejoices no matter what confronts him.

**“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ro.8:35-39).**

**Thought 1.** Rejoicing in the Lord is one of the very best ways to guard oneself against the trials of life and false teaching. When a person rejoices in the Lord, his mind is focused upon the Lord, upon what the Lord has done for him. And the mind cannot be two places at once. If it is upon the Lord and His glorious salvation, then it cannot be upon the trials and false teachings of this world.

**“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Lk.10:20).**

**“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (Jn.15:11).**

**“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Ro.12:15).**

**“As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Cor.6:10).**

**“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Ph.4:4).**

**“Rejoice evermore” (1 Th.5:16).**

**“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Pt.4:12-13).**

**“And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee” (Dt.12:7).**

**“But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee” (Ps.5:11).**

**“Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart” (Ps.32:11).**

**“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab.3:17-18).**

**“The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel” (Is.29:19).**

**2** (3:1) **Scriptures:** guard yourself by heeding what is written, that is, the Scriptures. Note: Paul says that he is writing some things that he had apparently written before. What he is about to write is so important that it has to be repeated. The church must do what is being said.

The point is this: the writings of Paul and of Scripture must be heeded. What Scripture says was written to instruct us and to help us in *pressing on* for Christ. No person can press on apart from heeding the Scriptures. If he fails to study and obey the Scripture, he will cave in either to the trials of life or to false teaching. Only as we obey the Scripture—the commandments of the Lord—can we show our love and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jn.14:15).**

**“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn.14:21).**

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).**

**“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love” (Jn.15:10).**

**“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).**

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).

“And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (2 Pt.2:2-3).

**3** (3:2) **Teachers, False:** guard yourself by watching out for false teachers. Paul was always facing false teachers who were savage in their attacks upon him. He mentions three groups of false teachers in this verse.

1. Beware of false teachers who act like dogs (kunas). It should be noted that both Jew and Gentile called each other dogs as a term of contempt. The word “dogs” was the lowest title possible to convey contempt and ridicule. Dog does not refer to the house pet of today, but to the wild dogs that roamed in the forests by day and the city streets by night. They were scavengers and snarlers who could be very vicious and dangerous.

The point is descriptive: there are some false teachers who are just like wild dogs.

⇒ They are scavengers who seek out all whom they can consume with their false teaching. And if any step forward to defend the sheep and the truth, they snarl and often become vicious and dangerous, ready to attack the defender and destroy him.

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Mt.7:6).

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mt.7:15).

“Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known” (Mt.10:26).

“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision” (Ph.3:2).

“While they [false teachers] promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Pt.2:19-22).

“For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev.22:15).

“For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet” (Ps.22:16).

2. Beware of false teachers who are evil workers. The world is full of people who work evil things.

⇒ This refers to those who hold to and teach high standards of righteousness, morality, and religion. They are absolutely sure they are righteous and good—at least good enough to be acceptable to God. There is just no way God would ever reject them—they think.

⇒ This also refers to those who live and teach evil by the way they live and talk about morality, righteousness and religion. Some live base, immoral, indulgent, and extravagant lives, while others try to mix both a religious and indulgent life-style together.

The point is this: there are those who are always opposing the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation by grace alone. They do not accept that He is God’s Son—that He is the Lord of man’s life; the Lord who is to be given all we are and have. Therefore, they accept His teaching, but ignore or deny salvation by His blood. They stand opposed to the gospel of salvation by His grace alone. They go about establishing their own way to God, doing whatever good they feel is needed to make themselves acceptable to Him. The result is false teaching—a way to God that stands against the Lord Jesus Christ and His way. Such false teachers are evil workers—workers who stand opposed to the truth.

3. Beware of false teachers who are of the concision. The concision refers to the Judaizers (see note, *Judaizers*—Gal.2:3-5; DEEPER STUDY # 1—2:4 for discussion. It is important to read this note before proceeding with this point.)

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:19-20).

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them” (Ro.10:3-5).

“Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (1 Tim.1:7).

**“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself” (1 Tim.6:3-5).**

**“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim.4:3-4).**

**“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pt.2:1).**

**4** (3:3) **Believers—Circumcision:** guard yourself by knowing that you are the true circumcision (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Circumcision*—Ph.3:3 for discussion). Note that believers are called *the circumcision*. What does Paul mean?

1. Believers are those who worship God as He really wishes to be worshipped: in the spirit; that is, they have circumcised or cut away the flesh as the means by which they worship God. Think for a moment: How do most people attempt to worship God?

- ⇒ By attending church services
- ⇒ By praying
- ⇒ By making occasional gifts to needy causes
- ⇒ By thinking of God occasionally
- ⇒ By being circumcised or baptized or undergoing some other ritual
- ⇒ By keeping the rituals and ceremonies of a church
- ⇒ By joining a church
- ⇒ By observing special days

But note a critical point: as good as all of these are, they are not the basis of true worship. They are things that we do *because* we worship; they are the result and activities of worship. They are not the basis or spirit of worship. True, they may help us to focus upon God and stir us to worship Him, but as stated, they are not the basis and spirit of worship.

⇒ The basis of worship is the Spirit of God, and the spirit of worship is the Spirit of God.

To worship God, man must have the Spirit of God living within his body and spirit. He no longer worships God externally through rituals and ceremonies. He now worships God inwardly through the Spirit of God who lives within him. True worship is no longer through anything that is of the physical or material world, no longer of anything that is of man’s flesh. True worship is of the spirit.

**Thought 1.** True worship has to be of the heart and spirit. Why? Because a man can attend church, keep all the rituals and ceremonies, and still be living in the depths of sin. But if a man’s spirit is right with God, he worships God with a clean and pure heart, free from all sin and defilement. The truly circumcised person is the person who worships God in spirit.

**“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (Jn.4:24).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

2. Believers are those who rejoice as God really wants us to rejoice: in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus...
- is God’s only begotten Son.
  - is the Person who gave Himself to die for us, bearing our sins and condemnation.
  - is the Person who has saved us, made it possible for us to live forever in the presence of God.
  - is the only Savior, the only acceptable way to enter God’s presence.

Therefore, it is only natural that God expects us to rejoice in Christ Jesus. How could we boast and rejoice in ritual and ceremony and religion? The Source—the Author and Finisher—of our faith is Christ Jesus. Therefore, the true circumcision, the true believer does not boast in anything physical or material—not in ritual or ceremony or religion. The true circumcision rejoices and boasts in Him who has given us salvation and access to God, even in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (Jn.15:11).**

**“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Ph.4:4).**

**“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pt.1:8).**

**“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Is.61:10).**

**“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts” (Jer.15:16).**

3. Believers are those who have no confidence in the flesh. The flesh...
- is only physical and material.
  - can only handle physical and material things.

- can only do good works and keep external rituals and ceremonies and religious practices.
- can do nothing beyond the physical and material.
- cannot penetrate the spiritual world or dimension of being.

The flesh ages, deteriorates, and corrupts. Therefore, the flesh goes the way of all material and physical substances: it dies and decays. And no matter what the flesh has done and accomplished in this physical world, it takes all its works to the grave with it. The flesh dies and all that concerns the flesh dies with it. Therefore, the true circumcision, the true believer, has no confidence and puts no stock in the flesh. He has confidence only in Jesus Christ.

**“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Ro.7:18).**

**“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” (Ro.7:25).**

**“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Ro.8:8).**

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).**

**“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal.5:17).**

**“For he that soweth to this flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal.6:8).**

**“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:15-16).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(3:3) **Circumcision:** before Christ, circumcision was the physical sign that a man was a follower of the true God. It was the sign that a man believed the promises that God had made to Abraham and Israel (cp. Gen. 17:10-14; Ro.4:11). God never intended circumcision to have any value other than being a sign. It was not to bring righteousness to any man—not even to Abraham (Ro.4:9-10). It was given only as a sign—a sign of the faith that a man already had in God’s promises. Righteousness was imputed to the man because he believed God’s promises; then the man was circumcised as a sign of his faith in God (see note—Ro.4:11 for more discussion).

However, many abused God’s purpose for circumcision.

1. Some made circumcision a substitute for true righteousness. A man was thought to be safe and secure in the arms of God if he was circumcised. Believing God and loving men had little to do with being a child of God. Many forgot the circumcision of a pure heart and became Jews of the circumcision in name only. Circumcision became merely an external and physical sign.

2. Some used circumcision as a way to divide and categorize people. A great wall of division was thrown up around the uncircumcised (cp. Acts 10:1; 1 Sam.17:26, 36; 2 Sam.1:20). Any man who was uncircumcised was thought to be *cut off* and *far off*, not only from those thought to be the people of God (the Jews and the circumcised) but from God Himself. (See notes—Acts 10:1-33; DEEPER STUDY # 3—10:11-16; 15:1-3 for more discussion.) An uncircumcised man was looked upon with bitter contempt. In the mind of the Jew, God was thought to love only Israel, despising and rejecting all other people (the Gentile nations).

3. God has done away with circumcision as a sign of righteousness since Christ has come (Gal.5:6; 6:15; Col.2:11). Righteousness is now of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter of rules and regulations (cp. Ro.2:25-29; 4:8-12, 23-25). The truly righteous man is the man who is God’s *inwardly*—the man whose spirit has been *recreated* into the very nature of God. God’s very own righteous nature is implanted into the very nature of man when he is *born again*. A man *born again* by the Spirit of God is God’s “new creation” (Jn.3:3f; 1 Pt.1:20; 2 Pt.1:4).

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|---|--|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Paul had achieved the height in self-righteousness</b></p> <p>a. He had the birth<br/>b. He had the heritage<br/>c. He had social status<br/>d. He had faithfulness &amp; knowledge<br/>e. He had the religion<br/>f. He had the religious zeal</p> <p>g. He had the morality</p> <p><b>2 Paul sought to win Christ—His righteousness, His perfection</b></p> <p>a. He had counted his own righteousness loss: A past experience</p> <p>b. Paul had counted all things as waste: A continuous experience</p> <p>c. Paul sought to be found in Christ: A future experience</p> | <p><b>B. Pressing on: Paul's Personal Testimony--Rejecting Self-righteousness &amp; Seeking Perfection, 3:4-16</b></p> <p>4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:</p> <p>5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;</p> <p>6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.</p> <p>7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.</p> <p>8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,</p> <p>9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the</p> | <p>faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:</p> <p>10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;</p> <p>11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.</p> <p>12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.</p> <p>13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,</p> <p>14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.</p> <p>15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.</p> <p>16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.</p> | <p>d. Paul sought a victorious experience with Christ: To know His glorious power over the world &amp; over all that is in the world</p> <p>e. Paul sought to be resurrected from the dead: An eternal experience with Christ</p> <p><b>3 Paul did not count himself as having yet arrived—he was not yet perfect</b></p> <p>a. He follows after his God-given purpose</p> <p>b. He worked at forgetting the past</p> <p>c. He pressed on toward the goal, toward God's purpose in Christ Jesus</p> <p>d. He kept his mind on growing, on maturing in Christ</p> <p>e. He maintained the growth he had already achieved</p> |
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DIVISION IV

THE "PRESSING ON" OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 3:1-21

**B. Pressing On: Paul's Personal Testimony—Rejecting Self-Righteousness & Seeking Perfection, 3:4-16**

(3:4-16) **Introduction:** all across the world men sense they need a relationship with God. They have a sense of God, but they sense there is something wrong between them and God. Sometimes they feel things are right; other times as though things are wrong. But underlying whatever feelings they have, men are never sure whether or not things are right with God. They lack perfect assurance and confidence that they please God enough to be acceptable to Him. They have a hope that God will accept them, but they do not know, not with absolute certainty.

It is these feelings that have stirred the religions of the world. Men want to be right with God; they want to be approved and accepted by God. They want God to look after them and help them, and they want God to accept them when this life is over. Therefore, they set out to do what they feel will make them *good enough* to be acceptable to God. They try to do whatever good they feel is necessary to please *their god*. Granted, the degree to which men feel this differs among all men. One man will feel that he has to be extremely good, whereas another man feels that he has to be moderately good. The point to note is this: *this kind of religion* is a religion...

- of works
- of doing good
- of securing God's favor
- of making oneself acceptable to God
- of being good
- of preparing oneself for God
- of making oneself approved by God

It is a religion of self-righteousness—of becoming as righteous and good as a person can—of earning and meriting God's favor—of working one's way into God's presence. There is, of course, a severe fallacy with this approach to God.

⇒ God is perfect and not a single person is perfect. No person can do enough good to become perfect no matter what he does. In fact, man is already imperfect; and once perfection is lost, it is lost. Imperfection can never become perfection, not by the efforts of human (imperfect) flesh. Imperfection cannot make perfection.

The point is this: no person can ever earn or merit the right to live in God's presence. If a person is ever going to live in God's presence, it will be because God loves the person enough to accept him and to transform him into a perfect person. This is exactly what God does through Jesus Christ. God accepts men *through His Son*, through the love and grace of His Son.

## PHILIPPIANS 3:4-16

It was this, the gospel of Jesus Christ, that Paul had missed. And it is this that so many in the world miss. Paul had never seen the great love of God for man. Yet, *above all men*, he had given his life to seeking after God, doing all the good he could to make himself acceptable to God. But despite all his achievements, he still did not have peace with God. Perfect assurance and confidence—of living eternally with God—was still lacking. This is the message of the present passage: Paul's personal testimony—his rejection of self-righteousness and turning to the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

1. Paul had achieved the height in self-righteousness (v.4-6).
2. Paul sought to win Christ—His righteousness and perfection (v.7-11).
3. Paul did not count himself as having yet arrived—he was not yet perfect (v.12-16).

**1** (3:4-6) **Self-righteousness—Paul:** Paul had achieved the height of self-righteousness. Paul ranks among the greatest of men who have attempted to work their way into God's presence. Paul did all the good he could to secure God's approval. Few if any men have ever attained what Paul did by human effort. Yet, it was all to no avail. His goodness and his attainments did not make him acceptable to God. And there is one primary reason: he could not make himself perfect.

However, note what Paul says: "If any man thinks he can trust in the works and attainments of his flesh, *I more*. I can trust and boast in the goodness and morality and works of the flesh as much as any man who has ever lived." This is a phenomenal claim, but Paul lists seven privileges and achievements which show the total inadequacy of man to save himself. Paul divided the list under "Privileges of Birth" and "Achievements by Self-Effort."

1. The privileges of birth are three in particular.
  - a. "Circumcised the eighth day": Paul was saying that he had the *right birth*. A true Jewish family always had its male child circumcised when he was just eight days old. Circumcision was the sign that a person believed in old and in His promises—in particular the promise that the Jews were the promised and covenant people of God. Paul was claiming to be a true Jewish believer who had the privilege of believing parents.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in birth nor in religious rituals and ceremonies. Yet, how many people think they are acceptable to God because they...

- have godly parents?
- have a godly spouse?
- have godly children?
- have godly friends?
- have kept religious rituals and ceremonies?

How many expect the godliness of others to rub off on them—to count for them and to make them acceptable to God?

- b. "Of the stock of Israel": Paul was saying that he had the *right national heritage* and a very special relationship with God. He was born in the right nation, among the right people. The name *Israel* goes back to the time when God changed Jacob's name to Israel. Jacob had a special need, and God met his need in a very special way through a dream and changed his name (Gen.32:28). When a Jew wished to stress his special relationship to God, he called himself an Israelite; that is, he was of the nation and descent of Israel which had a very special relationship with God and who had received a very special name from God.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in ancestors nor in social superiority. Yet, how many think that being born in a Christian nation and surrounded by Christian principles carry some merit with God? How many feel that the people of a so called Christian nation are more acceptable to God than the heathen of some idol-worshipping tribe in the depths of a jungle? How many feel that they have some merit with God because they have a Christian name? How many feel they have a little better relationship with God and are a little more acceptable to God because they live in a so called religious nation?

- c. "Of the tribe of Benjamin": Benjamin was considered the aristocratic tribe of Israel because of the tribe's loyalty when so many were disloyal (1 Ki.12:1) and because of the tribe's courageous acts throughout Israel's history (Judg.5:14; Hos.5:8). Paul was saying that he was of the *highest aristocracy, of the most noble, of the most respectable persons of Israel*.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in social or religious status. Yet, how many feel they are *more acceptable* to God because they belong to...

- an upper class?
- a more elite church?
- a more dynamic church?
- a more active ministry?

2. The achievements by self-effort are four in number.

- a. "An Hebrew of the Hebrews": Paul claimed to have the *right language* and the *right customs*. When the Jews were conquered and scattered over the world, a believing Jew refused to give up his Jewish language and customs. He continued using Hebrew and he continued to practice Jewish customs. Every Jew did not, but Paul says he and his family did. What Paul meant was that he had the mark of faithfulness. He had deliberately kept the Hebrew tongue and refused to forget it. In his day, this was extremely difficult, for the Jews were literally scattered across the world and the world had one common language, Greek. But Paul remained steadfast. He learned and refused to forget the right language. He was loyal to the elect race of God. He was untinged by other philosophies.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religious faithfulness, nor in a spiritual language, nor in the ability to know and speak in religious terms. Yet, how many think that they are acceptable to God because they..

- do good and are faithful in being good?
- are faithful in studying their religion, the Bible, and the great doctrines of the faith?
- are faithful in talking about and sharing spiritual things?
- know and use religious terms and languages?

- b. “A Pharisee”: Paul claimed to have had the *right religion*; to have been a Pharisee. The Pharisees were strict religionists, so strict their very name meant *The Separated Ones*. Paul said that he was of the strictest religious sect ever known. He devoted his whole life to the most *separated* and demanding religion ever known to man. He achieved *separation*, an exacting separation from other men.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religion, not even in being a follower of the true religion. Yet, how many feel the very opposite?

- c. “Zeal”: Paul had zealously stood and fought for his religion. He hotly pursued and persecuted the church. Paul had such a zeal for his religion that he sought to wipe out any cause that differed from his (Acts 22:2-21; 26:4-33; 1 Cor.15:8-10; Gal.1:13).

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religious commitments or zeal. Few have ever been committed to their religion like Paul—few have ever been as faithful to the worship services, ordinances, rituals, and ceremonies of his religion as Paul. Paul was a religionist among religionists. Few have ever proclaimed and protected their religion like Paul. Paul was as zealous as a person could be in trying to reach converts for his religion and in keeping his religion as pure as he could. Paul was full of zeal for his religion, as faithful as a person could be.

- d. “Blameless”: Paul claimed he had sought to keep the law and he had kept it—completely and fully. This does not mean that Paul was sinless; it means that when Paul sinned, he obeyed the law and took his sacrifice to the temple. He obeyed all the commandments, rituals, and ceremonies just like Scripture said. He followed all the laws and instructions of the Scripture. He was blameless—ritually and ceremonially—in the righteousness of the law.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in keeping all the rituals and ceremonies of religion. They are not even found in keeping all the commandments of the Scripture.

**“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:20).**

**“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt.7:22-23).**

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).**

**“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Ro.10:3).**

**“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Cor.10:12).**

**“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).**

**“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).**

**2** (3:7-11) **Righteousness—Perfection—Paul:** Paul sought to win Christ, to win His righteousness and His perfection. The one thing in life that Paul sought was the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ. He knew that no matter how good he could become, he could never become perfect. He still came short and he was still doomed to face death. Therefore, his only hope for living forever was the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ. He had to trust Christ; he had to focus his heart and life—all he was and had—upon Jesus Christ. He had to trust the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ to *cover him*. Therefore, he cast his heart and life upon Christ. He lived for Jesus Christ, and he trusted God to honor his commitment. He trusted God to *count his faith* as the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ. If God did not do this, he was lost and doomed to death forever; he could never gain perfection. His only hope was Christ and Christ alone. This is what the present passage is all about. Paul believed with all his heart that if he trusted Jesus Christ—that if he sought after the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ with all that he was and had—God would take his faith and *count it as righteousness*. God would honor his commitment to His Son by accepting and giving him eternal life. Note five significant points.

1. Paul had a *past experience* with Christ: there was a time when he had counted *his own righteousness* as loss (v.7). Paul was referring to his conversion experience. There was a time when he had given up his own self-righteousness and

works, his own attempts to become perfect. There was a time when he had accepted the fact that he could not become perfect—he could not gain righteousness—he could not make himself perfectly acceptable to God.

- a. Note that this is a past experience, a once-for-all experience. It is a definite time when Paul made a definite decision—a decision that he was unable to secure righteousness and perfection himself. If he was to become righteous and perfect, he had to trust the love of God—that God loved him enough to cover him with the righteousness and perfection of Christ.
- b. Note also that this did not mean that Paul quit trying to live for God. On the contrary, it meant that Paul tried more diligently than ever to live for God. When God saw Paul's total commitment to Christ, God knew that Paul's faith was genuine. He knew that Paul really believed that Christ was his Savior, his hope for perfection and righteousness—for eternity. If Paul had not committed himself totally to Christ, God would have known his faith was not genuine and God would not have saved Paul.

**Thought 1.** God sees our faith; whether or not it is genuine. Genuine faith makes a total commitment to Jesus Christ. A person who truly believes in Jesus Christ gives all he is and has to Christ. He counts his own effort and works, his own righteousness as loss—as nothing—in order to gain Christ.

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

**“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).**

2. Paul had a continuous experience with Christ: he constantly counted all things as loss and as waste in order to win Christ (v.8). The word “count” is in the present tense; it is continuous action. When a person has made the decision to seek after Christ, he is *to continue* to seek after the knowledge of Christ—to learn all he can about the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ.

- ⇒ It is not a matter of making a decision to follow Christ, and then turning and walking on as a person has always walked—doing his own thing and fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind.
- ⇒ It is making a decision to follow Christ and continuing to seek after the knowledge of Him—continuing to seek to know Him more and more.

- a. Note that the knowledge of Christ is said to be excellent: it is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the most excellent knowledge in all the world. No other knowledge can give a person righteousness and perfection. No other knowledge can make a person acceptable to God and give him the right to live eternally.
- b. Note what Paul says: “I have suffered the loss of all things.” The words “have suffered” mean to forfeit and to cast away. The phrase *all things* includes not only the religious position Paul had attained, but the “social, financial, intellectual, and political” gains he had made as well (Lehman Strauss, *Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.163). Wuest gives a graphic description of what Paul gave up to become a Christian believer.

*“Paul was a citizen of Tarsus. At the time he lived there, only families of wealth and reputation were allowed to retain their Tarsian citizenship. This throws a flood of light upon Paul’s early life. He was born into a home of wealth and culture. His family were wealthy Jews living in one of the most progressive of oriental cities. All this Paul left to become a poor itinerant missionary.*

*“But not only did he forfeit all this when he was saved, but his parents would have nothing to do with a son who had in their estimation dishonored them by becoming one of those hated, despised Christians. They had reared him in the lap of luxury, had sent him to the Jewish school of theology in Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the great Gamaliel, and had given him an excellent training in Greek culture at the University of Tarsus, a Greek school of learning. But they had now cast him off. He was still forfeiting all that he had held dear, what for? He tells us, ‘that I may win Christ’” (Kenneth S. Wuest. *Wuest’s Word Studies*, Vol.2. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966, p.91).*

**“Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee” (Mk.10:28).**

**“And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me” (Lk.5:27).**

**“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Lk.9:24).**

**“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:33).**

**“And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting” (Lk.18:29-30).**

**“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Ph.3:8).**

3. Paul sought a future experience with Christ: he sought to be found in Christ (v.9). Paul was looking ahead either to death or to the return of Christ. When he came face to face with God, he wanted to be *found in Christ*. He wanted to stand before God in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, not in his own righteousness.

Note that the righteousness of God is *Christ Himself*. The righteousness of God does not refer to behavior or works or deeds of righteousness. No person can ever secure the righteousness of God by behavior or works or deeds—no matter how good the works or deeds may be. The righteousness of God is Jesus Christ Himself. A person has to trust the righteousness of Christ to cover him if he wishes to become acceptable to God.

**“Christ, the righteousness which is of God” (v.9).**

**“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Ro.3:21-22).**

**“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness* to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:3-4).**

**“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor.1:30).**

4. Paul sought a victorious experience with Christ: he sought to know Christ—to know His glorious power over the world and all that is in the world (v.10). This is one of the Bible’s great verses of Scripture, a verse that should be memorized and that should dominate the believer’s life. As clearly seen throughout this whole passage, Paul’s great pursuit in life was to know Christ. This verse spells out exactly what he meant by knowing Christ.

- a. To know Christ is to know the power of His resurrection. The power of the Lord’s resurrection refers to three great things (see note, *Power*—Eph.1:20 for discussion).
- b. To know Christ is to know the fellowship of His sufferings. Most of us are willing to share in the blessings of Christ but we want nothing to do with the sufferings of Christ. We shrink from the ridicule, questioning, and abuse He had to bear. There is nothing pleasant about suffering pain and having people oppose us. There is nothing wrong with being honest about the fact. Paul said that he wanted to know the *fellowship* of the Lord’s sufferings. That is, he wanted to share in the *purpose for which Christ was suffering*. Why did Christ suffer? He suffered because He proclaimed the righteousness and salvation of God—because He proclaimed the way men could become acceptable to God and live forever. Paul was saying that he wanted to suffer right along with Christ, suffer for the same cause—suffer for proclaiming the righteousness and salvation of God.

There is no question about it: if we live for Christ—proclaim the righteousness and salvation of God—we shall suffer persecution. Why? Why would the world persecute anyone who brings the hope of eternal life to them? Because some persons want to live their lives like they want, and a righteous life and message condemns them. Therefore, they oppose anything that keeps them from living a life that pleases their own personal desires and flesh. The believer must know: he shall suffer persecution if he truly follows Christ.

**“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).**

**“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).**

**“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim.2:10).**

**“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12).**

**“But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pt.3:14-16).**

**“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Pt.2:21).**

Note one other thing: God draws close to the believer when he suffers for the cause of Christ. God gives a very special sense of His presence, love, and care when the believer is suffering. In fact, His presence is so near and dear it is called “the spirit of glory and of God” which rests upon the suffering believer.

**“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (1 Pt.4:14).**

- c. To know Christ is to be made conformable to His death. Jesus Christ subjected Himself totally to God. He put His own flesh and desires to death; He did only what God willed and desired. Even when He died, His flesh did not desire to die. He did not want to take the sins of the world upon Himself and be separated from God (cp. Mt.26:39, 42). But He subjected Himself to God’s will. God willed Him to die for the sins of the world; therefore, Christ subjected His flesh and desires to do exactly what God willed. He subjected His flesh and desires and died for the sins of men.

Paul sought to be conformed to the death of Christ. He sought to subject himself totally to God—to put his flesh and desires to death and to do only the will and desire of God.

⇒ Paul sought to *deny himself and take up the cross* of Christ daily.

**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk.9:23).**

⇒ Paul sought to *crucify his old man* with Christ.

**“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Ro.6:6).**

⇒ Paul sought to count himself dead to sin but alive to God.

**“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro.6:11).**

⇒ Paul sought to *kill himself* all day long.

**“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (Ro.8:36).**

⇒ Paul sought to *die daily*.

**“I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily” (1 Cor.15:31).**

⇒ Paul sought to be always *delivered to death* for Jesus’ sake.

**“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor.4:11).**

⇒ Paul sought to be *crucified with Christ*.

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).**

⇒ Paul sought to be *dead with Christ*.

**“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances” (Col.2:20).**

**“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him” (2 Tim.2:11).**

5. Paul sought an eternal experience with Christ: he sought to be resurrected from the dead (v.11). Paul sought to use all means—to commit himself totally—for this one great purpose: to attain to the resurrection of the dead. The words “if by any means” are not expressing doubt and uncertainty. Paul was not questioning the resurrection nor if he would be resurrected. Paul was simply saying what he had already stated (v.7-11). He uses all he is and has—all the means at his disposal—for this one great purpose: to attain to the resurrection from the dead. He is totally committed to that glorious day of redemption. He lives for that day and for that day alone.

What is so significant about the resurrection of the dead? What is to be so different about that day? At death, we go to be with the Lord. Quicker than the eye can blink, when our time comes, we shall stand face to face with Christ. What is the difference between meeting Christ then and the resurrection? Why did Paul long for the resurrection over and above his meeting the Lord at death? There are at least two significant reasons why the resurrection, the glorious day of redemption, takes precedence over our meeting the Lord at death.

- a. The glorious day of resurrection will launch the events that will soon bring about the new heavens and earth. At death, when we go to be with the Lord, the world continues on in its sin and shame, disease and death, evil and corruption. *God is still being...*
  - cursed and dishonored.
  - denied and ignored.
  - rebelled against and rejected.

But as stated, the resurrection will launch the events that bring about the glorious day of redemption—the new heavens and earth—the day when all evil and sin and the cursing and dishonor of God will be stopped. God will become All in All: worshipped and served in glory and majesty, dominion and power forever and ever.

**“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jn.5:28-29).**

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn.6:40).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn.11:25).

“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th.4:16-17).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Rev.21:1).

- b. The glorious day of resurrection will be the day when believers will have earthly bodies transformed and recreated into perfect eternal bodies. At death when we go to be with the Lord, we do not receive our perfect eternal body. We will either be given temporary spiritual bodies or live with Christ as disembodied spirits. But as stated, at the resurrection the elements of our present bodies will be called forth by God from all over the world, and the elements shall be transformed into perfect and eternal bodies. And we shall live with and for God forever.

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor.15:42-44).

“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor.15:49-54; cp. 1 Cor.15:12-58).

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (2 Cor.5:1-4).

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).

**3** (3:12-16) **Righteousness—Perfection—Paul:** Paul did not count himself as having yet attained—he was not yet perfect. Perfection is the great end of the believer. God has apprehended or laid hold of the believer for one reason only: to perfect the believer—to make him perfect so that he can live and worship and serve Christ forever.

Now note a critical point: no person achieves perfection on this earth. The fact is so evident to the thinking and honest man that it is actually ridiculous to even make the statement. Yet, too many are so narrow in their thinking that they seldom if ever grasp what perfection would really mean. For example...

- Consider the brain and the mind. It has been estimated that man uses only *one-tenth of one percent* of his mental capacity. Imagine how far short this is of perfection!
- Consider the body. What would a perfect body be like? A body that never desired, thought, or did wrong; that never came up short; that never aged, deteriorated, died or decayed?

The examples could go on and on, but note what Paul says: he had not attained perfection. In fact, he was always emphasizing how far short he came.

**“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Ro.7:18-19).**

**“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God” (2 Cor.3:5).**

**“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph.3:8).**

Beyond doubt, Paul was one of the greatest men who has ever lived. The great *Book of Second Corinthians* clearly shows this. If Paul was so short of perfection, how much further are we? The point bears repeating: no person achieves perfection on this earth. But note: Paul says five significant things.

1. Paul followed after perfection, after his God-given purpose. When Christ saved Paul, that was just the beginning, not the end. He had been saved to *live for Christ and to serve Christ*, and as long as he was on this earth he was going to *live for Christ* and do all he could to *serve Christ*. The word “follow after” (dioko) means to press; to pursue just like a runner in a race. There was no place for walking, much less for sitting or lying around in comfort, complacency and lethargy. Christ had saved Paul for perfection—to attain to the resurrection of the dead—and as long as Paul was on this earth, he was going to press and run after perfection.

⇒ Paul was going to do all he could to help the Lord in the Lord’s great task of perfecting him.

⇒ Paul was going to do all he could to lay hold of perfection—the perfection for which the Lord had laid hold of him.

**Thought 1.** There is no such thing as a genuine believer sitting still after he has been saved. The believer must not...

- become comfortable, complacent, lethargic, or lazy.
- waste time and lose opportunity.
- begin to think he is safe and secure forever; therefore, he can sometimes do what he likes and give in to his own desires.

The believer must follow, run, and press after perfection—the perfection for which Christ has saved him. The believer must be active in living for Christ.

**“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor.9:24-27).**

**“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair” (2 Cor.4:7-8).**

**“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Gal.5:7).**

**“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb.12:1).**

2. Paul worked at forgetting the past. This is a verse that is of enormous help to believers who have failed God—miserably failed Him. Paul had so failed God, and he was always confessing how far short he came (cp. Ro.7:18-19; 2 Cor.3:5; Eph.3:8). Paul faced what so many of us face:

⇒ failure and shortcoming

⇒ the struggle to forget it and to move on

How does a person do this? It is one of the most difficult things in all the world to do. And it is especially difficult if others are not forgiving and willing to let the believer put his failure behind him. But note: Paul tells us how to deal with the past. How? By concentrating and controlling the mind and by reaching forth to those things which are before us. Note the concentration and focus:

⇒ but *one thing*.

⇒ but *this one thing I do*.

In one focused act, we must forget the things that are past and reach forth to those things that are before us. The act involves two parts: both forgetting and reaching forth. The past cannot be forgotten without reaching forth to what lies ahead. A person cannot sit around moaning and regretting the past. To do so is to be concentrating upon the past. The things of the past are to be *forgotten*. The things of the future are to be the focus of the mind. The believer is to zero in on the things at hand and on the things that lie ahead. If we do this, there is no time to wallow around in the past and its failure.

**“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Lk.13:24).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal.6:9).**

**“Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily” (Col.1:29).**

**“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin” (Heb.12:4).**

## PHILIPPIANS 3:4-16

**“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.1:13).**

**“Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev.3:11).**

3. Paul pressed on toward the goal, toward God’s purpose in Christ Jesus. What is God’s purpose for us in Christ Jesus? It is to be conformed to the image of Christ—to be perfect even as He is perfect. Once we are perfect...

- we shall be incorruptible and eternal.
- we shall live in honor and glory.
- we shall live in God’s perfect presence and power.
- we shall live in perfect righteousness and purity.
- we shall live worshipping and serving God eternally.

Perfection means eternal life, a perfect life that never ends—that goes on and on doing the things that God created us to do. Perfection means the eternal life of Jesus Christ—being conformed to the perfection of Jesus Christ. (See notes—Ro.8:29; 1 Cor.15:42-44 for more discussion.)

**“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).**

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).**

**“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).**

**“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col.3:24).**

**“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).**

4. Paul kept his mind on growing and maturing in Christ. All believers are ordained by God to be perfect in Christ Jesus, and we shall be perfected in the glorious day of redemption. Let us, therefore, as many as are ordained by God to be perfected, keep our minds on perfection.

Note: this is sometimes difficult to do because we live in a world that is gripped by the lust for...

- comfort and ease
- pleasure and plenty
- possessions and recognition
- indulgence and extravagance
- more and more

But note something: God will not let the genuine believer rest unless his mind is on righteousness and purity, the gospel and witnessing. God pricks our hearts, reveals that we are failing and coming short. God stirs us to get our minds back upon living like we should—upon pressing for perfection.

**“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Mt.5:48).**

**“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor.13:11).**

**“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:13).**

**“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col.1:28).**

**“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Heb.6:1).**

**“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?” (Jas.4:1).**

5. Paul maintained the growth he had already achieved. Too many live up and down lives. We gain some discipline and some growth, then before too long, we slip right back. It may involve...

- lying, stealing, or cheating
- devotions or prayer
- control of thoughts and mind
- discipline of body and habits

Growth takes place, but then some circumstance or interruption takes place, and the *new man* and new growth are forsaken and we slip back into being the *old man*, living just like we used to live.

But note the strong exhortation of Scripture: take what you have learned and attained and walk by that rule; keep your mind upon that rule.

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).**

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).**

**“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (Eph.5:15).**

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).**

**“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).**

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| <p><b>1 Reason 1: Some walk as examples</b><br/> a. Paul walked as an example<br/> b. Others walked as examples</p> <p><b>2 Reason 2: Many walk as enemies of the cross</b><br/> a. Their end: Destruction</p> | <p><b>C. Pressing On: Marking Those Who Walk as Examples, 3:17-21</b></p> <p>17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.</p> <p>18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ:<br/> 19 Whose end is destruction,</p> | <p>whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)<br/> 20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:<br/> 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.</p> | <p>b. Their god: Appetite<br/> c. Their glory: Shameful<br/> d. Their minds: Earthly</p> <p><b>3 Reason 3: The believer is a citizen of heaven</b><br/> a. His life: Heaven-centered<br/> b. His focus: The return of Christ, v.20<br/> c. His end: A changed body</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE “PRESSING ON” OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, 3:1-21**

**C. Pressing On: Marking Those Who Walk as Examples, 3:17-21**

(3:17-21) **Introduction:** this is one of the most important passages in the Bible. It has to do with the example we set before the world and before our families and friends. The way we live and what we do influences people. We may not want to influence them, but it does not matter whether we want to or not: they are influenced. Family, friends, and children—everyone who knows us—watch us; and they follow both the good and the bad of our example. It may be conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional; we may be willing or we may not be willing for them to follow in our steps—it matters not—they follow our example. We influence people by how we live and by what we do.

- ⇒ If we follow good and do good, it encourages them to do good.
- ⇒ If we follow bad and do bad, it sets a pattern of bad before others. It even causes some (in particular, the young and immature) to think that since we did it and still got along fairly well, they can do it and get along fairly well, too.

The point is this: the life we live sets a pattern for others to follow. Others are going to follow us no matter what we do. This says something to us, something of critical importance: we must live lives on the highest plane possible. We must set the most dynamic example possible. We must set the most perfect pattern possible for others to follow. But it also says something else: we must follow after those who live on the highest plane of life. We must mark those who walk as examples and follow after the great traits of their lives. We must take those who live as examples and dissect the traits of their lives, and apply those traits to our own lives. This is the subject of the present passage: marking those who walk as examples for us all.

1. Reason 1: some walk as examples (v.17).
2. Reason 2: many walk as enemies of the cross (v.18-19).
3. Reason 3: the believer is a citizen of heaven (v.20-21).

**1** (3:17) **Paul—Testimony:** we must mark those who walk as examples, first, because they *do walk as examples*. Note what Paul said: he and others followed Christ ever so diligently; therefore, they were dynamic examples as to how people should walk and live. When a person lives a life on the highest plane—when he lives like Christ said to live—he is an example. He is living just like we all should live: just as Christ said.

What did Paul mean? Was he claiming perfection—claiming to be the perfect pattern for men to follow? No! A thousand times no! In fact, the very opposite is true. He had just declared...

- that he could never stand before God in his own righteousness (v.9).
- that he had not yet attained (v.12).
- that he was not perfect (v.12).
- that he had not apprehended that for which Christ had laid hold of him (v.13).

What then did Paul mean? Just what he said. He was a dynamic example...

- in forgetting the things that were past.
- in reaching forth to the things that lay ahead.
- in pressing toward the prize, even the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul was a dynamic example in seeking to follow Christ. He was forever reaching forth, forever pressing to be like Christ. He never reached the perfect pattern of Christ—he could not, not as long as he was a man—but he pressed and pressed to be all he could for Christ. It is this that Paul sets before us as a pattern. We are to follow Paul...

- in forgetting the past, no matter how terrible it is.
- in reaching forth to the things that lie ahead.
- in pressing toward the prize, even the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We will never achieve perfection, not in this life, but we are to follow after Christ and seek to be like Him. Now note the point: when we see a person sharing Christ with such dynamic commitment and energy, that person is an example for us. We should follow that person. He is following after Christ, doing the very thing we should be doing. Therefore, he is a living example for us.

Note the word “example” (tuupon). The underlying meaning of the word is that of an imprint or mark made by a blow or some mould or dye. The idea is that we are to be seeking Christ with such diligence that our example will be like a powerful

blow being thrown at those around us. Take the most powerful boxing blow of the heavyweight champion and our example for Christ should strike others with just as much power.

**Thought 1.** No believer should ever claim or think that he has come anywhere close to perfection. But *every believer* should follow Christ with so much commitment and diligence that he is a dynamic example for others. Every believer should be able to say “follow me”—follow my seeking after Christ—my seeking to be like Christ.

**“Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me” (1 Cor.4:16).**

**“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor.11:1).**

**“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Ph.3:17).**

**“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Ph.4:9).**

**“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost” (1 Th.1:6).**

**“Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe” (1 Th.2:10).**

**“For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you” (2 Th.3:7).**

**“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim.4:12).**

**“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.1:13).**

**“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Tit.2:7).**

**“But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation” (Jas.5:12).**

**2** (3:18-19) **Testimony—Jesus Christ, Cross:** we must mark those who walk as examples, second, because many walk as enemies of the cross. Who are the enemies of the cross? Many commentators say they are the hypocritical and false believers within the church, those who are nominal Christians. They say that the word “walk” is used of Christians in verse 17; therefore, it also refers to church members in verse 18. It is also said that Paul would weep only for false believers within the church.

It is true that Paul could have been referring to false and hypocritical believers within the church; however, every unbeliever both in and out of the church walks as an enemy of the cross...

- whether the leader of a nation or a movement who is set on wiping out the church and the cross.
- whether a professing believer who really doubts the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Note something else as well: it is a common thing for believers to weep for the lost. Certainly Paul wept many times over the lost of the world and not just over false believers within the church. (Cp. Mt.23:37; Lk.13:34; Ro.9:1-3; 10:1; 1 Tim.2:1-4.)

**“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:1-4).**

Again, who are the enemies of the cross? It seems best to take the verse for just what it says: there are many who walk as “the enemies of the cross”—no matter who they are, whether within or without the church. Unquestionably, the enemies of the cross are many. Note what is said about them.

1. Their end is destruction (apoleia). The word means perdition, destroyed, or slayed; to lose one’s well-being; to be wasted and ruined and given a worthless existence. It does not mean that a person will cease to exist. It means a person will be destroyed and devastated and condemned to a worthless existence. He will suffer waste and loss and ruin forever and ever.

If a person stands as an enemy of the cross, he shall be destroyed. It does not matter who he is, either within or without the church, he shall suffer perdition, that is, utter destruction. Who is an enemy of the cross? It is the person...

- who rejects the cross of Christ as the only way to God.
- who does not accept the death of Christ as payment for his sins.
- who does not believe that Christ died for him, that is, as the punishment for his transgressions.
- who does not believe that the penalty for his imperfection was borne by Christ on the cross.
- who does not approach God claiming that he is coming by the death of Christ—that is, that he wants God to accept him in the death of Christ.
- who claims that there are other ways to approach God—ways other than the cross of Christ.
- who considers the cross of Christ to be foolishness.
- who opposes and curses Christ and His cross.
- who persecutes and attempts to stamp out Christ and His cross.
- who denies and questions that Christ died for our sins.

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mt.25:46; cp. v.25-45).

“But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation” (Mk.3:29).

“...he [Christ] will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable” (Lk.3:17).

“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile” (Ro.2:8-9).

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Th.1:7-9).

“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people” (Heb.10:29-30).

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pt.2:9).

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev.20:15).

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).

2. Their god is their belly (koilia), that is, their appetite, their sensuality, their desire for the physical pleasures of this world. Physical and material gratification is their god. They center their lives around...

- possessions and property
- houses and furnishings
- food and appetite
- comfort and plenty
- money and wealth
- pleasure and sex
- acceptance and social standing
- position and success
- honor and fame

Just take a moment and think upon any of the above, how some persons center and focus their lives upon such things. Some persons spend more time in front of a mirror or eating or thinking about acceptance or success or possessions or some business deal than they do in prayer.

The point is this: when a person has a craving and an appetite for such things, they become his god. The craving begins to consume his thoughts, energy, and effort. Before long his craving is taking up so much of his energy that he has very little if any time for God or for anything else. His appetite and craving, or as the Scripture says, his belly, becomes his god. Marvin Vincent quotes the Cyclops in Euripides as saying: “My flocks which I sacrifice to no one but myself, and not to the gods, and to this my belly the greatest of the gods: for to eat and drink each day, and to give one’s self no trouble, this is the god for wise men” (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol.3, p.452).

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:5-6).

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Ro.16:18).

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph.4:17-19).

3. Their glory is their shame. This simply means that men boast in their sins and shame. They boast in and pride themselves...

- in their comfort
- in their drunkenness
- in their gluttony
- in their conquests
- in their sex
- in their partying
- in what they eat
- in what they have purchased
- in their authority and power
- in how much they have

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph.5:3).

**“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence [desire], and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).**

**“Let your conversation [behavior] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).**

**“For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth” (Ps.10:3).**

**“They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (Ps.49:6-7).**

**“Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain” (Pr.25:14).**

**“Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Pr.27:1).**

4. They keep their mind on earthly things. This is simply another way of saying that a person is worldly. He focuses his mind, energy and effort upon the things of the world. But note: the things of the world include much more than the physical and material gratifications of this world. Worldly things also include the commendable things that are accepted by society such as...

- religions and spiritual pursuits
- self-development programs
- rules of virtue and morality
- the pursuit of ambition or success
- employment and jobs and business

As stated, such things are commendable and some are even necessary for survival and health. But the point is this: the basis of our lives must be the cross of Christ, not the things of this world. The only hope for conquering the ills and corruption of society and the evil and death of man is the cross of Christ. Nothing on this earth, no matter how good and beneficial it is, can give us life—not abundant and eternal life. Only Jesus Christ can give us life that conquers all and that infuses us with life that lasts forever. Therefore, the focus of our lives must be Christ and His cross. Yes, we must give our attention to our jobs and families and to the other good and beneficial pursuits of life, but underlying everything we do must be Christ and His cross. He and His cross must be the consuming passion and purpose of our lives. The person who sets his mind on earthly things is an enemy of the cross of Christ.

**“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:5-6).**

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).**

**“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).**

**3** (3:20-21) **Heaven—Believer:** we must mark those who walk as examples, third, because the believer is a citizen of heaven. Note three points.

1. The believer’s life is to be heaven-centered, for his citizenship is in heaven. The word “conversation” (*politeuma*) means *citizenship* in this context. Remember that Philippi was a Roman colony and its citizens, although in Macedonia, were citizens of Rome. As pointed out earlier, the citizens of Roman colonies lived as Romans: they dressed as Romans, spoke the Roman language, lived by the laws of Rome, engaged in Roman pleasures and social affairs, and worshipped the Roman gods. Despite the fact that they lived in Macedonia, their citizenship was in Rome. (See note, *Citizenship, Heavenly*—Ph.1:27 for more discussion; cp. Eph.2:6.)

The point to see is this: the Philippian believers knew exactly what it meant to live in one place and to be a citizen of another place. They knew exactly what it would mean to live upon the earth and...

- to dress as a citizen of heaven and not of the earth.
- to speak as a citizen of heaven and not of the earth.
- to engage in the pleasures of a citizen of heaven and not of the earth.
- to live by the laws of heaven as well as the laws of earth.
- to worship the God of heaven and not the religions and gods of this earth.

**Thought 1.** Believers are to live as citizens of heaven and not of this world. The point is forceful.

**“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Lk.10:20).**

**“That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk.22:30).**

**“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph.2:19).**

**“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ph.3:20).**

**“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb.11:9-10).**

**“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb.11:13-16).**

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).**

**“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev.21:27).**

2. The believer’s life is to be focused upon the return of Christ. He is to be looking for the Lord’s return—constantly looking—looking every day of his life. Lehman Struss makes a strong point in the following:

*“The greatest event in any country on earth is a visit from its chief emperor. History records the most elaborate preparations and memorials for such an event. Special coins have been minted, commemorative stamps issued, and highways built. Looking forward to the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is the highlight of Christian expectation. We should be dwelling daily in this thought of His return....Imagine how the residents in your neighborhood would feel if the President of the United States had announced that he was making a personal appearance in your community. I feel certain there would be some special preparations for his coming” (Devotional Studies in Philippians, p.207f).*

Kenneth Wuest points out that the Greek word “look” is made up of three words put together. There is...

- the word “receive” which speaks of welcoming as the welcoming of a guest. It also has the idea of preparation for the guest.
- the word “off” which speaks of withdrawing one’s attention from other objects.
- the word “out” which has the idea of waiting for, of stretching out the neck and waiting out or for the return of Christ. (*Philippians*, Vol.1, p.102.)

Combined together, the word “look” (apekdechometha) means to yearn, to eagerly look and wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus to take His dear people to heaven.

**“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Mt.24:44).**

**“And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come” (Lk.19:13).**

**“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (Jn.14:1-2).**

**“So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.1:7).**

**“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Th.4:16-18).**

**“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).**

**“Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father” (1 Jn.2:24).**

3. The believer’s life is to focus upon the glorious body he is to receive when Christ returns.

a. Right now the believer’s body is vile, that is, lowly and humiliating. The human body is so lowly and humiliating...

- because it has its origin out of the earth: it is nothing more than earthly chemicals or human flesh.
- because it is subject to sin and selfishness, evil and destruction.
- because it is so weak: it becomes sick and diseased, injured and maimed, aged and deteriorated.
- because it is corruptible and dying, aging and mortal, offering no hope of ever lasting beyond a few short years—no hope whatsoever.

## PHILIPPIANS 3:17-21

- b. However, note the wonderful declaration: the Lord Jesus Christ shall change the believer's body and fashion or make it just like His glorious body. The word "fashion" (summorphon) points out a most wonderful thing. The word means the permanent, constant, and unchangeable being of a person. Our bodies shall be fashioned just like the glorious body of Christ. Imagine! To have a body that is permanent, constant, and unchanging. (See note, pt.2—Ph.2:6 for more discussion on the word *fashion*.) The believer will receive a spiritual body.

**"There is a natural body [soma psuchikon] and there is a spiritual body [soma pneumatikon]" (1 Cor.15:44).**

**"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Ph.3:21).**

**We shall be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Ro.8:29).**

**"We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 Jn.3:2).**

- c. How is such possible? By the power of God, the very power which is able to subdue all things to Christ. The very power that created the world and all that is in the world...
- is sovereign over the world.
  - is able to control the world.
  - is able to subdue the world.
  - is able to recreate the world.
  - is able to transform the body of man.

**"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pt.3:10-13).**

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| <p><b>1 Step 1: Peace comes thru standing fast</b><br/> a. The source of strength: Being "in the Lord"<br/> b. The encouragement: A</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 4</b></p> <p><b>V. THE SECRET OF PEACE—THE PEACE OF GOD HIMSELF, 4:1-9</b></p> <p><b>A. The Steps to Peace (Part I): Standing Fast, Unity, Rejoicing, &amp; Gentleness, 4:1-5</b></p> <p>Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.</p> | <p>ed.<br/> 2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.<br/> 3 And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.<br/> 4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.<br/> 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.</p> | <p>“brother” who cares</p> <p><b>2 Step 2: Peace comes thru agreement &amp; unity</b><br/> a. The plea: For arguers to agree in the Lord<br/> b. The need: The help of a true friend<br/> 1) Must help them because they were co-laborers<br/> 2) Must help them because their names are in the Book of Life</p> <p><b>3 Step 3: Peace comes thru rejoicing continually &amp; repeatedly</b></p> <p><b>4 Step 4: Peace comes thru a strong gentleness</b></p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE SECRET OF PEACE—THE PEACE OF GOD HIMSELF, 4:1-9**

**A. The Steps to Peace (Part I): Standing Fast, Unity, Rejoicing, & Gentleness, 4:1-5**

(4:1-9) **DIVISION OVERVIEW:** Peace: the point of this whole passage (4:1-9) is the peace of God (v.7) and the presence of the God of peace (v.9<sup>b</sup>). There are six steps that a believer must take to maintain the peace of God within his heart and life (see outlines—Ph.4:1-9). If the believer fails to take these steps, he grieves both the Lord and fellow believers, those who have made a special contribution to his growth, *those who look upon him as their* “joy and crown” (Ph.4:1). Unfortunately, when a believer loses his peace with God, several things happen...

- He becomes self-conscious, and sheepishly shy and guilty, and perhaps discouraged and defeated.
- He becomes cantankerous, critical, murmuring, grumbling, and divisive.
- He begins to slip back into sin.

The peace he once had with God and man becomes disturbed, and restlessness grips his soul. His restlessness stirs him into being a troublemaker or into sin or else it plummets him into despair and defeat. He has failed; therefore, he feels unworthy and unable to walk victoriously with God. This is the importance of this passage: the secret of peace—the peace of God Himself. (See note—Jn.14:27.)

(4:1-5) **Introduction:** this passage is speaking to Christian believers, not to unbelievers. Unbelievers do not have peace with God. They reject, question, deny, curse, and oppose God. God feels no peace between Himself and an unbeliever. No matter how mild the unbeliever’s questioning and rejection is, it is still questioning and rejection and not peace. But when an unbeliever surrenders his life and accepts God, peace is made between him and God. Peace rules both within and between the person and God. In fact, God causes a flood of peace to surge through the heart and life of the new believer.

The question is this: once we have the peace of God flooding our lives, how do we maintain that peace? How do we keep the peace of God ruling and reigning within our souls? How do we stay aware that God’s very own presence is within us—stay aware that the God of peace lives within our very being? This is the discussion of this passage: the steps to peace.

1. Step 1: peace comes through standing fast (v.1).
2. Step 2: peace comes through agreement and unity (v.2-3).
3. Step 3: peace comes through rejoicing continually and repeatedly (v.4).
4. Step 4: peace comes through a strong gentleness (v.5).

**1** (4:1) **Standing Fast—Peace:** the first step to peace is standing fast. This verse is a transitional verse between what has been said and what is about to be said. Paul has just said...

- there are enemies of the cross of Christ,
  - the believer’s citizenship is in heaven,
  - the Lord is going to return and take us out of this world into heaven, transforming our bodies;
- ...therefore, *stand fast in the Lord.*

However, note how the verse fits in with what is to follow. Verse nine is the conclusion of this section:

**“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (v.9).**

If a person wants the *God of peace*, he must do the things which Paul taught and did, and one of the major things he taught was to stand fast in the Lord. If a person wishes the God of peace, he must stand fast in the Lord.

The word “stand fast” (stekete) means simply to stand firm, persist, persevere. It is the picture of a soldier standing fast against the onslaught of an enemy. He refuses to give ground no matter the pressure and strength of attack. He does not

flinch; he is not unstable and he is never defeated. The Christian believer is to stand fast...

- no matter how great the trial
- no matter the pressure of the temptation
- no matter the influence, offer, and allurements made by others.

But how does a believer stand fast? When the temptation to surrender is so appealing and the trial is so terrible, where can the believer find the strength to stand fast? There are two places.

1. There is the believer's source of strength: the Lord Himself. Note the words, "Stand fast *in the Lord*." There is only one place the believer can stand fast, and that is "*in the Lord*." The believer must be living and moving and having his being in the Lord; that is, he must be...

- praying, talking, and sharing with the Lord all day long.
- keeping his thoughts upon the Lord: the glorious salvation, hope, and mission He has given believers.
- serving and ministering for the Lord, bearing testimony of Him and meeting the needs of those who hurt and need help.

When a believer is walking *in the Lord* throughout the day, his mind and thoughts are upon the Lord. Therefore, when the temptations and trials come, he is *conscious and aware of the Lord's presence and strength*. He has been thinking and sharing and talking with the Lord—standing and walking in the Lord—all day long; therefore, he is much more able to stand fast against the temptation and trial. This is exactly what is meant by being "in the Lord."

⇒ Believers are to be walking in prayer and praise all day long. This is what keeps the peace of God dwelling in their lives—the "peace of God" that conquers all trials and temptations.

**"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Ph.4:6).**

⇒ Believers are to be walking with their minds upon the Lord and the things that are pure and honorable. This is what gives them a sense that the "God of peace" walks with them—the God of peace who gives the believer the power to conquer all trials and temptations.

**"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Ph.4:8-9).**

⇒ Believers are to actually work at bringing every single thought into subjection to Christ.

**"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor.10:5).**

**Thought 1.** The believer who walks praying and keeping his mind and thoughts upon the Lord is the believer who stands fast in the Lord. Common sense tells us this. There is no way to be "in the Lord" unless we are thinking, talking, and walking in the Lord. Very simply we are *in* whatever we are thinking, talking, and walking in. The first step to peace is to "stand fast in the Lord."

2. There is the encouragement: a minister or brother who loves and cares about his fellow-believer's standing fast. Note how Paul, the minister, feels about his flock—how deeply he feels for those under his care:

- ⇒ my dearly beloved brothers.
- ⇒ whom I long to see.
- ⇒ my joy and crown.

- a. He calls them my "dearly beloved brothers": they were his brothers and sisters in Christ. They had all trusted Christ as their Savior and become sons and daughters of the family of God. They were all brothers and sisters of the Lord and Paul is reminding them of this relationship. Therefore, they should all stand fast in the Lord.
- b. He says that he longs to see them. He is in prison and unable to be with them, but his heart is with his dear family, the family of God. Therefore, they need to please his heart by standing fast.
- c. He says they are his "joy and crown." This is probably a reference to the rewards to be given in the glorious day of redemption. The word "crown" (*stephanos*) refers to the crown or wreath that was given and set upon the head of a victorious athlete after he had won the victor's crown in his particular event. Paul says that his joy and crown will be the lives of the Philippians themselves when they all appear before Christ. Therefore, if he was to receive the joy and crown of their presence, they must stand fast in the Lord.

The thing to see is this: the need of believers for personal encouragement. If believers are to stand fast, they must be loved and cared for by the minister and other believers. Nothing encourages us any more than knowing that we are loved and cared for by others. The love of others stirs us to live like we should and to stand fast against temptation and trial.

**Thought 1.** Scripture exhorts believers to stand fast in several things.

1) Believers are to stand fast in the faith.

**“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor.16:13).**

2) Believers are to stand fast in the liberty of Christ.

**“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal.5:1).**

3) Believers are to stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

**“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

4) Believers are to stand fast in the Lord which is the secret of peace.

**“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved” (Ph.4:1).**

5) Believers are to stand fast and hold the teachings or doctrines that have been taught.

**“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Th.2:15).**

**2** (4:2-3) **Unity—Brotherhood—Restoration:** the second step to peace is agreement and unity. There is no peace if people are...

- |             |             |               |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| • arguing   | • brawling  | • dissenting  |
| • bickering | • wrangling | • grumbling   |
| • biting    | • disputing | • criticizing |

Paul knew this, a fact that is easily seen by all, but too often ignored by some. Paul knew something else as well, something that the Lord Himself knew. There were some in the Philippian church who were being critical, arguing, grumbling, and quarreling. The Lord had already had Paul to charge the believers:

⇒ To stand fast in one spirit and in defending the gospel.

**“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

⇒ To love each other and to be of one accord and mind.

**“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Ph.2:1-2).**

⇒ To esteem others better than self.

**“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).**

1. The plea is for all quarrelers to agree in the Lord. The source of the disturbance in the church was due to two prominent ladies in the church: Euodia and Syntyche. Who they were and what caused the trouble between them is not known. Only one thing is known about them: they were quarrelers—two women who differed and who bickered and argued, criticized and dissented, murmured and grumbled.

Note what Paul did: he pleaded for the two ladies to get their minds together “in the Lord.” As stated in the former point, if a person is living and moving and having his being “in the Lord,” then he is walking and serving the Lord. He is consumed with the Lord and His mission. There is no time for arguing and divisiveness. In fact, the very opposite is true. He has time only for joining hands with others who are living and moving in the Lord—all seeking to fulfil the Lord’s mission upon earth. A person walking in the Lord is consumed with keeping the presence of the Lord alive in his heart and life. His thoughts are upon the Lord and His mission, not upon differences with other believers and arguing and divisiveness.

2. The need is for a true friend, a yokefellow, to step in and help any who are quarreling. The word “yokefellow” (sunzuge) is thought by some to be a proper name given to some Christians when they were baptized. It was a common practice for believers to be given new names at their baptism in order to symbolize their spiritual birth. Just who this yokefellow was is not known, but he must have been a man deeply respected by the people of the church. His name refers to the *yoke* or *collar* that was fitted around the neck of oxen for plowing. The collar attached the plow and held the two oxen together so that they would pull together and more quickly get the work done. Therefore, “yokefellow” means a person who pulls and works cooperatively with others. The very fact that Paul would ask him to help the two quarreling ladies shows that he was highly esteemed. Paul felt that he cared and that the two quarrelers would listen to him—that he could solve the dispute and bring about reconciliation.

## PHILIPPIANS 4:1-5

**Thought 1.** Most churches have one or more *yokefellows*, persons...

- who love and care deeply for others.
- who are always helping and ministering to others.
- whom God has gifted and appointed to be ministerial helpers to the flock.
- who are highly respected and esteemed by most in the congregation.

The yokefellow is the person who should step in when quarrels and divisiveness begin to arouse their poisonous heads. The yokefellow is the person especially gifted by God to bring reconciliation and peace to the church.

Note: a message is given to the yokefellow as well as to the two quarrelers. The yokefellow is to help; helping is not an option. God has called and gifted him with a loving and caring nature that was especially suited for this kind of ministry. Therefore, he was to use his gift by stepping forward and doing his best to bring reconciliation and peace. Note also: there are two other reasons why he must help.

- a. The quarrelers were co-laborers in the gospel. They had helped Paul and Clement and others in the church. They needed to be serving in the gospel, not arguing and differing. Therefore, every effort possible had to be exerted in trying to salvage them.
- b. Second, their names were in the Book of Life. They were true believers who had slipped back into a life of sinful divisiveness. Despite their sin, they were true believers; therefore, every effort needed to be made to restore them.

**“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph.6:7).**

**“But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all” (Mk.10:43-44).**

**“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Lk.10:36-37).**

**“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet” (Jn.13:14).**

**“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:16).**

**“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).**

**“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:1-2).**

**“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:10).**

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).**

**“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb.12:28).**

**“Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God” (Jer.3:22).**

**“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him” (Hos.14:4).**

**“He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Mic.7:19).**

**3** (4:4) **Rejoicing:** the third step to peace is that of rejoicing in the Lord. Note that a person is to rejoice always, that is, continually; and then he is to rejoice again, that is, repeatedly.

Remember: Paul is in prison and the church is having a problem with some false teaching. Yet, Paul tells the believers that they are to walk about rejoicing in the Lord. In fact they are to rejoice in the Lord always—no matter the circumstances (see note, *Rejoicing*—Ph.3:1 for discussion).

**4** (4:5) **Moderation—Gentleness:** the fourth step to peace is a strong gentleness. The word “moderation” (*epieikes*) is a difficult word to translate into English. It is translated by others as gentleness, forbearance, reasonableness, consideration, agreeableness, courtesy, patience, and softness. There is a tendency to say that either forbearance or gentleness is the better translation. Barclay says that the word has the idea of justice in it, but that the meaning goes beyond and claims that there is *something better than justice*—a gracious gentleness.

1. Believers are to be gentle and forbearing in dealing with unbelievers. Note the phrase, “all men.” The exhortation not only deals with believers within the church, but with unbelievers. Barclay makes an excellent exposition of this point:

*“The Christian, as Paul sees it, is the man who knows that for him there is something beyond justice. When the woman taken in adultery was brought before Him, Jesus could have applied the letter of the Law, and she should, according to it, have been stoned; but He went beyond justice. As far as justice goes, there is not one of us who deserves anything but the condemnation of God, but God goes far beyond justice. Paul lays it down that the mark of a Christian in his personal relationships with his fellow-men must be that he*

## PHILIPPIANS 4:1-5

*knows when, and when not, to insist on justice, and that he always remembers that there is something which is beyond justice, and which makes a man like God” (The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thesalonians, p.94.)*

**Thought 1.** The point is well-taken: we must be gentle and forbearing in dealing with unbelievers. The last thing we must do is criticize, condemn, censor, neglect, and ignore unbelievers. We must reach out to the world with the gospel and treat them with a *loving gentleness*. We must be gentle, having absolutely nothing to do with harshness. Too many of us are harsh and critical or neglectful and withdrawn. Too many of us are wrapped in the cloak of religion having nothing to do with reaching out to the lost. The desperate need of the hour is for us to reach out with the gospel in a spirit of *love and gentleness*.

**“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (Eph.4:2).**

**“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col.3:13).**

**“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children” (1 Th.2:7).**

**“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim.2:24).**

**“To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men” (Tit.3:2).**

**“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (Jas.3:17).**

2. The reason we must be gentle to men is because the Lord is at hand. He is ready to come, and His coming is near. This simply means that when He comes, everyone of us will need Him to treat us with gentleness. We are sinners—men and women, boys and girls—who sin too often. The Lord will have every right to be critical and condemning of us. Our only hope is that He will be gentle with us. Therefore, we must be gentle with all other men. Only if we are forgiving toward them will the Lord be forgiving toward us.

**“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).**

**“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Mt.6:12).**

**“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mt.6:14-15).**

**“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (Mk.11:25).**

**“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Lk.6:38).**

**“And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Lk.17:4).**

## PHILIPPIANS 4:6-9

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| <p><b>1 Peace comes thru prayer</b></p> <p>a. The charge: Do not worry</p> <p>b. The remedy: Praying</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) About everything</li> <li>2) With requests</li> <li>3) With thanksgiving</li> </ol> <p>c. The promise: Peace</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Peace that passes all understanding</li> <li>2) Peace that keeps our hearts &amp; minds</li> </ol> <p><b>2 Peace comes thru posi-</b></p> | <p><b>B. The Steps to Peace (Part II): Prayer &amp; Positive Thinking, 4:6-9</b></p> <p>6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.</p> <p>7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.</p> <p>8 Finally, brethren, whatso-</p> | <p>ever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.</p> <p>9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.</p> | <p><b>tive thinking</b></p> <p>a. The charge: Think &amp; practice things that are...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) True</li> <li>2) Honest</li> <li>3) Just</li> <li>4) Pure</li> <li>5) Lovely</li> <li>6) Of good report</li> <li>7) Virtuous</li> <li>8) Praise-worthy</li> </ol> <p>b. The source or power of positive thinking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Word of God</li> <li>2) Noble examples</li> <li>3) Self-effort</li> </ol> |
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### DIVISION V

#### THE SECRET OF PEACE—THE PEACE OF GOD HIMSELF, 4:1-9

#### B. The Steps to Peace (Part II): Prayer & Positive Thinking, 4:6-9

(4:6-9) **Introduction:** remember we are answering a question—once we possess the peace of God, how do we maintain the peace? (See note—Ph.4:1-5 for more discussion.) Once we have made *peace with God*, then the *peace of God* floods our lives. How do we maintain that peace? How do we keep the *peace of God* ruling and reigning within our souls? How do we keep a consciousness of God’s very own presence within us—an awareness that the “God of peace” lives within our very being? This passage discusses two of the most important steps to possessing peace. Above all other passages, it tells us how to have peace and how to maintain peace. If we will take these two steps, the peace of God will rule and reign in our hearts and lives. We will never lose our peace or be without peace.

1. Peace comes through prayer (v.6-7).
2. Peace comes through positive thinking (v.8-9).

**1** (4:6-7) **Peace—Prayer—Anxiety:** peace comes through prayer. Note three significant points.

1. There is the charge: be anxious (merimnate) about nothing. The idea is that the believer is not to worry or fret about a single thing. The word “nothing” (meden) means not even one thing. Humanly speaking, the Philippians had every reason to worry and be anxious.

- ⇒ They were suffering severe persecution (Ph.1:18-19).
- ⇒ They were facing a disturbance in the church, some disunity and quarreling (Ph.1:27, 42).
- ⇒ They had some carnal members within their fellowship, some members who were prideful, super-spiritual, and self-centered (Ph.2:3-4; 3:12).
- ⇒ They were facing some false teachers who had joined their fellowship, and the teachers were fierce in attacking the cross of Christ (Ph.3:2-3, 18-19).
- ⇒ Some of the believers were having to struggle for the necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter (Ph.4:19).

There was little else that could confront these dear believers. They were facing about every trial and temptation imaginable, the kind of trouble that arouses anxiety and worry. Humanly, a person is going to fret, worry and suffer anxiety...

- when he is either about to lose or lacks food, clothing, or shelter.
- when he is persecuted, ridiculed, abused, or threatened.
- when he is surrounded by quarrels, disturbance, carnality, or false teaching.

In the midst of such circumstances, the only way a person can keep from worrying is to receive an injection of supernatural power.

This is the very point of Scripture. There is an answer to worry and anxiety, a supernatural answer: the peace of God. God will *enable* the believer to conquer worry and anxiety. God will overcome the trials of life for the believer, no matter how terrible and pressuring they may be. God will infuse the believer with peace—with the very peace of God Himself—a peace so great and so wonderful that it carries the believer right through the trial. Of course, this does not mean the believer is not to be concerned about the problems of life. He is, but there is a difference between concern and anxiety or worry. Concern drives us to arise and tackle the problems of life with an indomitable courage and diligence. Concern drives us to tackle and conquer all that we can handle. Anxiety and worry cause all kinds of problems...

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear to act</li> <li>• withdrawal</li> <li>• hesitation</li> <li>• cowardice</li> <li>• depression</li> <li>• discouragement</li> <li>• a defeatist attitude</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quick, unplanned action</li> <li>• unwise and harmful decisions</li> <li>• physical sickness and infirmities</li> <li>• emotional problems</li> <li>• spiritual backsliding</li> <li>• distrust and unbelief</li> </ul> |
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## PHILIPPIANS 4:6-9

Of course the list could go on and on, but the point to see is the seriousness of anxiety and worry. Just take a moment and think about a few of the above problems: how anxiety and worry cause a person to act and suffer. The seriousness is easily seen. We all know people who suffer greatly because of anxiety and worry; they simply lack the peace of God. Yet, the charge of Scripture is forceful: be anxious for nothing, not even for a single thing.

**“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where-withal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles [unbelievers] seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:31-33).**

**“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things” (Lk.10:41).**

**“And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind” (Lk.12:29).**

**“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lk.21:34).**

**“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:6-7).**

**“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).**

**“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pt.5:7).**

2. The remedy for anxiety and worry: prayer. The four words used for prayer show exactly how prayer is the answer to anxiety and worry.

⇒ The word “prayer” (*proseuche*) refers to the special times of prayer that we share in periods of devotion and worship. We are to have set times for prayer, times that we especially set aside for devotion and worship.

⇒ The word “supplication” (*deesis*) refers to the prayers that focus upon special needs. We feel a deep, intense need, therefore, we go before God and *supplicate*, that is, pour out our soul to God. Need—great need—confronts us, and the only possible help and deliverance is God. Therefore, we come and lay our need before Him as a child: crying, pleading and begging for His help, comfort, deliverance, and peace.

⇒ The word “thanksgiving” (*eucharistia*) means that we thank and praise God for all that He is and for all that He has done for us.

⇒ The word “requests” (*aitemata*) means specific and definite requests. Our praying is not to be general, but specific. We are to lay before God exactly what is needed and we are not to fear that we are being too detailed with God or bothering God. Neither are we to hold back from asking because we fear He will not answer something so specific. Too often believers fear not receiving the answer to a specific request, fear that it will show how weak they are spiritually if the request is not granted.

Note what Scripture says: “*In everything*” pray like this—use all four ways of praying and use them in praying for everything. This means two things.

a. We are to walk in God—live, move, and have our being in Him—and we do this *by prayer*. We live and move in God through prayer. We pray “in everything”—all day long as we walk and move about our daily affairs.

⇒ We *pray* in times that are specifically set aside for devotion and worship.

⇒ We *supplicate*—struggle in prayer—when facing times of deep and intense need.

⇒ We offer *thanksgiving* (and praise) all day long as we walk and move about.

⇒ We offer our *requests*—specific requests—to God. We ask Him to do definite things as we walk throughout the day.

As stated, we walk in God—live, move, and have our being in Him; and the way we do this is through prayer.

b. We are to pray about every thing no matter how small and insignificant it may seem. God is interested in the details of our lives, in the most minute details. He wants us acknowledging Him in *all our ways* or steps because He wants to care and look after every single step.

Now picture the scene: we are walking throughout the day, sharing with God every step of the way, and God is taking care of every step of the way. What then can take the peace of God away from us? Absolutely nothing! For as we walk in prayer and fellowship with God, God is infusing us with His presence and peace. No matter the conflict or trial, we are continuing to share with God and God is continuing to infuse us with His peace. Through prayer He is giving us the peace to conquer and walk through the trial. Our relationship with God and His peace is unbroken.

**“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Mt.7:7).**

**“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mt.26:41).**

**“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk.18:1).**

**“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Lk.21:36).**

**“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).  
“Pray without ceasing” (1 Th.5:17).**

3. The promise: peace. Peace (eirene) means to be bound, joined, and woven together. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God. It means to have a sense, a consciousness, a knowledge that God will...

- provide
- guide
- strengthen
- sustain
- deliver
- encourage
- save
- give real life both now and forever

A person can experience the peace of God only as he walks and moves about in prayer. Why? Because only God can *deliver man* through the most severe circumstances and tragedies of life; only God can *infuse assurance and security* within the human soul. The wonderful promise about the peace of God is twofold.

- a. First, the peace of God passes all understanding. It is beyond anything we can ask or think. It surpasses all our imaginations. Think of the most terrible situation you can imagine; then think of the peace you would want as you went through that trial. In actual experience, the peace of God is far greater than anything you could ever imagine or understand. The peace of God actually carries the faithful believer through the very midst of trial and tribulation.
- b. Second, the peace of God keeps our hearts and minds. The word “shall keep” (phrouresei) is a military word meaning to garrison, to keep guard and protect. The peace of God is like a most elite soldier who guards and protects the most precious possession of God: the believer’s heart and mind.

However, note that God can keep us only as we are “in Christ Jesus.” We can know the peace of God only if we have trusted Christ as our Lord and Savior and only if we walk in fellowship with Him. To be in Christ means to walk in Christ—to live, move and have our being in Him.

**“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn.14:27).**

**“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn.16:33).**

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).**

**“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:17).**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

**“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Is.26:3).**

**“The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace” (Ps.29:11).**

**2** (4:8-9) **Mind—Thoughts—Thinking Positive:** peace comes through positive thinking. The word “think” (logizesthe) means to consider, reflect, reason, and ponder. The idea is that of focusing our thoughts until they shape our behavior. The truth is:

- ⇒ what we think is what we become.
- ⇒ where we have kept our minds is where we are.
- ⇒ our thoughts shape our behavior.
- ⇒ what we do is what we think.

William Barclay says, “...it is a law of life that, if a man thinks of something often enough and long enough, he will come to the stage when he cannot stop thinking about it. His thoughts will be quite literally in a groove out of which he cannot jerk them” (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.97).

A person who centers his thoughts upon the world and its things will live for the world and its things: money, wealth, lands, property, houses, possessions, position, power, recognition, honor, social standing, fame, and a host of other worldly pursuits. Very simply stated, a person who centers his thoughts...

- upon the flesh and its lusts will live to satisfy the flesh through such things as pride, self, greed, pleasure, and sex.
- upon the eyes and its lusts will live to satisfy the eyes and its lusts through such things as the immoral, pornographic filth flaunted in magazines, films, books, and television; the exposing of the human body; dressing to attract attention; looking a second time.
- upon the pride of life will live to satisfy such things as the desire for recognition, honor, position, and authority.

A mind set upon the world and the flesh is what leads to anxiety and worry, emptiness and restlessness. This was the stress of the former point (v.6-7). A worldly mind never knows peace—not true peace, not the peace of God. God will just never allow a worldly mind to have peace, for it is the restlessness of the human soul that He uses to reach men for salvation.

The point is this: when a person accepts Jesus Christ, his mind is renewed by the Spirit of God.

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).**

**“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:23-24).**

**“And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).**

Once a person has been converted to Christ and becomes a new man, he is to focus his thoughts upon the good things of life and upon God. He is to give his mind to *positive thinking*. In fact, he is to think only positive thoughts. The believer is never to allow an immoral, fleshly, worldly, selfish, sinful or evil thought to enter his mind. There is never to be a negative thought whatsoever in the mind of the believer. Sinful and negative thoughts disrupt and destroy peace. For this reason, the believer is to struggle to conquer his mind and thoughts. He is to exert every cell of energy possible to captivate and control every thought. What we think is so important that God tells us what we are to think.

1. The charge is to think and practice positive thinking.

a. “Whatsoever things are *true*” (alethe): real and genuine.

Many things in the world seems to be true, but they are not; they are false and deceptive, an illusion, and a counterfeit. They seem to offer peace, but what they offer is a deceptive, a counterfeit peace—only escapism. We are to keep our minds upon things that are true, and we are to live lives that are true to both men and God. When our thoughts and lives are centered upon true things, peace comes to the human heart.

b. “Whatsoever things are *honest*” (semna): honorable, worthy, revered, highly respected, and noble. Barclay says: “The word really describes that which has the dignity of holiness upon it. There are things in this world which are flippant and cheap, things which are attractive to the light-minded; but it is on the things which are grave and serious and dignified that the Christian will set his mind” (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.98).

c. “Whatsoever things are *just*” (diakia): right and righteous behavior. It has to do with right behavior toward man and God.

The believer is to keep his thoughts upon his duty toward men and God—upon doing what is right toward both. Man is to be a responsible being while on earth. He is responsible for the earth and his fellow human beings, and he is to be held accountable by God for both. Therefore, he is not to focus his thoughts upon comfort and selfish pleasures and pursuits. He is to focus his thoughts upon the things that are *just and righteous*. He owes his thoughts and mind to the world and to his fellow men and especially to God. He owes whatever contribution he can make to the world and to God. A mind filled with *just and righteous* thoughts will know peace.

d. “Whatsoever things are *pure*” (hagna): morally clean, spotless, stainless, chaste, undefiled, free from moral pollution, filth, dirt, and impurities.

The believer’s mind and thoughts are to be pure—every thought.

e. “Whatsoever things are *lovely*” (prosphele): pleasing, winsome, kind, gracious; things that excite love and kindness.

The believer’s thoughts are not to be thoughts of unkindness and meanness, grumbling and murmuring, criticism and reaction. The believer’s thoughts are to be focused upon things that are lovely—that build people up, not tear them down.

f. “Whatsoever things are of *good report*” (euphema): reputable, high-toned, worthy things; things of the highest quality.

The believer is to think only upon worthy things. He is not to fill his mind with junk; he is not to listen to *bad reports*, no matter how *juicy* they may seem. Neither is he to fill his mind with junk, whether through rumor, radio, television, music, off-colored jokes, or by whatever source. His thoughts are to be focused only upon worthy things—only upon that which is of *good report*.

g. “If there be any virtue [excellence] and if there be any praise [in any thought], think on these things.” Positive thinking is the answer to peace for the Christian believer.

2. The source or power for positive thinking is twofold.

a. There is the Word of God. Paul says that he had preached and taught the very virtues of positive thinking to the Philippians and that they had learned them. What Paul had preached and taught was the will of God; therefore, the source or power for positive thinking comes from the Word of God. It is in the Word of God that a person finds the things that are to fill his mind. His thoughts are to be upon the teachings of God’s Word.

**“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col.3:16).**

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).**

**“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb.4:12).**

**“The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes” (Ps.19:8).**

## PHILIPPIANS 4:6-9

**“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Ps.119:9).**

**“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Ps.119:11).**

**“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps.119:105).**

- b. There are noble examples. Paul says that he lived as a testimony before the Philippians. Therefore, they could follow his example because he kept his thoughts and life upon the very virtues of positive thinking.

**“Brethren be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Ph.3:17).**

**“For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you” (2 Th.3:7).**

**“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.1:13).**

**“But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience” (2 Tim.3:10).**

3. There is the energy and power of self-effort and discipline. Note the words, “Those things...do.” The believer is expected to control and discipline his mind. He is to struggle against all sinful and negative thoughts, and fight to think only positive thoughts. Note the result of positive thinking: the God of peace shall be with the believer.

**“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Ro.8:5).**

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).**

**“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor.2:16).**

**“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).**

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Ph.4:8).**

**“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:23-24).**

**“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee” (Is.26:3).**

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| <p><b>1 Their giving was revived &amp; it flourished</b></p> <p><b>2 Their giving was not necessary, but it was needed</b></p> <p>a. Giving is not necessary because God teaches contentment apart from circumstances</p> <p>b. Giving is not necessary because Christ strengthens</p> | <p><b>VI. THE APPRECIATION FOR GOOD CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS, 4:10-23</b></p> <p><b>A. Appreciation: For a Church That Revives Its Sacrificial Giving, 4:10-19</b></p> <p>10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.</p> <p>11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.</p> <p>12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.</p> <p>13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth</p> | <p>me.</p> <p>14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.</p> <p>15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.</p> <p>16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.</p> <p>17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.</p> <p>18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.</p> <p>19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.</p> | <p>us thru all</p> <p>c. Giving is needed—it is work well done</p> <p><b>3 Their giving was distinctive: They were the only church that gave &amp; they gave consistently</b></p> <p><b>4 Their giving was sacrificial &amp; it was seen &amp; rewarded by God</b></p> <p>a. God deposited fruit to their account</p> <p>b. God was well pleased</p> <p>c. God promised to supply all their need</p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**THE APPRECIATION FOR GOOD CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS, 4:10-23**

**A. Appreciation: For a Church That Revives Its Sacrificial Giving, 4:10-19**

(4:10-19) **Introduction:** this passage deals with stewardship, in particular the giving of money to meet the needs of ministers and missions or the spread of the gospel to the world. Remember: Paul is in prison facing the false charge of insurrection against the government. He is facing the death penalty if convicted. The Philippians had heard about his plight, and they had heard how Paul was standing fast and continuing to preach the gospel to everyone who visited him. The church was stirred to do two things: to take up a love offering and to send a man, Epaphroditus, to minister to Paul’s needs. (See outline and notes—Ph.2:25-30 for more discussion.)

This passage is Paul’s appreciation for a church that is stirred to revive its interest in missions—stirred to begin giving *once again* to the support of God’s ministers worldwide.

1. Their giving was revived and it flourished (v.10).
2. Their giving was not necessary, but it was needed (v.11-14).
3. Their giving was distinctive: they were the only church that gave and they gave consistently (v.15-16).
4. Their giving was sacrificial and it was seen and rewarded by God (v.17-19).

**1** (4:10) **Stewardship—Giving:** the church revived its giving and its giving flourished. Note the words “flourished again” (anethalete): it means to revive again. It is the picture of plants and flowers sprouting, shooting up, and blossoming *again*. The key word is *again*. When the church had been founded, the believers had supported Paul and his mission work on a regular basis. But for some reason they had dropped their mission support. That had probably been over ten to twelve years before (Strauss). Why they had stopped sending support to Paul is not known. However, the point to see is the glorious revival of mission support that took place in the church. They picked up the support of Paul once again, and their giving flourished and blossomed anew. The joy and rejoicing of Paul’s heart can just be imagined. He says, “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly.”

**Thought 1.** Why had the church dropped its mission support of Paul? As stated, the reason is not known. In his gracious and kind way, Paul just passes over the issue by saying that he knew they cared for him, but they had just lacked opportunity to support him. Was their lack of support...

- legitimate: that is, due to persecution or poverty?
- illegitimate: that is, due to neglect and unconcern for the spread of the gospel and missions worldwide?

Being honest about the matter, it is difficult to conceive of a legitimate reason for dropping mission support. It is especially difficult to see a reason that would last as long as the ten to twelve years that the Philippian church had failed to support Paul. Whether legitimate or not, we all need to search our hearts about our own personal support of God’s ministers and missions worldwide.

⇒ The gospel must be supported.

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- ⇒ The gospel must be carried worldwide.
- ⇒ The need of the hour is for churches to awaken to the *worldwide mission* of Christ.
- ⇒ Preachers, that is, ministers, missionaries, teachers, and evangelists—all of God's appointed preachers and teachers—must be supported as they carry the gospel to the world.

Note this: it has been centuries heaped upon centuries since Jesus Christ came to die for the sins of men and to give them life. Yet, look at how little has been done—at how many have still not heard or believed.

- ⇒ Where are the laborers to carry the message? Where are those who actually pray for laborers as He instructed? Look at how many stay at home and then look at the few out in the communities and fields of the world ministering and witnessing to the lost. Is this God's method? His will? Thought and honesty give us the answer. The problem is not that we don't know the truth. We know the truth: we know that we are to go. The problem is that we do not go. We are just unwilling to commit ourselves to go. We are unwilling to leave the comfort and security of our homes and offices, jobs and families to go into the communities and nations of the world.

The need of the hour is for laborers—laborers who will do exactly what Christ commanded: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15). And if we cannot go, then we must commit ourselves to support those who are willing to go!

**“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Mt.9:37).**

**“Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest” (Lk.10:2).**

**“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk.14:33).**

**“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (Jn.4:35-36).**

**2** (4:11-14) **Stewardship—Ministers—Provision:** the church's giving was not necessary, but it was needed. Very simply, what this means is that God will take care of His dear servant even if churches do not adequately care for him. Down through the centuries most churches have not adequately cared for their ministers. This has been part of the sufferings most ministers have to bear in order to carry the gospel forth to a world reeling in desperate need. Yet, God's dear servants have gone forth despite whatever suffering they have had to bear. Note three significant points.

1. Giving is not necessary because God teaches His servants to be content, no matter the circumstances (v.11-12). The word “content” (*autarkeia*) means to be self-sufficient; to be completely detached from circumstances. Note the word “learned.” It was a learning experience. Paul had to learn to conquer circumstances and not to let circumstances worry him. But note: he had learned contentment. He says three descriptive things:

- ⇒ that he knew how to be abased (to live humbly with little) and how to abound (to live with plenty and prosperity).
- ⇒ that he knew the *secret* to facing every situation, whether being full or going hungry.
- ⇒ that he knew how to abound (live in plenty) and how to suffer need.

Lehman Strauss says:

*“In those early days of my Christian experience I could not see how some Christians I knew could be content with so little of this world's goods. I sincerely trust that I am learning the secret. From what I see about me I do not hesitate to say that it is a secret many Christians have yet to learn. Paul needed to learn it. He said, ‘I have learned....’ The lesson of contentment was one he learned by degrees in varying circumstances. As a young unbelieving Jew, he had no want insofar as this world's possessions are concerned. He did not always know the divine provision of satisfaction, but after he was saved he came to learn it, not in the academic classroom, but as the result of a lengthy experience of trials and discipline, ‘I have learned’ is the language of a good student. Have you learned to be satisfied with your place and position and possessions in this life?” (Devotional Studies in Philippians, p.321.)*

What was the secret Paul had learned? It is the next point.

**“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Ph.4:11).**

**“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Tim.6:6-10).**

**“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb.13:5).**

2. Giving is not necessary because the minister can do all things through Christ who strengthens him (v.13). Note the verse:

**“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Ph.4:13).**

God’s servant (minister) can be content in all circumstances no matter how severe they are—through Christ—but he cannot be content in any circumstance apart from Christ. Note exactly what the verse says:

- ⇒ “I can...through Christ”
- ⇒ “Christ who strengthens me”

Christ does not do everything for the believer; neither does the believer do everything for himself. Both Christ and the believer have a part in conquering circumstances. The believer declares, “I can,” and he gets up and faces the circumstances head on. It is then that Christ steps in and strengthens the believer. Christ infuses strength into the believer *while the believer* is tackling the problem.

Facing reality, there is no need for strength unless the believer is facing and struggling against the circumstance.

- ⇒ The believer does not need extra strength to arise and face the circumstance. Any believer, no matter who he is, has the strength himself to arise and face any circumstance that confronts him.
- ⇒ The believer does not even need strength to begin struggling to conquer and solve the circumstance. He has the strength himself to fight against the circumstance that confronts him.

It is only when the believer has exhausted what he can do that a special infusion of the strength of Christ is needed. Christ steps in when our strength is no longer sufficient. It is then that He is able to demonstrate His wonderful love and care for His dear servant. Note something else as well: all praise and glory is then due Christ and not man. Giving is not necessary; God will provide and care for His dear servant.

**“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor.12:9-10).**

**“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Ro.8:37).**

**“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor.9:8).**

**“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph.3:16).**

**“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Ph.4:13).**

**“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb.13:6).**

**“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him” (Ps.28:7).**

**“But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God” (Ps.40:17).**

**“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).**

3. However, giving is needed, and it is work well done (v.14). The minister needs daily provision and the gospel needs to be supported so that it can be carried around the world. Money and support are greatly needed. They are not necessary; God can take care of His dear servants and the gospel with or without any church. But His will is for every single church to become involved in supporting His servants and worldwide missions. God can do the job without us; God can bypass us and put us on the shelf just like a useless book. But He wants His people to give and give generously. When they do, they perform a work that is well done, that is commendable and noble.

**“I have showed you all things how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).**

**“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal.6:9-10).**

**3** (4:15-16) **Stewardship—Minister—Missions:** the church’s giving was distinctive—they were the only church that gave and they gave consistently. This is a point that desperately needs to be heeded by churches everywhere. When the Philippian church was founded, it underwrote the ministry of Paul and it was consistent in its support. But note: it was the only church that was supporting Paul. The unfaithfulness of the other churches cut Paul’s heart. This is clear from his words that no church supported him—none except the Philippian church.

It was while he was in Thessalonica that the Philippians had been consistent in their mission support. And how he had needed their support in Thessalonica, for it was there that he had faced severe persecution (cp. Acts 17:1f).

**Thought 1.** Imagine! Just one church supporting Paul and his mission to the world! And that church was a church that had just been founded. Two questions desperately need to be asked by all of us.

- 1) What are we doing for the Pauls and missions of today?

- 2) Have we made a commitment to support any minister or mission and backed off the commitment?

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.19:23).

“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mk.4:19).

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (1 Tim.6:7).

“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Tim.6:9).

“For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others” (Ps.49:10).

“Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven” (Pr.23:5).

“For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?” (Pr.27:24).

“As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool” (Jer.17:11).

**4** (4:17-19) **Stewardship—Mission:** the church’s giving was sacrificial, and it was seen and rewarded by God. The gift cost the Philippian church. They were a church that gave, not just a percentage (so to speak) but sacrificially. This is seen in two points. Their gift is said to be a definite *sacrifice*, acceptable and well pleasing to God. Their gift is also said to have created a *need* among themselves. But Paul answers them, “God shall supply all your needs....” (v.19). Note three points.

1. God saw who sacrificially gave to support Paul and He deposited a reward to their account (v.17). This was what Paul desired in giving: not a gift for himself, but a reward for the giver. Paul knew that God saw and rewarded the believers who gave sacrificially; therefore, Paul desired believers to give and to give sacrificially.

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Mt.6:20).

“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Mt.19:21).

“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Lk.12:33).

“Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting” (Lk.18:30).

2. God was well pleased with the giving of the Philippians (v.18). Paul compares it to an Old Testament sacrifice which a person offered up to God. The person’s sacrificial commitment to God was just like the *pleasant smell* of the animal sacrifice: it was acceptable. The sacrificial commitment was a sweet or pleasant smell to God. So it was and is with sacrificial giving. The commitment of the gift is acceptable to God just like the pleasant smell of an animal sacrifice.

“But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God” (Ph.4:18).

“But to do good and to communicate [give] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb.13:16).

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, and holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.2:5).

3. God promised to supply all the needs of His dear people (v.19). This is one the great promises of Scripture: “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).

a. There is the great Provider: *God Himself*. No matter what the need is, the need is not greater than God. God can and will meet the need. But note the pronoun “my.” It is “my God” who shall provide for the needs. A person has to make sure...

- that the God who can really provide for needs is his God.
- that he knows God personally—well enough that he can trust and depend upon God to meet his need.

b. There is the great assurance of provision: “my God *shall supply*.” There is no question about the provision being supplied. God is God; therefore, He is able to provide and He will supply whatever provision His dear child needs.

c. There is the great provision: “*all your needs*.” This promise does not refer only to the physical needs for food, clothing, and shelter. It refers to mental, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. It refers to any need that arises, engulfs, or confronts the believer. No need will be omitted or overlooked. No need is too big or too little. No need is unimportant—not to God, not if His dear child is really experiencing the need.

- ⇒ There may be a lesson for the believer to learn before the need can be met, some lesson such as more trust, endurance, love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, or control.
- ⇒ There may be some testimony that the believer needs to share as to the strength of Christ which carries us through trials.

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But no matter what the trial or need is, God will supply all our needs.

- d. There is the great *resource*: “according to His riches in glory.” Take all the riches and wealth, glory and majesty of heaven—it is all available to meet the needs of God’s dear people. There is no limit—not even a fraction—to the great resources at God’s disposal. God can provide for any need.
- e. There is the great Mediator: “*By Christ Jesus.*” This is critical to note, for God does nothing apart from Christ. No person can approach God without coming to Him through Christ Jesus. This is the key to having our needs met: surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ, and asking God to meet our needs *in Him*. We must always remember that God has only one child: the Lord Jesus Christ. God loves Christ so much that He will do anything for the person who honors Christ by sacrificially giving to share the glorious news about Him.

**“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor.9:8).**

**“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Lk.6:38).**

**“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).**

**“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:19).**

**“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.1:14).**

**“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim.4:8).**

**“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pt.1:11).**

**“Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Is.41:10).**

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|   | <b>B. Appreciation: For God &amp; for Fellow Christians, 4:20-23</b>             |
| <b>1 God is to be praised as God &amp; as our Father</b>                          | 20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.                 |
| <b>2 Believers are to salute every saint</b>                                      | 21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. |
| a. Christian leaders are to greet every saint                                     |  |
| b. All the saints are to greet other believers, including government officials    | 22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.       |
| <b>3 Believers are to wish the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ upon each other</b> | 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.                     |

## DIVISION VI

### THE APPRECIATION FOR GOOD CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS, 4:10-23

#### B. Appreciation: For God & for Fellow Christians, 4:20-23

(4:20-23) **Introduction:** the great *Letter of Philippians* is now being closed. But before it is closed, one more thing must be done. Appreciation must be expressed—appreciation for God and for fellow Christian believers.

1. God is to be praised as God and as our Father (v.20).
2. Believers are to salute every saint (v.21-22).
3. Believers are to wish the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ upon each other (v.23).

#### **1** (4:20) **God—Praise:** God is to be praised as God and as our Father.

1. First, God is to be praised as God. He is God, the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of the universe. God has made all, and He rules and governs all.
  - ⇒ He is the only wise God who dwells in majesty and glory, dominion and power (Jude 24-25).
  - ⇒ He is the only One who possesses the bottomless depth of wisdom and knowledge, who possesses all the riches of wisdom and knowledge. He is the One whose judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out. He is the One who has a mind that no man can know and who has such wisdom that no man can be a counsellor to Him: “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Ro.11:36).
  - ⇒ He is the only One who reigns and is clothed with majesty and strength, whose very voice is the embodiment of power and of creation. Before Him are both honor and majesty (Ps.29:4; 93:1; 96:6).
  - ⇒ He is the only One whose glory is like a devouring fire (Ex.24:17). He is the One whose glory is declared by the heavens, and whose handiwork is shown by the firmament (Ps.19:1).

An eternity of declaration could be proclaimed about God. God is God, and because He is God, He is to be praised as God.

2. God is to be praised as *our Father*. Imagine! The Sovereign Majesty of the universe has humbled Himself so much that He has adopted us as His sons and daughters. Just think about the fact. He is the Sovereign Power not only of this earth, but of the whole universe. Yet...

- we have criticized, grumbled, and complained about His rule.
- we have cursed His very name.
- we have rebelled and rejected Him.
- we have questioned and denied Him, and even scoffed at the very idea of Him.
- we have deliberately disobeyed Him.
- we have chosen to live as we please and to do our own thing instead of following Him.

Just think about our attitude and behavior toward God—toward Him who is the Ruler of the universe in all its glory and vastness. Yet, He has not wiped us out; He has not destroyed us. On the contrary, He has sent His Son into the world to declare that He loves the world and that He wants to reconcile us to Himself. How? Through the death of His Son Jesus Christ. God wants to adopt men and women as sons and daughters through faith in the death of His Son. (See note, *Adoption*—Gal.4:4-7; DEEPER STUDY # 2—4:5-6 for more discussion.)

This is *the great humility (or condescension) and mercy* of God—that He, as the Sovereign Ruler of the universe whom we have rejected and cursed so much, would still save and adopt us and let us call Him Father (see outline and notes—Ph.2:5-11).

The great condescension of God demands one thing: that we praise and glorify Him *as our Father for ever and ever*.

“After the manner therefore pray ye: **Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name**” (Mt.6:9).

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:15-17).

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:4-6).

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb.13:15).

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pt.2:9).

**2** (4:21-22) **Brotherhood—Greeting—Prejudice—Partiality:** believers are to salute every saint, that is, every true believer. “Saint” (hagion) means those who are separated or set apart unto God; those who are different from the person who lives for the world, for its possessions and pleasures. Note: every saint is to be greeted. There is to be no discrimination or favoritism shown. Among saints there is to be...

- |                  |                 |                                  |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| • no clique      | • no neglect    | • no sense of pride              |
| • no ignoring    | • no snubbing   | • no sense of superiority        |
| • no downgrading | • no separation | • no sense of super-spirituality |
| • no withdrawal  | • no avoiding   | • no sense of being better       |

Poverty, education, handicap, unattractiveness, clothing, social standing, employment, race, nationality—nothing is to cause believers to discriminate or to show partiality and favoritism. All saints are equally acceptable to God. Therefore, all saints are to be greeted by all believers.

1. Christian leaders are to greet every saint. Note that “all the brothers” with Paul send their greetings. This apparently refers to the ministers who accompanied and served with Paul in his ministry—men such as Timothy and Luke. Paul does not name them, so we do not know who they were. The point to note is that the Christian leaders are to take the lead in greeting *every saint*. If the leader shows discrimination and favoritism, then others in the church will do the same. The minister and other leaders must always demonstrate love, interest, and care *for all*.

2. All the saints, including government officials, are to greet every saint. Caesar’s household does not necessarily refer to members of Caesar’s family. The term is very similar to what we call civil servants, or government employees. As in our day, Rome had its government employees scattered all over the world. But note: Paul was in Rome, so this means that some government officials had been reached for Christ. The lesson for us is that humility must be demonstrated even by those in the echelons of government, no matter how high their position is. Even if a person is in Caesar’s household, in the highest position of government, he must walk humbly before God and greet all the saints, even the lowest saint.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Pt.5:5-6).

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.18:4).

“And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Lk.22:25-26).

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro.12:3).

“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Ro.12:16).

**3** (4:23) **Grace:** believers are to wish the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ upon each other (see notes, *Grace*—Gal.1:3; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Eph.1:2; 2:8-9 for discussion).



**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE**

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**COLOSSIANS**



# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

## INTRODUCTION

**AUTHOR:** Paul, the Apostle.

Paul's authorship is disputed by some commentators, but the majority still hold that Paul was the author. The strongest argument for Paul's authorship is seen in the great similarity between Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians (See Ephesians, Introductory Notes, To Whom Written, point 4). Philemon definitely comes from Paul's hand. Note five other facts as well:

1. Paul's son in the faith, Timothy, was his companion in both letters (Col.1:1; Phile.1).
2. Paul's companions in Philemon were also present at the writing of Colossians: Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke (Col.4:12f; Phile.22-23).
3. Paul was in prison while writing both letters (Col.4:7f; Phile.1).
4. Paul sent a message to the same man in both letters—Archippus (Col.4:17; Phile.2).
5. Paul had Onesimus to travel with Tychicus in taking the letter to the church of Colosse. Onesimus was the slave or the subject of the Philemon letter (Col.4:7-9; Phile.10).

**DATE:** Uncertain. Probably between A.D. 60-63.

Colossians was probably written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome. But this too is disputed by some. Some hold that the letter was written from Caesarea (A.D. 58-60) or Ephesus (A.D. 55-56).

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** To the believers and faithful brothers in Christ which are at Colosse (Col.1:2).

**PURPOSE:** To combat an extremely dangerous and threatening heresy that was arising in the Colosse church.

There have been several suggestions as to what the heresy was. But the value in identifying the name of the heresy is questionable, since few if any ever hold to a belief in its entirety or in its pure form. The Christian believer and carnal church can, however, benefit from a study of its characteristics. (See notes—Col.1:15; 2:8-10; 2:11-12; 2:13-15; 2:16-19; 2:20-23 for more discussion.)

1. It stressed astrology, the signs and spirits of the stars and planets. Paul warns, "Beware lest any man spoil you...after the rudiments [elementary signs and spirits] of the world, and not after Christ" (Col.2:8). Then Paul asks, "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" (Col.2:20).
2. It stressed philosophy. The heresy attacked the simplicity of the gospel. It prided itself in being original and in its ability to rationalize. Paul warns, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit" (Col.2:8).
3. It stressed "enlightenment." It had a strong emphasis upon wisdom and knowledge (Col.2:3); philosophy and tradition (Col.2:8); delving into the unknown and using one's fleshly mind (Col.2:18); and worshipping man's own ability and will to control and discipline himself (Col.2:23).
4. It stressed soul over body. The body was considered evil, a prison house that imprisoned the soul. The consequences were twofold. First, some said the way to release or take care of the soul was to subdue the body, discipline and control it. Therefore, asceticism became the inevitable result: "Touch not, taste not, handle not" (Col.2:21). Second, some said that since the soul is what is important, the body does not matter. One can do what he wishes with his body just so he takes care of his soul by participating in religious worship and ordinances. Therefore, loose living became acceptable. One could be worldly so long as he was also religious. This is what is so strongly attacked by Paul in passages such as Col.3:5-8 and by John in 1 Jn.1:6-2:2.
5. It stressed ritual and tradition. Special foods and drinks, days and festivals, traditions and man-made rules were insisted upon (Col.2:16, 22).
6. It stressed other mediators between God and man: elementary spirits (Col.2:8, 20) and angels (Col.2:18).
8. It stressed spiritual humility. Man was considered to be so unworthy that he was unable to approach God himself. Man had to submit to other mediators to approach God for him. This evidently resulted in a great spiritual pride and snobbishness and in false humility (Col.2:23). Note also the stress upon "every man" of Col.1:28. Paul is pointing out that salvation is not limited to a special few.)

The heresy attacked Jesus Christ at every point.

1. It attacked His supremacy, His deity, His messiahship and His incarnation. The heresy said this: if the world and its material, including man's body, is evil and imprisons the soul, then God would never take human flesh upon Himself. Why? Human flesh is evil. And God would become evil by taking man's flesh upon Himself. This argument took two directions.
  - a. There was Docetism. Docetism said that Christ was not really human; He only appeared human. The word "Docetism" means *to seem*. Jesus only seemed to have a body. He was never really flesh and blood. He came to earth only as a pure spiritual being.
  - b. There was Cerinthianism. Cerinthianism said that there was a clear distinction between the human and the divine Christ. This just had to be, for God could never suffer and die. He could not really be God if He suffered and died. Thus it was claimed that the Spirit of God Himself did not enter Jesus until His baptism, and He left Jesus right before His death.

Paul has to insist that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Col.1:15); that “it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell” (Col.1:19); that “in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col.2:3); that “in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col.2:9). John combated the same heresy by saying that the eternal God has come to earth and entered time and space (1 Jn.1:1-4; see Outline). He asks, “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ” (1 Jn.22). He pointedly says, “Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is that spirit of antichrist” (1 Jn.4:3). In answer to Cerinthus John says, “This is He that came by water and blood, even by Jesus Christ; not water [baptism] only, but by water and blood [death]” (1 Jn.5:6).

2. It attacked the creative power and supreme role of Jesus Christ in creation. Paul has to insist that “by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or power; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things and by Him all things consist” (Col.1:16-17).

3. It attacked the humanity of Jesus Christ. Paul says it was “in the body of His flesh” that He redeemed man (Col.1:22); that “in Him [His body] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily [in His bodily form]” (Col.2:9).

4. It attacked the redemptive power of Jesus Christ. The heresy was claiming that something more than Christ was needed to defeat the powers that oppose man. Christ has His place, but only as one among others. He is one way to God, but there are other ways as well. Paul insists that “you...hath He reconciled in the body of His death” (Col.1:21-22); that “ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col.2:10); that “having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col.2:15).

### **SPECIAL FEATURES:**

1. The city of Colosse. Colosse was one of three cities within sight of one another in the Lycus Valley, sitting by the Lycus River. The other cities, Hierapolis and Laodicea, the chief city of the area, were only six miles apart. Colosse was twelve miles away and was the least important of the three. The city was about one hundred miles east of Ephesus. The area was a fertile land providing a feast for flocks. It was also one of the clothing and dye centers of the world.

2. The Church at Colosse. Paul never visited Colosse so far as is known. The church had never seen his face (Col.2:1), and the book of Acts does not record a mission to the area. He was writing the city to combat the heresy discussed in the Purpose above. Paul mentions both Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col.2:1; 4:13, 16). Apparently some of Paul’s converts founded the church. While in Ephesus for three years, Paul saw to it that “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:10). Epaphras, who was the fellow servant of Paul, was the pastor of the Colosse church. Apparently, he was also the area pastor of Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col.1:7; 4:12-13; Phile.23). The church met in Philemon’s home, a convert of Paul (Phile.10). The church was primarily Gentile in membership, for they were aliens from God’s promises to Israel (Col.1:21). He speaks of making known the “mystery of God to the Gentiles” (Col.1:27). And he gives a list of sins that were viewed as common to the Gentiles (Col.3:5-7).

The church showed some strengths despite the heresy. They held “faith in Christ Jesus” and showed “love to all the saints” (Col.1:4). They were bearing evangelistic fruit, reaching people for Christ (Col.1:6). They were steadfast in their faith (Col.2:5). This seems to indicate that the heresy was just beginning to seep into the church and had not yet become a major problem. Paul’s task was to stop it dead in its tracks.

3. Colossians is “The Epistle Similar to Ephesians” (see Ephesians, Introductory Notes, To Whom Written, point 4). In Ephesians, the church is seen as the body of Christ. In Colossians, Christ is seen as the Head of the church (cp. Col.1:15f).

## OUTLINE OF COLOSSIANS

**THE PREACHER'S OUTLINE & SERMON BIBLE™** is *unique*. It differs from all other Study Bibles & Sermon Resource Materials in that every Passage and Subject is outlined right beside the Scripture. When you choose any *Subject* below and turn to the reference, you have not only the Scripture, but you discover the Scripture and Subject *already outlined for you—verse by verse*.

*For a quick example*, choose one of the subjects below and turn over to the Scripture, and you will find this marvelous help for faster, easier, and more accurate use.

*In addition, every point* of the Scripture and Subject is *fully developed in a Commentary with supporting Scripture* at the bottom of the page. Again, this arrangement makes sermon preparation much easier and faster.

*Note something else*: The Subjects of Colossians have titles that are both Biblical and *practical*. The practical titles sometimes have more appeal to people. This *benefit* is clearly seen for use on billboards, bulletins, church newsletters, etc.

*A suggestion*: For the quickest overview of Colossians, first read *all the major titles* (I, II, III, etc.), then come back and read the subtitles.

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### OUTLINE OF COLOSSIANS

#### **I. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE, 1:1-11**

- A. The Great Beliefs of a Great Christian, 1:1-2
- B. The Great Pillars of the Christian Life, 1:3-8
- C. The Great Requests of Prayer, 1:9-11

#### **II. THE PREEMINENT CHRIST: GOD'S DEAR SON, 1:12-23**

- A. God and Man: What God Has Done for Man, 1:12-14
- B. God and Christ (Part I): The Person of Christ, 1:15
- C. God and Christ (Part II): Christ the Creator, 1:16-17
- D. God and Christ (Part III): Christ the Head of the Church, 1:18-19
- E. God and Christ (Part IV): Christ the Reconciler of All Things, 1:20-23

#### **III. THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH, 1:24-2:7**

- A. The Minister Who Tirelessly Labors for the Church, 1:24-29
- B. The Distinguished Marks of a Mature Church, 2:1-7

#### **IV. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST AND FALSE TEACHING, 2:8-23**

- A. Christ vs. False Philosophy and Astrology, 2:8-10
- B. Christ vs. False Religion, 2:11-12
- C. Christ vs. Man's Idea of Sin, the Law, & Evil Spirits, 2:13-15
- D. Christ vs. Rules, Ritual, and Spiritism, 2:16-19
- E. Criticisms of Worldly Philosophy and Man-Made Approaches To God, 2:20-23

#### **V. THE DEMANDS OF THE BELIEVER'S NEW LIFE: GREAT CHARACTER, 3:1-17**

- A. The Basis of the Believer's New Life, 3:1-4
- B. The Violent Demands of the New Life, 3:5-11
- C. The Clothing of the New Life, 3:12-14
- D. The Heart of the New Life, 3:15-17

#### **VI. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BELIEVER, 3:18-4:6**

- A. The Believer and His Family, 3:18-21
- B. The Believer and His Work, 3:22-4:1
- C. The Believer and His Prayer Life and Witness, 4:2-6

#### **VII. CONCLUSION: THE EXAMPLE OF SOME HEROIC CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, 4:7-18**



# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

## CHAPTER 1

### I. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE, 1:1-11

#### A. The Great Beliefs of a Great Christian, 1:1-2

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Life has one basic profession: The will of God</b></p> <p><b>2 Life has one essential relationship: Brotherhood</b></p> <p><b>3 Life has two levels of spiritual maturity: A carnal believer vs. a faithful brother<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p><b>4 Life has two basic spiritual needs: Grace &amp; peace</b></p> | <p><b>P</b>aul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,</p> <p>2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.</p> |
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## DIVISION I

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE, 1:1-11

#### A. The Great Beliefs of a Great Christian, 1:1-2

(1:1-2) **Introduction:** no person could ever pack so much in so little space as the Word of God does. This is one of the proofs of the inspiration of Scripture. The opening verses of Colossians—just two verses—are a prime example. In just a few words the great beliefs of a great Christian are covered.

1. Life has but one profession: the will of God (v.1).
2. Life has one essential relationship: brotherhood (v.1).
3. Life has two levels of spiritual maturity: a carnal saint vs. a faithful saint (v.2).
4. Life has two basic spiritual needs: grace and peace (v.2).

**1** (1:1) **Profession—Will of God:** life has but one profession—the will of God. Two things are stressed.

1. What Paul did was “by the will of God”; that is, his profession and work was exactly what God wanted him to do. Paul did not choose his life’s work, for he did not want to make a mistake; he did not want to waste his life. He did not want to come up to the end of his life and be reckoned a failure by God. To Paul there was but one work or profession: the job God wanted him to do. The profession he wanted did not matter; only God’s will for his life mattered.

**Thought 1.** There is only one profession for any believer: the work God wants him to do. God has put every believer upon earth for a specific task. If the believer chooses some profession or job other than the work God wants him to do, then he is out of the will of God. He is not fulfilling his purpose for being upon earth.

“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Mt.12:50).

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn.7:17).

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).

“[God] make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever” (Heb.13:21).

“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (Jas.4:15).

2. The profession chosen by God for Paul was that of being a minister, in particular, an apostle (apostolos) means a person who is especially sent to go among men as an ambassador or messenger. The key thought is this:

⇒ He is sent forth by God. He does not go forth on his own nor by the authority of other men. His profession and authority are both of God.

⇒ He is the messenger of God. In fact, his very call or profession exists only to deliver the message of God. He has no right to proclaim his own message and thoughts nor the message and thoughts of others.

(See note, *Apostle*—Gal.1:1 for more discussion.)

“[God] who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament” (2 Cor.3:6).

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry [from God] as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor.4:1-2).

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation....Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor.5:18, 20).

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Eph.3:7).

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:12).

“But [God’s grace] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim.1:10-11).

**2** (1:1) **Brotherhood:** life has but one essential relationship—brotherhood. Paul mentions Timothy, a young disciple or student of his. Timothy had joined Paul to learn all he could about the ministry and to serve right along the side of Paul. But note that the relationship mentioned by Paul was not that of a student or disciple. It was not even that of a fellow preacher, teacher, or administrator. It was that of being a *brother in Christ*. And note the word “our.” The basic relationship between Timothy and the believers at Colosse was that of being a brother. Note also that he calls the Colossians brothers (v.2). This stresses a significant fact: there are many different relationships in life. There are relationships such as...

- employer and employee
- neighbor and neighbor
- teacher and student
- friend and friend
- worker and worker
- merchant and customer
- minister and parishioner

All the relationships of life are important and have their place in the welfare of society, but there is one relationship that is essential: that of brotherhood. A man does not walk as a solitary figure upon this earth. He walks among people—people just like himself. Thus, a man who walks aloof does not understand life. Brotherly relationships are essential. Paul knew this: wherever he went, he initiated and nourished relationships. Here he calls Timothy *brother* and the Colossians *brothers* (v.2). One of the most cherished abilities in all the world is knowing how to properly relate to people.

The one essential for believers is to walk as brothers to other believers. Within the church there is not to be any sense of...

- |                      |             |                |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| • superiority        | • criticism | • envy         |
| • pride              | • grumbling | • cliquishness |
| • arrogance          | • judging   | • divisiveness |
| • super-spirituality | • censoring | • self-seeking |

A true brotherhood is to be the fundamental relationship within the church and with believers. Treating one another as brothers is the secret to peace in both the world and the church.

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5; cp. 1 Cor.10:17; 12:12-13; Eph.4:13).

“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love in honour preferring one another” (Ro.12:10).

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph.2:3-4).

“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another” (1 Th.4:9).

“Let brotherly love continue” (Heb.13:1).

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pt.5:5).

**3** (1:2) **Maturity, Spiritual:** life has two levels of spiritual maturity—being a carnal believer or being a faithful believer. Note that Paul addresses his letter to the *saints* (believers) and faithful brothers in the church. Paul is making a clear distinction between two classes of believers.

1. There are the “saints” (*hagios*), that is, the *carnal saints or believers*, within the church. This refers to those who in the past had set their lives apart to follow the Lord Jesus. They *had separated* themselves from the world and *had turned* to the Lord Jesus to save them. However, a saint or believer may or may not *continue on* with the Lord Jesus. Some in the Colossian church *were not continuing on*. They were not fully committed. Their commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ was lacking. Therefore, they were running the risk of falling into the error of false teaching and turning away from Christ. The point is this: a person can be a carnal believer or carnal “saint” within the church. Just because a person has made a profession and given some semblance of following Christ does not mean he is safe and secure forever—that he is automatically

## COLOSSIANS 1:1-2

mature in Christ. When a person truly comes to know Christ, he is just beginning a journey with Christ, a journey that has a much higher level of spiritual growth to reach.

**“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:5-8).**

**“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:24).**

2. There are faithful saints or believers in the church. This refers to those who had set their lives apart to Christ and *had continued on*. They were loyal and steadfast in their allegiance and they held firm against the attacks of worldliness and false teaching. They were not shaken by the temptations of the devil nor by the urges of the flesh. They were faithful against all foes.

The point is this: once a person has become a saint, that is, set his life apart to follow Christ, he is to be faithful. And he is to grow in his faithfulness. In fact, the highest level of spiritual maturity is that of faithfulness. Being faithful or obedient to Christ is the one thing that pleases Christ above all else.

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).**

**“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Mt.7:24-27).**

**“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Mt.12:50).**

**“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn.14:21).**

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).**

**“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love....Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (Jn.15:10, 14).**

**“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam.15:22).**

**Thought 1.** Note something that needs to be stressed about the church: the church is people; it is not a vague, abstract entity. It is men, women, boys, and girls. It is made up of saints, genuine believers and faithful brothers.

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(1:2) **Citizenship—Believer:** life has two dimensions of being—the physical and the spiritual. There is not room to outline this point beside the Scripture. But note that believers are said to be both *in Christ* and *at Colosse*. The believer is a citizen of the city or place where he happens to live upon earth, but he is also a citizen of the kingdom of Christ, that is, of heaven. (See notes, *Citizenship, Heavenly*—Eph.2:6; Ph.1:27; 3:20-21 for discussion.)

William Barclay has an excellent description of this point that is well worth quoting.

*“[Paul] writes to the Christians who are in Colosse and who are in Christ. A Christian always moves in two spheres. He is in the town, the place, the society where he happens to stay in this world; but he is also in Christ. The Christian lives in two dimensions. He lives in this world, and he does not take the duties and relationships of this world lightly; he fulfils his every obligation to the world in which he lives. But above and beyond that he lives in Christ. In this world he may move from place to place, so that now he is in one place and now in another; but wherever he is, he is in Christ. That is why outward circumstances will make very little difference to the Christian; his happiness and his peace and his joy are not dependent on them; these things can change, but the fact that he is in Christ can never change. That is why the Christian will do any job and any task with all his heart. It may be menial; it may be unpleasant; it may be painful; it may be far less distinguished than he might expect to have; its rewards may be small, and its praise may be non-existent; nevertheless the Christian does it diligently, uncomplainingly and cheerfully, for he is in Christ and does all things as to the Lord. We are all in our own Colosse, wherever that Colosse may be, but we are all in Christ, and it is Christ who sets the tone of our life and our living” (The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.125).*

**4** (1:2) **Grace—Peace:** life has two basic spiritual needs—grace and peace (see notes, *Grace*—Gal.1:3; DEEPER STUDY # 1—Eph.1:2; notes—2:8-9; 2:8-10; *Peace*—Gal.1:3; 5:22-23; Eph.2:14-15 for discussion). A person may wish a man wealth, pleasure, fame, or even health. But there is really only one necessary benediction—the benediction of God’s grace and peace. If a man possesses God’s grace and peace, he possesses all the inner strength and confidence that are needed to overcome and to walk joyfully in the world, regardless of circumstances (cp. Ph.4:11-13).

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
|  | <b>B. The Great Pillars of the Christian Life, 1:3-8</b>   | word of the truth of the gospel;<br>6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:<br>7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;<br>8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. | <b>4 The believer's hope has one great source: The gospel</b><br>a. It is truth, v.5<br>b. It is for individuals<br>c. It is for all men<br>d. It produces fruit<br>e. It comes by hearing<br>f. It is God's grace<br>g. It is shared by men<br><br>h. It results in love |
| <b>1 The great pillars are good reasons for giving thanks to God</b> | 3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,         |  |   |
| <b>2 The great pillars are faith &amp; love</b>                      | 4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, |  |   |
| <b>3 The great pillars have one great basis: The believer's hope</b> | 5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the                |  |   |

**DIVISION I**

**THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE, 1:1-11**

**B. The Great Pillars of the Christian Life, 1:3-8**

(1:3-8) **Introduction:** this is a power-packed passage, a passage that covers the great pillars of the Christian life—the pillars of faith and love. It also covers the great hope of the Christian and the source of hope which is the Word of God. As stated, this is a power-packed study! As this passage is studied, note how it lays a solid foundation against false teaching—the great threat which the Colossian church was facing and which the church of every generation faces.

1. The great pillars are good reasons for giving thanks to God (v.3).
2. The great pillars are faith and love (v.4).
3. The great pillars have one great basis: the believer's hope (v.5).
4. The believer's hope has one great source: the gospel (v.5-8).

**1** (1:3) **Thanksgiving:** the great pillars are good reasons for giving thanks to God. The pillars will be identified in just a moment in the next point. But for now, note just how great the pillars are. They are so great, such wonderful qualities of life, that they stir Paul to thank God that the pillars exist in the lives of the Colossian believers. The pillars are the very supports that hold together the lives of believers. The Colossian believers could not exist as a church without the foundational support of the pillars.

Note one other fact: Paul gives thanks to God, but he gives thanks to the only living and true God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no God except the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This means something of critical importance: Jesus Christ is the Son of God; He is exactly whom He claimed to be (see notes—Jn.1:34; note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—3:31; DEEPER STUDY # 2—10:25. Also see Subject Index, *Jesus Christ, Claims.*)

**2** (1:4) **Believer—Faith—Love:** the great pillars of the Christian life are faith and love. Faith and love are the two basic or foundational qualities of life for true Christians. In fact, they form the one great commandment of God Himself.

**“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 Jn.3:23).**

1. There is the great pillar of faith. But note: the faith being spoken about...
  - is not the energy of faith itself that is so often taught as being necessary for life.
  - is not the energy of faith needed to grasp the great qualities of life.
  - is not the faith needed to plow through life.
  - is not the faith in self or others that is needed to live successfully as a human being.

The great pillar of faith is faith in a particular person: the person of Christ Jesus our Lord. What is there about Jesus Christ that makes faith in Him so superior to faith in other great leaders or to faith in the great qualities of human life? Stated as simply as possible, Jesus Christ brings us in touch with God and makes it possible for God to adopt us as sons and daughters of His. As stated in the former verse and point, God is the Father of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus Christ is able to bring any person who is *spiritually fatherless* to His father. Jesus Christ has the right to ask His Father to adopt the *fatherless person*. Jesus Christ makes a Father-son relationship possible between God and the believer. But we must always remember: the Father-son relationship with God does not automatically exist. The only natural relationship between God and man is that of Creator and subject. Jesus Christ alone brings about the Father-son relationship between God and man. (See note, *Adoption*—Gal.4:4-7 for more discussion.)

The point is this: faith in Christ Jesus assures a person of God's wonderful presence and blessings. It means...

- that God looks after the believer as a father looks after his child.
- that God helps and directs the believer through all the trials and temptations of life.
- that the believer has the very strength of God at his disposal as he faces life day by day.
- that the believer is assured of living with God forever and ever.

The believer lives by his *faith in Christ*. He believes in Christ; therefore he lives by his belief. He governs his life by Christ. He does nothing that his faith in Christ forbids. He lives, moves, and has his being in Christ—in the faith of Christ. His faith in Christ becomes one of the great pillars of his life.

Another way to look at the great pillar of faith is this. *Faith in Christ* is like a sphere, an area, a territory, a world in which the believer lives. He believes in Christ Jesus; therefore, he lives within the sphere or world of that belief. He governs his life by Christ. He does nothing that his faith in Christ forbids. He has accepted the sphere and area and territory of Christ as the world in which he is to live. Therefore, the believer lives and moves and has his being in that world, in the faith of Christ. Again, his faith in Christ becomes his very world, the great pillar of his life.

**“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn.3:36).**

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).**

**“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (Jn.12:46).**

**“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).**

**“Therefore being justified by faith [in Christ], we have peace with God through out Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

2. There is the great pillar of love. But note: the love being spoken about is not the natural love which all men should have for one another. We are fellow members of the human race and fellow citizens of the same globe; therefore, all men should love one another with a natural love. But, as stated, this is not the love being spoken about in this passage. The great pillar of love is the love which believers hold for each other. Why is the love of believers for one another greater than the natural love of men for fellow men? There are two reasons.

- a. The love of believers is based upon the love of Jesus Christ, and the love of Jesus Christ is the summit of love. This is seen in His sacrificial death for men. He paid the ultimate price for man: He sacrificed His life before God to bear the sins of men—men who opposed Him and stood against Him. No greater love could ever be demonstrated. Therefore, when a man gives his life to follow Christ, he is giving himself to love as Christ loved. He is proclaiming that he will love to the ultimate degree: he will sacrifice himself for men even as Christ sacrificed Himself.
- b. The love of believers is stirred by the Holy Spirit; that is, the believer’s love is a supernatural love. The Holy Spirit, who lives within the believer, arouses the love of God within the heart of the believer. The believer is actually stirred to love others by the Spirit of God.

The point is this: believers possess a great love for all men: the very love of Christ. But they possess a very special love for fellow believers. Why? Because they have all committed themselves to follow the same Lord. They all live and move in the faith of Christ, in the same sphere or world of faith. There is bound to be a very special attachment and love between two persons who live and move and have their being in the faith of Christ. And remember: believers are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit. There is bound to be a close bond, a very special bond, between all who are indwelt by the same Spirit of God. As stated, a true believer has a *special love* for everyone on earth, but he has a *very special love* for his fellow believers.

**Thought 1.** This is a striking point. It means that there is no room within the church or among believers for...

- division
- cliques
- grumbling
- envy
- criticism
- argument
- strife
- hard feelings

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).**

**“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn.15:12).**

**“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).**

**“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).**

**“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).**

**“Beloved, let us love one other: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1 Jn.4:7).**

In conclusion, faith and love are the two great pillars of the Christian life. A person who has faith in Christ Jesus and loves as Christ loved is the person who constructs the two foundational pillars of life. It is utterly impossible to have a successful life without faith in Christ Jesus and love—utterly impossible to build a life that will be given the privilege of living forever.

**3** (1:5) **Hope:** the great pillars have one great basis, the believer’s hope. Hope, the hope that God gives, is the reason we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ and go to such limits to love one another. Only one thing could make a man love to such a point that he would sacrifice himself for another man—especially when the man is attacking or trying to destroy him. That one thing is the hope of some great promise—the hope of some great reward. Note what the hope or reward is: it is the hope that is *laid up* for us in heaven. What is that hope?

⇒ It is the hope of being raised from the dead and being given a new and perfect and glorious body—a body just like Jesus Christ.

“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor.15:50-54).

“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).

⇒ It is the hope of the Lord’s return and of being with the Lord Himself forever.

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn.14:2-3).

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th.4:16-17).

⇒ It is the hope of entering the veil of heaven and of living there forever.

“It was impossible for God to lie, [that] we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil [heaven]; wither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus” (Heb.6:18-20).

⇒ It is the glorious inheritance we are to receive from God as sons and daughters of His.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pt.1:3).

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:16-17).

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).

**4** (1:5-8) **Word of God—Gospel:** the believer’s hope has one great source: the gospel, that is, the Word of God. Note that both “the Word” and “the gospel” are mentioned in verse 5. It is the Word of God that reveals the great hope for man. Man cannot find hope—not a permanent or eternal hope, not a hope that lasts forever—anyplace else. The only lasting hope ever offered to man is found in the Word of God—in the glorious message of its gospel (good news). Note what is said about the Word of God or the gospel in these four verses. (These verses provide an excellent study of the gospel or of the Word of God.)

1. The gospel or Word is truth. It is not false; it is not false teaching. Neither is it just a wish or guess that its message is true. The gospel is the truth of God, the very Word and promise of the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. This means a most wonderful thing: the hope offered to man is true. It is not a desire or guess that may or may not be true. The hope promised in the gospel is the very truth of God Himself.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn.17:17).

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).

2. The gospel or Word is for individuals. Paul says that it has come to *you*. He is addressing all the believers together, but he is saying that the gospel is for *everyone of them*—for every individual. It is the individual who has to respond to the gospel; no one can respond for him. The hope laid up in heaven is for the individual, and the individual has to give up his heart and life to pursue the hope.

“Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God” (Lk.12:8-9).

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn.4:14).

“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ro.10:13).

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn.5:1).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).

3. The gospel or Word is for the world: it is universal as well as individual. The gospel is...

- not for a particular body of people
- not for a particular nation or nationality
- not for a particular religion or denomination
- not for a particular church
- not for a particular social class
- not for a particular intelligence

The gospel is not to be limited in any sense of the word: it is to be proclaimed to the whole world. The hope offered by God is for every human being who lives and ever will live on the earth. There is to be no discrimination, partiality, or favoritism shown whatsoever—not to anyone.

“God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Lk.24:47).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

4. The gospel or Word produces fruit. It produced fruit in the Colossians and it will produce fruit within any person who surrenders his life to follow the gospel. What fruit?

⇒ There is the fruit of the Spirit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.2:22-23).

⇒ There is the fruit of bearing converts, of reaching others for Christ.

“Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let [hindered] hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles” (Ro.1:13).

⇒ There is the fruit of sanctification, that is, of purity and cleanliness of life.

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (Jn.15:2-3).

The great hope of the gospel is the very thing just mentioned: a life of love, joy, and peace; a life that works to change society by converting individuals; a life that seeks the purity of sanctification in Christ. It is the gospel and the gospel alone that offers the hope of such a life to man.

5. The gospel or Word comes by hearing. This is common sense, yet it is seldom thought about. Men will sit under the gospel and never listen. They allow their minds to wander or to focus upon other subjects or else they close their ears lest they hear the gospel. Yet, no person can ever hear the gospel until he opens his ears and willingly receives the message. The power of the ear is in the hands of man: he can either open or shut his ear. The decision is his. But note: the gospel, the message of the glorious hope offered to man, comes only by hearing the Word of God (Ro.10:17).

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Ro.10:17).

6. The gospel or Word is the message of God’s grace. There is no greater message than the gospel of God. The grace of God is the great hope which he offers man—the great gifts and blessings which He extends to men. But note: the hope and blessings are offered and extended to men, not forced upon them. It is up to men to receive the hope and blessings of God. God’s grace is available, but His grace has to be received. (See notes, *Grace*—Gal.1:3; Eph.2:8-10; 2:8-9 for more discussion.)

**“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts 15:11).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit.2:11-12).**

7. The gospel or Word is shared by men. The Colossians learned the hope of the gospel from their minister, Epaphras. God has not committed the gospel to angels, but to men. He has chosen man and holds man accountable for sharing His Word.

**“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Jn.15:16).**

**“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:1-2).**

**“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God” (Col.1:25).**

**“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (1 Th.2:4).**

**“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:11-12).**

**“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:2-3).**

8. The gospel or Word results in love. The Colossian believers were true believers, so they were filled with love *in the Spirit of God*. They had given their hearts over to the hope of the gospel. Therefore, the love of Christ was generated in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

**“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Ro.5:5).**

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love” (Gal.5:22).**

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| <p><b>1 Request 1: To know God's will—to be filled with the knowledge of God's will</b><br/>                 a. In all wisdom<br/>                 b. In all spiritual understanding</p> | <p><b>C. The Great Requests of Prayer, 1:9-11</b><br/><br/>                 9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;</p> | <p>10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;<br/>                 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;</p> | <p><b>2 Request 2: To walk worthy of Christ</b><br/>                 a. By being fruitful in good works<br/>                 b. By increasing in the knowledge of God<br/> <b>3 Request 3: To possess the power of God</b><br/>                 a. To make us steadfast<br/>                 b. To make us long-suffering<br/>                 c. The spirit of joyfulness</p> |
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**DIVISION I**

**THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE, 1:1-11**

**C. The Great Requests of Prayer, 1:9-11**

(1:9-11) **Introduction:** Paul was in prison in Rome when writing the Colossian believers. At some point he had been visited by Epaphras, the pastor of the great Colossian church. Apparently Epaphras had felt a need for some counsel and advice on how to handle the false teaching that had seeped into the church. Paul, God's chosen apostle to the Gentiles, was the natural person to turn to for advice. This is the purpose for the letter to the Colossians: to encourage the church and its believers to get rid of the false teaching and to continue on with Christ.

Remember: Paul had never visited the Colossian church. The believers had never seen him face to face, and he was unable to visit them now because of being in prison. They needed him, for the false teaching was extremely dangerous and the very ministry of the church was threatened. Being in prison and unable to reach them, what could he do? Only two things:

- ⇒ He could write them and share the Word of God in a letter.
- ⇒ He could pray for them.

Paul did both. The present passage covers his prayer: what he asked God to do for the Colossian believers. He asked three things; he made three great requests. All three requests are needed by every church and all believers, in particular those who face false teaching. Note how these three requests lead to a deeper experience with the Lord, a much stronger walk than most believers experience. Every believer should covet these three things and covet them diligently.

1. Request 1: to know God's will—to be filled with the knowledge of God's will (v.9).
2. Request 2: to walk worthy of Christ (v.10).
3. Request 3: to possess the power of God (v.11).

**1** (1:9) **God, Will of—Wisdom—Understanding:** the first great request is to know God's will. But note exactly what Scripture says: we are to be filled with the knowledge of God's will. It is not enough to just know God's will; we are to be *filled* with the knowledge of His will. The will of God is to permeate our very being. Nothing is to flow through us nor out of us that is not of God's will. But note: what is being talked about is not God's will for a particular thing nor for a few things. What is being talked about is the *whole scope of life*. God's will involves *all of life*, everything we do every moment of every day. The will of God involves what we do, say, and even think. Simply stated, we are to live and move and have our being in the will of God. God has willed a life that he wants us to live. We are to learn about that life and be filled with the knowledge of that life.

- ⇒ Briefly stated, God's will for us involves our very behavior and conduct; it even reaches down into the depth of imagination and thought. Imagine! Even every thought is to be controlled by God's will.

**“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).**

The point is this: God tells us how to live life, and what He tells us is His will. Therefore, we are to study what God has said. We are to study God's Word: learn and gain all the knowledge we can about His will—about how to live. We are to study and learn until the knowledge of His will just floods our lives—floods us to such a degree that doing His will flows out into conduct and behavior.

**“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Mt.6:10).**

**“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jn.4:34).**

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:1-2).**

**“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jn.2:17).**

**“Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness” (Ps.143:10).**

Note a most wonderful thing: knowing God's will involves both wisdom and understanding. The person who is filled with God's will possesses wisdom and understanding—spiritual wisdom and spiritual understanding.

- ⇒ “Wisdom” (sophiai) means that a person knows the first principles or basic principles of life.
- ⇒ “Understanding” (sunesei) means that a person has the ability to apply the basic principles to everyday life, to the circumstances and decisions of life.

The believer needs both wisdom and understanding: he must learn all the basic principles of life, and he must learn how to apply them to everyday life. But how? How can he secure wisdom and understanding?

- ⇒ By studying God’s Word.

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Ro.15:4).

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor.10:11).

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pt.2:2).

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding” (Pr.2:1-2).

- ⇒ By prayer—praying to be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him” (Eph.1:17).

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas.1:5).

**Thought 1.** Think about the shallow lives that so many people live. Think about how little most people know about God’s will. Compare this tragic fact with the kind of life God wills man to live. Is it any wonder...

- that so many have been deceived by false teaching?
- that so much of our ministry is superficial and formal?

**2** (1:10) **Believer, Walk:** the second great request is to walk worthy of Christ. This is the critical point for the believer. It is the point that must be preached and taught time and again. In fact, it must be hammered into the minds and hearts of believers:

- ⇒ It is not enough to *know* God’s will.
- ⇒ It is not enough to *possess* wisdom: to possess the basic principles of life.
- ⇒ It is not even enough to *possess* understanding: to have the ability to apply the basic principles of life to everyday living.

Knowing something and having the ability to do something are very important, but they involve only head knowledge. The critical point is putting what we know into practice. We are to live out the will of God; we are to practice and do the will of God. Knowing the will of God is of no value until we have committed our lives to do it.

- ⇒ The word “walk” (peripatesai) means that we *set* our lives—our behavior and conduct—after Christ.
- ⇒ The word “worthy” (axios) means to have the weight of or to weigh as much as something else (Wuest, *Ephesians and Colossians*, Vol.1, p.176).

This means an amazing thing: our walk is to weigh as much as the walk of Christ. Our conduct is to conform to the will of God as much as the conduct of Christ. We are to live a life just as worthy as the life of Christ. The will of God is to control our behavior as much as it did the behavior of Christ.

- ⇒ Christ is the pattern, and we are the copy. The copy is to be just like the pattern (Wuest).

How is such a walk possible? There is only one way. We must be totally committed to do two things.

1. We must be fruitful in every good work; that is, we must do every good work. Note the word “every.” Everything that God says is to be done. Dealing with God is just like dealing with anyone. No person is pleased when we do only half of what he says. To please anyone we have to do all that he says. How much more true with God! If we are to please Him, we must do every good work and we must do it fruitfully, bearing as much fruit as possible.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt.5:16).

“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim.6:18).

“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Tit.2:7).

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Heb.10:24).

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works” (Jas.2:17-18).

**“Having your conversation [behavior] honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pt.2:12).**

2. We must grow in the knowledge of God. Note a critical question: How do we get to know God—how do we gain a personal knowledge and relationship with God?

⇒ We do not know God just because we know about God. Just knowing the Word of God does not mean that we know God Himself—not in a personal and intimate way.

Note exactly what the verse says: “that ye might walk worthy of the Lord...increasing in the knowledge of God.” The way we get to know God is the same way we get to know anyone. We walk with them: associate, fellowship, and share with them. So it is with God, and the more we walk with Him, the more we increase in the knowledge of Him.

**“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:4).**

**“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor.5:7).**

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).**

**“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph.4:1).**

**“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

**“See then that ye walk circumspectly [carefully and strictly], not as fools, but as wise” (Eph.5:15).**

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).**

**3** (1:11) **Power:** the third great request is for the power of God. God’s power is an absolute essential for the believer. This is easily seen by asking two questions.

⇒ What good is it if the believer knows God’s will, but he does not have the power to do God’s will?

⇒ How can the believer walk worthy of Christ if he does not have the power to walk worthy?

Many in the world believe that man has the strength within himself to become spiritually strong; that it is a matter of the will and discipline; that man can apply himself and conquer the circumstances of life. And, to some degree, this is true. But man’s flesh fails in three critical areas.

⇒ The flesh cannot become perfect, neither can it do anything about perfection. Therefore, no matter what the flesh becomes or does, it is still unacceptable to God. Why? Because God is perfect, and being perfect, God can accept only perfection.

⇒ The flesh cannot conquer death. No matter what the flesh does, it all ends up as dead matter. One thing is certain: death has no part with God.

⇒ The flesh cannot do what this verse says: it cannot be patient and longsuffering against all the traumatic trials and temptations of life and *be joyful at the same time*.

It is for these three reasons that we need the power of God. Man’s power can overcome some of the problems of life, but his power cannot overcome all the problems, especially the three mentioned.

⇒ Only God’s power can make us acceptable (perfect) before Him.

⇒ Only God’s power can conquer death, that is, raise us up to live eternally.

⇒ Only God’s power can infuse enough strength in us to make us endure any and all trials with a spirit of joyfulness.

Imagine some of the trials we have to face: disease, accident, poverty, loss, death. There is no way for the flesh to *work up a joyful spirit* through some of the traumas of life. But God has the power, the power...

- to give us understanding and peace

- to strengthen and settle us

- to give us hope and security

Where does such power come from? From God. And we secure His power through prayer. This is the point of this great request of Paul. Now, note the results of God’s power.

1. God’s power gives us a spirit of patience (hupomonen): endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, constancy, perseverance. The word *patience* is not passive; it is active. It is not the spirit that just sits back and puts up with the trials of life, taking whatever may come. Rather it is the spirit that stands up and faces the trials of life, that actively goes about conquering and overcoming them. When trials confront a man who is truly justified, he is stirred to arise and face the trials head on. He immediately sets out to conquer and overcome them. He knows that God is allowing the trials in order to teach him more and more patience (endurance).

**“In your patience possess ye your souls” (Lk.21:19).**

**“Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer” (Ro.12:12).**

**“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb.10:36).**

**“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (Jas.1:2-4).**

**“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain” (Jas.5:7).**

2. God’s power gives us a spirit of longsuffering (see note, *Longsuffering*, pt.4—Gal.5:22-23 for discussion).

3. God’s power gives us a spirit of joyfulness through all the trials and tribulations of life (see note, *Joy*—Ph.1:4 for discussion).

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|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 God has given us an inheritance</b></p> | <p><b>II. THE PREEMINENT CHRIST: GOD'S DEAR SON, 1:12-23</b></p> <p><b>A. God &amp; Man: What God Has Done for Man, 1:12-14</b></p> <p>12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us</p> | <p>meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:<br/>                 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:<br/>                 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:</p> | <p><b>2 God has delivered us from the power of darkness</b></p> <p><b>3 God has redeemed us, even forgiven our sins</b></p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE PREEMINENT CHRIST: GOD'S DEAR SON, 1:12-23**

**A. God and Man: What God Has Done for Man, 1:12-14**

(1:12-23) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Jesus Christ, Person & Works:** this is one of the greatest passages of Scripture ever written. Its importance cannot be overstressed. It is a passage that reveals the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is supreme, above all both in His Person and in His work. Who He is and what He has done for man can never be matched. This is the purpose of this great passage, a passage that covers so much in twelve brief verses: to show to the world just who Jesus Christ is and what He has done.

Griffith Thomas says, “[This] constitutes one of the most important documents in the New Testament for the study of Christology” (*Studies in Colossians and Philemon*, ed. by His Daughter. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1973, p.45).

Bishop W.R. Nicholson is quoted by Griffith Thomas as saying: “[This is] a Christological statement [that] has scarcely an equal, certainly no superior” (*Studies in Colossians and Philemon*, p.45).

William Barclay says, “This is a passage of...such importance that we shall have to spend some considerable time on it” (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.135). He then proceeds to write some seventeen pages on the twelve verses.

A.T. Robertson says: “[This is a] wonderful picture of the person and work of Christ...a full and final answer to the...[false teaching] about Jesus Christ by speculative philosophy and to all modern efforts [to give a] ‘reduced’ picture of Christ” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.477).

Matthew Henry forcefully says: “Here is a summary...of the gospel concerning the great work of our redemption by Christ” (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol.5, p.752).

The Preeminent Christ: God’s Dear Son, 1:12-23

- A. God and Man: What God Has Done for Man, 1:12-14
- B. God and Christ (Part I): The Person of Christ, 1:15
- C. God and Christ (Part II): Christ the Creator, 1:16-17
- D. God and Christ (Part III): Christ the Head of the Church, 1:18-19
- E. God and Christ (Part IV): Christ the Reconciler of All Things, 1:20-23

Note one other thing about this passage. It is couched in the midst of praise and thanksgiving, not in a sermon (Matthew Henry. *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol.5, p.752).

(1:12-14) **Introduction:** God has done three great things for man, things that are so great that they just explode human imagination. If we diligently concentrate upon these three things, the depth of what God has done will erupt in our lives for good. We will never be the same. What has God done for man?

- 1. God has given us an inheritance (v.12).
- 2. God has delivered us from the power of darkness (v.13).
- 3. God has redeemed us, even forgiven our sins (v.14).

**1** (1:12) **Inheritance:** God has given us an inheritance. Before we proceed to discuss the inheritance, note two other points.

1. We have to be *prepared*, that is, qualified and made fit before we can receive the inheritance. Man is not qualified or fit to receive anything from God, especially an inheritance, not in his present sinful and corruptible state. If he is to ever receive an inheritance from God, he first has to be made fit and acceptable to God. Note: this is exactly what Scripture says: God has made us fit. It does not yet say what He did to make us fit; it simply declares that God has *fitted* us to receive an inheritance from Him. (What He did to make us qualified will be discussed in verses 13-14.)

2. We share the inheritance with all other saints in light. Remember, saints (hagios) simply means those who have set their lives apart to live for God (see note, pt.2—Col.1:2). God is Light, therefore, when a person turns his life over to God, he is turning his life over to Light. He is to live and move and have his being in light, that is, in God. He is to walk in the *light of God Himself*, so much so that he, the believer, is called the light of the world. This is what is meant by “saints in light.” They are people who have committed their lives to walk in the light of God. Therefore, they are saints, persons set apart in the light of God.

The point is this: every saint who lives and moves in the light of God is to receive the inheritance of God. But note: since God is light, only those *set apart in light* can live with God. Any person who sets his life apart *in darkness* can never receive the inheritance of God, for darkness can never dwell in light. The light destroys and eliminates the darkness.

3. God has given believers an inheritance. What is the inheritance? Scripture describes the inheritance in the following ways.

a. We are heirs of eternal life.

**“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit.3:7).**

b. We are heirs of salvation.

**“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb.1:14).**

c. We are heirs of the promises made to Abraham, that is, the promises to inherit the world and to be a citizen of a great nation of people.

**“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal.3:29. See note—Ro.4:13.)**

**“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Ro.4:13).**

d. We are heirs of glory.

**“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro.8:17).**

e. We are heirs of righteousness.

**“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb.11:7).**

f. We are heirs of the grace of life.

**“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pt.3:7).**

g. We are heirs of God’s very special favor—heirs that shall stir the praise of His glory.

**“In whom [Christ] also we have obtained an inheritance....that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ” (Eph.1:11-12).**

**“[The Holy Spirit] is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Eph.1:14).**

h. We are heirs of the reward, of the inheritance and all that it includes.

**“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet [fit] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col.1:12).**

**“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col.3:24).**

i. We are heirs of the eternal inheritance.

**“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb.9:15).**

j. We are heirs of an immortal and perfected body that shall be given us when Christ returns.

**“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor.15:50-54; cp. 1 Pt.1:3-4).**

**2** (1:13) **Deliverance—Darkness—Kingdom of Heaven:** God has delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

1. Note two things about the “power of darkness.”
  - a. The “power of *darkness*” indicates there is a kingdom, a realm, a world of darkness. Darkness means just what is indicated: a person is unable to see and understand or know. Picture the scene: a person trying to walk and stumble through a world of darkness. He cannot see or understand:
    - ⇒ who he really is
    - ⇒ where he has come from
    - ⇒ where he is
    - ⇒ where he is going

This is the very situation of natural man, the man who has not been delivered from the world of darkness by God. The man in darkness does not know...

- who he is: why God created him and what God has planned for man.
- where he has come from: that his origin is God; that God created him.
- where he is: that the world was made by God and that it has an eternal purpose in the plan of God.
- where he is going: that he is an eternal being who is to either live forever in the light of God’s presence or in the darkness away from God’s presence.

The point to see is that darkness is a realm or a world in which the unbeliever lives and moves. He never knows these things, never knows the truth of his world and life nor of God. He walks in a life and world of darkness, blinded from the truth. (See note, *Darkness—Eph.5:8* for more discussion.)

- b. The “power of darkness” also indicates that the darkness is not only a realm or world, but a *power*—an active power that enslaves men and stands in opposition to the light of God. The *world of darkness* is a kingdom in rebellion against God. This is the very reason men struggle against God so much. It is difficult to imagine the antagonism of most men against God, yet it is true. Just imagine how contradictory it is to see a *rational creature*...

- cursing God
- denying God
- rejecting God
- hurting people
- damaging himself
- ridiculing, persecuting, and killing those who profess God

There is no way a rational creature would act like this unless he was enslaved by the power of darkness.

**“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Mt.6:23).**

**“In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (Jn.1:4-5).**

**“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn.3:19).**

**“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Ro.13:12).**

**“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ” (2 Cor.3:14).**

**“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).**

**“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18).**

**“But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (1 Jn.2:11).**

2. Note that it is God Himself who has delivered us from darkness. The word “delivered” (erurato) means to rescue or snatch from darkness. A person lost in pitch black darkness is hopeless unless someone rescues him. And note: he cannot be rescued by those who are lost in the same darkness as he is. No person who is in the world of darkness has light, or else he would use the light to get out of the darkness. This is the very reason God had to rescue man. He alone is light; therefore, He alone could reach down and snatch man from the darkness. How did He do this? The answer is given in the next point.

3. God transferred us into the kingdom of His dear Son, into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must always remember that the kingdom of Christ already exists.

⇒ His rule and reign already exists in the spiritual world or spiritual dimension of being, that is, in heaven.

⇒ His rule and reign already exists in the hearts and lives of believers in this physical world or physical dimension of being.

The message of the glorious gospel is that God has transferred the believer from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Kingdom of Heaven—Mt.19:23-24* for more discussion.)

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn.3:3).**

**“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that**

I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (Jn.18:36-37).

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Ro.14:17).

"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor.15:25).

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Heb.1:8).

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev.11:15).

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Is.9:7).

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer.23:5).

**3** (1:14) **Redemption-Forgiveness:** God has redeemed us, even forgiven our sins (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Eph.1:7 for full discussion. Eph.1:7 and Col.1:14 are almost identical verses.)

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| <p><b>1 Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God</b><br/> <b>2 Jesus Christ is above all things</b></p> | <p><b>B. God &amp; Christ (Part I):<br/>The Person of Christ,<br/>1:15</b></p> <p>15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE PREEMINENT CHRIST: GOD'S DEAR SON, 1:12-23**

**B. God and Christ (Part I): The Person of Christ, 1:15**

(1:15) **Introduction:** this Scripture is one of the most important passages ever written. It does two very significant things.  
 ⇒ It destroys false teaching and false thoughts about God and Jesus Christ.  
 ⇒ It reveals exactly who God and Jesus Christ are.

This was the very purpose of Paul. False teaching had seeped into the Colossian church, false teaching that attacked Jesus Christ. It was called Gnosticism. This was one of the major reasons the pastor of the Colossian church (Epaphras) had visited Paul: to get Paul's advice in dealing with the heresy. The unfortunate thing is this: the teachings of Gnosticism have continued to plague the church down through the centuries, even today. In one form or another similar teachings are always being used to attack the church. Because of this, the teachings of Gnosticism and its *modern counterpart* will be dealt with in the points where they apply. The point to remember is this: throughout this passage Paul is answering the false teaching that had seeped into the church. And there is no better way to counteract false teaching than to present the truth. The false teaching was an attack against Jesus Christ, against both His work and Person. Therefore, Paul takes up the pen and proclaims God and Christ (Part I): the Person of Christ.

1. Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God (v.15).
2. Jesus Christ is above all things (v.15).

**1** (1:15) **Jesus Christ, Deity—God, Revelation—Gnosticism:** Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. The word "image" (eikon) means the exact likeness, the very person of God.

- ⇒ It means that Jesus Christ was the very *representation of God—God in every respect*. Wuest quotes Lightfoot as saying that "image" means a mark or figure burned or stamped on (something)...a precise reproduction in every respect.
- ⇒ It means that Jesus Christ was the perfect manifestation or revelation of God. God is invisible or unseen, but Jesus Christ reveals God to the world. He reveals God as the exact image, as the perfect representation of God.

The impact of this truth about Jesus Christ has explosive repercussions for man. It destroys all false teaching about God and Christ, and it reveals God to man. It shows man who God is and what He is like. As stated in the introduction, this was the very purpose of Paul. False teaching had seeped into the Colossian church, false teaching that had attacked who Jesus Christ was. Note how forcefully the truth destroys the error.

1. Gnosticism said there were many intermediaries—many mediators (emanations)—between God and man, that Jesus Christ was not the only mediator.

- a. The parallel with false teaching down through the centuries is clearly seen. There have been and always will be those who proclaim...
  - that Jesus Christ is not the only person who can bring us near God; that He is not the only mediator between God and man; that there are other mediators and intermediaries of God—other great teachers who are just as important as Jesus Christ—who can bring us in touch with God. (Cp. Buddha, Mohammed, and other leaders of various cults, and self-proclaimed messiahs.)
- b. However, note how the truth destroys this false teaching. Jesus Christ, who lived and walked among men, is the express image of God, the very Lord of the universe. This means a most significant thing: God is not what most men think. He is not an unconcerned and distant God who is off in outer space someplace. He is not separated from man by a host of intermediaries, by many different ways to reach Him. God is not out of touch with the world; He has not made it difficult to reach Him. He is close at hand, so close that He has come to earth and lived as a Man among us. And in doing so He has done two great things for us through the Lord Jesus Christ. First, He has shown us exactly who He is and what He is like; and second, He has shown us the way to reach Him.

Think for a moment about all that Jesus Christ shows us about God.

- ⇒ The fact that He came to earth shows us that He and He alone is the Supreme Person who can take us to God.
- ⇒ The fact that He came to earth shows us that God is near.
- ⇒ The fact that Jesus Christ lived as a Man, ministering and helping, shows us that God cares.
- ⇒ The fact that Jesus Christ died at the hands of men shows that God is love—He willingly sacrificed Himself. Being God He did not have to die. As Scripture says, He could have called down a host of angels to deliver Him.
- ⇒ The fact that Jesus Christ proclaimed salvation to man shows that God is a Savior.
- ⇒ The fact that Jesus Christ proclaimed judgment upon evil and warned men of destruction shows that God is a just Lord.

The list could go on and on, but the point is clearly seen. God is not so unconcerned and far away from man that He has left man to grope and stumble through life on his own seeking after God. God loves and cares so much for man that He has shown man exactly who He is and what He is like and the way to reach Him. Jesus Christ alone is the image of God, the Supreme Person of the universe. He alone is the Mediator between God and Man. God is as close as Jesus Christ is.

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

**“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph.2:18).**

**“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.2:5).**

**“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb.8:6; cp. Heb.12:24).**

**“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament” (Heb.9:15).**

**“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb.9:24).**

**“[Christ] is a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us” (Heb.10:20).**

**“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 Jn.2:1).**

**“And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Heb.12:24).**

**“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (Col.1:19).**

2. Gnosticism said the human body was evil. This teaching resulted in two different attitudes toward the body and life.
  - ⇒ Some said the body needed to be disciplined, controlled, and taken care of as much as possible. By controlling its urges and appetites and keeping it fit, the corruption and evil of the body could be mastered more easily.
  - ⇒ Others said the very opposite: what was done with the body mattered little, for it was evil and doomed to death. Therefore, once a person took care of his spirit, he could then eat, drink, and be merry.
- a. The parallel with the false teaching of today is clearly seen.
  - ⇒ Some concentrate upon the body and its health through recreation, discipline, and strict living, seeking to overcome the evil, that is, the corruption, disease, aging, and dying of the body, as much as possible.
  - ⇒ Others live as they please, eating and drinking and partying as they wish, thinking that it matters little how they live. Just think how many people feel they can do their own thing—what they want, when they want—just so they believe in God and worship and do a good deed here and there.

The point to see is this: each gives attention to the spiritual only as he wishes, only as much as he feels is necessary to keep his spirit in touch with God. But his concentration is the body and its pleasure, whether the pleasure is the exhibition of discipline and control or the stimulating of the flesh.

- b. Note how the truth destroys this lifestyle and teaching. The human body is not evil; Jesus Christ shows us this. He is the image of God—the very Son of God Himself—who came to earth in a human body. Therefore, the human body could not be evil, for God cannot be touched with evil.

The human body has to be honorable or else Jesus Christ would not have wrapped Himself in a human body and come to earth. The conclusion is shocking and convulsive for the life of man. Since the body is honorable, it means that everything a man does with his body is important to his spiritual welfare. What he does with his body determines his relationship and destiny with God. It is totally impossible to keep one's spirit right with God and let one's body go its own way. A person is a person, both spirit and body. Therefore, he is to honor God with *both his spirit and body*, just as Jesus Christ did *in the body* given him by God. (See outline and notes—Ro.12:1-2; 1 Cor.6:12-20 for more discussion.)

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Ro.12:1).**

**“Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body” (1 Cor.6:13).**

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor.6:19-20).**

**“In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and un-reproveable in his sight” (Col.1:22).**

3. Gnosticism said the way to God was through learning a certain amount of knowledge and certain key words that would assure the opening up of spiritual insight. The emphasis was upon the intellect and learning, knowledge and insight, personal improvement and self-effort in achieving acceptance with God.

## COLOSSIANS 1:15

- a. The parallel with so much of man's natural thinking is evident. So many feel safe and secure if they...
- know about God and religion.
  - know religious phrases and words and can talk in pious and religious language.
  - are religious enough to learn about God and religion.
- But note: knowing about someone is not knowing the person; it is not personal knowledge.
- b. The truth revealed by Jesus Christ strikes at the very foundation of such thoughts and teachings. God does not save a person because he thinks about God and knows some things about religion and God. God saves the uneducated as well as the educated, the simple as well as the intellectual, the ignorant as well as the knowledgeable, the poor as well as the rich, the young as well as the adult. This is seen in that Jesus Christ, who is the image of God...
- came to earth as a baby.
  - was reared by simple, poor parents.
  - was not educated at a university or any other school beyond the local community synagogue.
  - always ministered and reached out to the needy of the world—those who had need, regardless of age, simplicity, suffering, ignorance, or any other unfortunate circumstance.
- Jesus Christ reveals that God saves all who come to the Father through Him—through Him who redeems us and forgives our sins (Col.1:14).

**“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage” (Mt.22:9).**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ro.10:12-13).**

**“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col.1:28).**

**“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:4).**

**“And the Spirit and bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).**

**“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Is.45:22).**

**“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is.55:1).**

The conclusion is forceful: Jesus Christ is the express image, the exact representation, the perfect manifestation, the very Person of God Himself. There is no other person who can bring us near God and no other life-style to follow in reaching God. Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe who came to earth as God to save men.

**“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:19-21).**

**“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim.3:16).**

**2** (1:15) **Jesus Christ, Deity:** Jesus Christ is above all things. The word “firstborn” does not mean that Jesus Christ was the first created being of the universe. It means *priority, superiority, preeminence, supremacy*. It means that He existed before all creation as the Supreme Being of the universe. All creation is His heritage. (See note, *Jesus Christ, Eternal*—Col.1:16; 1:17 for more discussion. Cp. Ro.8:29; Col.1:18.)

**“I and my Father are one” (Jn.10:30).**

**“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (Jn.14:9-10).**

**“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor.4:4).**

**“[Christ] who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Ph.2:6).**

**“[Christ] who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:3).**

**C. God & Christ (Part II):  
Christ the Creator,  
1:16-17**

**1 Christ created all things**  
a. In heaven & in earth

b. Visible & invisible

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

**2 Christ created all things for Himself**

**3 Christ is before all**

**4 Christ holds all things together**

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

**DIVISION II**

**THE PREEMINENT CHRIST: GOD'S DEAR SON, 1:12-23**

**C. God and Christ (Part II): Christ the Creator, 1:16-17**

(1:16-17) **Introduction—Creation:** this passage concerns the creation of the universe. It deals with such questions as...

- What is the origin of the universe?
- How did the world come into existence?
- What was the force that brought the universe forth?
- Is there more than one world or universe? More than the physical dimension of being? Are there invisible worlds in other dimensions?
- What is the purpose or end of things or of creation?
- What holds things together? What is the cohesive force that gives order to the universe? What is the power behind the laws of nature such as gravity?

There are basically three views of creation.

First, there is the secularist or humanist view, the idea that the world just happened by chance. No force or power created the world. No power stands behind the world. There was nothing, and then by some means and in some way some gas or some element of some sort just appeared...

- out of nothing.
- out of nowhere.

Then through eons of ages, the single gas or element became two elements and the evolutionary process began until eventually the world was created. Of course, there have been and always will be various ideas as to how the evolutionary process happened (cp. the present idea of the Big Bang theory that is somewhat popularized). However, the essence or seed of the secularist or humanist is that the world or universe began out of nothing and out of nowhere.

Second, there is the view that some god did create the world, but he is far off and removed from the world. The far off god is thought of in various ways:

- ⇒ Some see him as good; others as evil.
- ⇒ Some think he created the world himself; others that he used intermediary forces.

This was the view of Gnosticism, the false teaching that had seeped into the church at Colosse. It is also the view held by men in today's society. They just *feel* that God is far away, completely removed from the world. If they think about creation at all, they cannot see God as having created the world, for He is too far removed from it. He therefore must have used other forces or beings, other intermediaries or some other way to make the world.

Third, there is the pure Christian view, the truth that God Himself, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, created the world in the person of Jesus Christ. This is, of course, the discussion of this passage. As it is studied, note the force of its proclamation: it declares in no uncertain terms how the cosmos or universe began. Note also how the proclamation destroys all false teaching and how much more logical and understandable the truth is in comparison to the false beliefs. Christ is the Creator of the universe.

1. Christ created all things (v.16).
2. Christ created all things for Himself (v.16).
3. Christ is before all (v.17).
4. Christ holds all things together (v.17).

**1** (1:16) **Creation—Jesus Christ, Creator:** Jesus Christ created all things. This is a matter of fact declaration, yet note how profound the truth is and how much is covered in the verse.

1. The words "by Him" (en autoi) mean *in Him*; that is, creation took place *in* Christ, *within* His very being.
  - ⇒ The heart of Christ desired the world.
  - ⇒ The mind of Christ planned the world.
  - ⇒ The will of Christ destined the world.
  - ⇒ The Word of Christ created the world.

The creation of the world took place within Christ, within His personality and being. The world was born within Him.

- ⇒ It was the *love of Christ* that moved His heart to create the world.
- ⇒ It was the *knowledge of Christ* that aroused His mind to plan the world.

- ⇒ It was the *riches of His grace* that stirred Him to will the world.
- ⇒ It was the *power of His Word* that energized or brought the world into existence.

The universe exists because of Christ and because of Him alone. The idea for the universe was born *in Him*, and the actual creation of the universe took place by His own energy and effort. Jesus Christ Himself brought the universe into existence.

2. The words “all things” (*ta panta*) are very significant. They mean...
- “all things” collectively, that is, all the things within the universe were created by Christ.
  - “all things” individually, that is, every single detail of creation, was created by Christ. Each particle and thing, each being and element has come into being in Christ and in Him alone.

The point is that nothing exists that was not created by Christ. All things were made by Him, even the very details of every single thing.

3. The words “were created” (*ektisthe*) are in the Greek aorist tense which simply means that creation was an historical event. Creation actually took place in this way. Jesus Christ Himself *created* the world. There was a time, a day, an hour, a moment when He spoke the Word and all things in their intricate detail came into being.

4. The creation of Christ includes all the worlds of all the dimensions of being. This is what is meant by the statement, “that are in heaven, and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.” Note how all inclusive the statement is:

- ⇒ If there are other *visible and living planets and beings* in outer space, Christ created them.
- ⇒ If there are invisible worlds and beings in other dimensions, Christ created them.

It does not matter what kind of world or creatures they may be—thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers—Christ created them all. There is nothing in existence that He has not created.

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| ⇒ no planet    | ⇒ no vegetation |
| ⇒ no star      | ⇒ no mineral    |
| ⇒ no creature  | ⇒ no element    |
| ⇒ no dimension | ⇒ no thing      |

**“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (Jn.1:3).**

**“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Cor.8:6).**

**“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph.3:9).**

**“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” (Col.1:16).**

**2** (1:16) **Creation, Purpose—Jesus Christ, Creator:** Christ created all things *for Himself*. Think for a moment: if Christ really created all things, to whom would creation look? Who would creation praise, honor, worship, and serve? The answer is obvious: creation looks to its Creator. Creation owes its existence to its Creator; therefore, creation is to exalt its Creator. Creation finds its end and consummation in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ created the universe...

- that in the ages to come He might show the riches of His grace and kindness (Eph.2:7).
- that He might reveal His glory (Ro.8:18).

Simply stated, the universe was created for Christ, that it might be His...

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| • to love   | • to receive |
| • to bless  | • to save    |
| • to redeem | • to exalt   |

Therefore, creation owes its praise and honor, worship and service to the Lord Jesus Christ. The universe exists for its Creator.

**“And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor.15:28).**

**“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Eph.1:10).**

**“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:19-20).**

**“Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Heb.1:2).**

**“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb.2:10).**

**“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever” (Ro.11:36).**

**3** (1:17) **Jesus Christ, Eternal:** Jesus Christ is before all things. This is a critical point; it means two things.

1. Jesus Christ was before all things in time. Before the first thing was ever created, Jesus Christ was already there. He is not a created being; He is the Creator. There was nothing existing in the universe when He created. Before the beginning of time, before the universe ever existed, He was there. He alone is eternal.

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Ps.90:2).

“I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was” (Pr.8:23).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn.1:1).

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (Jn.8:58).

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (Jn.17:5).

“[Christ Jesus] who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Ph.2:6-8).

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Rev.22:13).

2. Jesus Christ is before all things in importance, supremacy, and preeminence. Nothing is superior to Him. He alone is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He alone stands before all as Supreme; all else—every single thing—stands under Him owing their existence, worship, and service to Him.

“Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever” (Ro.9:5).

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Col.1:15).

“And he is before all things” (Col.1:17).

**Thought 1.** This point destroys all ideas that Jesus Christ is only a great teacher, only one among many great men who can lead us to God.

**4** (1:17) **Jesus Christ, Creator:** Jesus Christ holds all things together. Wuest quotes Lightfoot as making an excellent statement on this point:

*“[Jesus Christ] is the principle of cohesion in the universe. He impresses upon creation that unity and solidarity which makes it a cosmos (an ordered system) instead of a chaos (an unformed mass). Thus (to take one instance) the action of gravitation, which keeps in their places things fixed and regulates the motions of things moving, is an expression of His mind” (Ephesians and Colossians, Vol.1, p.185).*

Barclay, as is so often the case, is descriptive in his exposition:

*“...it is the Son who, as it were, holds the world together. That is to say, all the laws by which this world is an order and not a chaos are an expression of the mind of the Son. The law of gravity and all the so-called scientific laws are not only scientific laws; they are divine laws. They are the laws which make sense of the universe. They are the laws which make this a reliable and a dependable world. Every law of science and of nature is, in fact, an expression of the thought of God. It is by these laws, and therefore by the mind of God, that the universe hangs together, and does not disintegrate in chaos” (The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.144).*

The point is clear: Jesus Christ is what holds the world together. It is His love and power...

- that keeps the universe from flying apart and disintegrating.
- that keeps all creatures from utterly destroying themselves through savagery.

All things are held together by Jesus Christ, by His...

- energy
- force
- power
- order
- unity
- solidarity
- cohesion

“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Col.1:17).

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:3).

**Thought 1.** Jesus Christ is eternal. This says several important things about Christ.

- 1) Christ reveals the most important Person in all the universe. He reveals all that God is and wants to say to man. Therefore, Christ must be diligently studied, and all that He is and says must be heeded to the utmost (cp. Jn.5:24).
- 2) Christ reveals God perfectly. He is God; therefore, when we look at Christ we see God (see DEEPER STUDY # 2—Jn.14:6. Cp. Jn.14:9.)
- 3) Christ reveals that God is the most wonderful Person. God is far beyond anyone we could have ever dreamed. He is loving and caring, full of goodness and truth; He will not tolerate injustices: murder, stealing, lying, cheating, abuse, mistreatment, ignoring, neglecting of husband, wife, child, neighbor, brother, sister or stranger. God loves and is working and moving toward a perfect universe that will be filled with people who choose to love, worship, live, and work for Him (cp. Jn.5:24-29).

**Thought 2.** The very nature of Christ is...

- to exist eternally.
- to exist in a perfect state of being, knowing nothing but eternal perfection.
- to exist in perfect communion and fellowship eternally (cp. 1 Jn.1:3).

Note: it is the very nature of Christ that shall be imparted to believers; therefore, all three things will become our experience.

**“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (Jn.14:20).**

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).**

**“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor.3:18).**

**“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).**

**“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).**

**“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn.3:2).**

**D. God & Christ (Part III):  
Christ is the Head of the  
Church, 1:18-19**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1 He is the head of the church</b><br/> <b>2 He is the beginning of the church</b><br/> <b>3 He was the first from the dead</b><br/> <b>4 He is supreme in all things</b><br/> <b>5 He is filled with all the fulness of God Himself</b></p> | <p>18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.<br/>         19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE PREEMINENT CHRIST: GOD'S DEAR SON, 1:12-23**

**D. God and Christ (Part III): Christ is the Head of the Church, 1:18-19**

(1:18-19) **Introduction:** this is one of the great pictures of Christ and of the church. It pictures in the clearest of terms what the relationship is between Christ and the church. It is a passage that should be studied by every local church time and again.

1. He is the head of the church (v.18).
2. He is the beginning of the church (v.18).
3. He was the first from the dead (v.18).
4. He is supreme in all things (v.18).
5. He is filled with all the fulness of God Himself (v.19).

**1** (1:18) **Church—Jesus Christ, Head of the Church:** Jesus Christ is the head of the church. (See note, *Church—Mt.16:19* for the meaning of the word *church*.) This is the most common description of Christ and the church: the picture of the human body with Christ as the Head and the church as His body. When the church is called the body of Christ at least three ideas are pictured. (See outlines and notes—Ro.12:3-8; 1 Cor.12:12-31; Eph.1:22-23; 2:19-22 for more discussion.)

1. There is the idea of life, of the most vital connection and relationship. A body cannot live apart from the head and a head cannot live apart from the body. Both the head and body are absolutely necessary for there to be life. Without Jesus Christ, the church does not exist, and without the church the life of Christ on earth could not be known or exist. Christ is made known only through the lives of His people, the church. That is His chosen method to make Himself known.

**Thought 1.** This means something of critical importance.

- 1) If any part of the world is without the church (His body), that part of the world cannot know Christ the Head.
- 2) If the world sees a body of people with some head other than Christ, then that body of people is not the church, not the true church.

2. There is the idea of activity and its source. It is the body that acts, but it is the head that tells the body to act. It is the head that...

- plans for the body
- directs the body
- guides the body
- inspires the body
- arouses the body
- activates the body
- drives the body

The body does nothing without the head. All that the body does begins in the head.

**Thought 1.** This is significant. It means that the church is totally dependent upon the Head, Jesus Christ. The body finds its purpose, meaning, and significance in the Head who is Jesus Christ. Therefore, the body or church must learn more and more to acknowledge and honor the Head. The body must learn to look to the Head for its plans, guidance, and motivation.

3. There is the idea of control. The head is to rule and reign over the body. The body is to be controlled by the head. The body is not to act apart from the head. But note: sometimes a body does act apart from the head. But when it does, it is because of disease, handicap, or injury. There is some malfunction—some physical, emotional or mental problem. So it is with the church. When Christ does not control the church body, it is because there is some malfunction, some problem within the body.

**Thought 1.** The church body is to let Christ control it. The church is to walk a disciplined, controlled life just like Christ says. When the church lives like Christ dictates, then the church body lives a life free of disease and injury.

**“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church” (Eph.1:22).**

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph.4:15).

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph.5:23).

“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col.1:18).

“And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col.2:19).

**2** (1:18) **Church:** Jesus Christ is the beginning of the church. The word “beginning” (arche) has a twofold idea.

1. “Beginning” means creative power. When something first begins, it is created or brought into being by some person or thing greater than itself. Jesus Christ was the Person who gave birth to the church. He is greater than the church; therefore, He had the power to create the church and bring it into existence.

⇒ The church is the idea of His mind: He was the One who dreamed of the church, thought it up, and saw the great purpose it could accomplish upon earth.

⇒ The church is the plan of His heart: He saw how the church could be founded and built upon the earth and His heart wanted it.

⇒ The church is the desire of His will: He desired and longed for the church; therefore, He willed to create it.

⇒ The church is the activity of His hands and life. Jesus Christ came to earth and gave birth to the church (see outline, notes and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Church*—Mt.16:18).

⇒ The church is the result of His love: He loved the world; therefore, He founded His church and He reaches out to the world through His church.

⇒ The church is the subject of His care: He looks after and oversees the welfare of His church, making sure that it fulfils its purpose on earth. Even the very gates of hell cannot prevail against the church because of His love and care (Mt.16:18).

The point is this: Jesus Christ began the church. He is the beginning, the creative power who founded and gave birth to the church.

**Thought 1.** Jesus Christ is the Person—the only Person—who is to be honored and acknowledged as the beginning of God’s church on earth. No other person is to ever usurp the place of Christ in the church. He and He alone is to be praised as the Source of the church’s life and being. He and He alone can bring men to God.

2. “Beginning” means *first in time*. Jesus Christ was the first Person of the church. He began the church; therefore, He was the first member, the great and glorious Founder of the church. All others who come into the church follow Him.

**Thought 1.** This means something of extreme significance. A person who does not follow Christ the Founder fails to really enter the church which He founded. A person may sit in the pews of a building and hear the voice of the preacher, but unless he follows Christ, he is not in the body and movement of the church’s Founder. He follows some other body and movement. And one thing must be noted: Christ was very clear about His body and movement—about how His church and followers are to live. Therefore, to be a part of His church, a person has to live in the will and movement which He established.

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph.4:14-15).

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col.2:18-19).

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father” (1 Jn.2:23-24).

**3** (1:18) **Church—Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** Jesus Christ was the first to arise from the dead. There are three ways that the resurrection of Christ and the church are closely related.

1. The resurrection of Christ is the very reason the church exists. If Jesus Christ had not arisen from the dead, there would be no church. God loves man and longs for man to live forever in His presence. He made such possible through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and by establishing the church. What happened was this: Jesus Christ became the first person who ever arose from the dead and who never has to die again. He has blazed the path of conquering death; and because He has, He stands as the First, the Pattern, the Forerunner, the Ideal Man in conquering death. Therefore, when a person truly believes in the resurrection of Christ, God takes that belief and counts the person as being in Christ. God counts the man’s trust in the resurrection of Christ as the energy and power of the Lord’s resurrection. Therefore, when the man is ready to leave this world, he is *in the energy and power* of Christ’s resurrection, and the Lord’s energy and power transfers the person right into the presence of God.

Now note: this is the message and hope of the gospel. It is the people who believe in the resurrection of Christ who make up the church. This is what the church is: a body of people who have trusted the power of Christ's resurrection to conquer death for them and to transfer them into the eternal presence of God. Apart from the resurrection of Christ there would be no hope and no message of conquering power; therefore, there would be no church.

**Thought 1.** The resurrection of Christ and the church are tied together.

- ⇒ Every person who truly believes in the resurrection of Christ is a true member of the Lord's church.
- ⇒ Every true member of the church is a person who has truly believed in the resurrection of Christ.
- ⇒ There is no person who is a true member of the church who has not believed in the resurrection of Christ.
- ⇒ There is no person who is a member of God's true church who has not believed in the Lord's resurrection.

**Thought 2.** The church is a body of people who truly believe in the resurrection of Christ. The conquest of death is the church's great message of hope. It is this very belief that distinguishes it from all other organizations of men such as social and civic clubs.

2. The resurrection of Christ and the life of the church means there is a new life available for people. When Christ was raised from the dead, His body and life were entirely different from His former body and life. He had a changed body and life; He was raised to live a new life, to live face to face with God forever. So it is with the church. The church is to be a picture of the resurrected and changed life of Christ. The church is...

- to be entirely different from the world.
- to be separated from the world and given over completely to God.
- to live its life as though it is face to face with God.

3. The resurrection of Christ is the power by which the church is to live. The resurrection of Christ proves there is unlimited, enormous power available for living and conquering all the foes of life, even the foes of death and judgment. The church is to live as resurrected beings—beings with a new life, a life of power and energy that conquers all the trials of life. Just imagine! Power to conquer all the trials and temptations of life, including the terrible trials of death and judgment. Such power is available, and it is to be *alive and active* in the church. In fact, the resurrected power of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be the very life blood of the church.

**“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22-23).**

**“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:25).**

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Ro.10:9).**

**“And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:4).**

**“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:19-20).**

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pt.1:3).**

**4** (1:18) **Jesus Christ, Preeminence:** Jesus Christ is supreme in all things. God the Father has only one child, the Lord Jesus Christ who is God the Son.

Note two points.

1. Jesus Christ is the preeminent Person in the universe because He died and arose again for man's salvation. It is because Christ was perfectly obedient to God the Father in dying and being raised from the dead that God the Father has made God the Son preeminent in all things.

Another way to say the same thing is this: God the Son willingly came to earth to die and to arise again for man's salvation. Therefore, God the Father is bound to love God the Son with a supreme love. He is bound to do the ultimate for Christ, to give Christ the preeminence of all things.

Still another way to say the same thing is this. God the Father has only one child who is the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son. God the Son was *perfectly obedient* in coming to earth to die for man and to arise from the dead. Therefore, God the Father is bound to love His only Son with a supreme love. He is bound to do everything and to arrange everything to focus around His only Son.

The point is this: God's great love for His Son explains why the church exists. God had created the world and man to worship and serve Him, but when man rebelled and refused to honor Him, God had to accomplish His purpose some other way. All men were not going to worship and serve Him, but He knew that some would if He provided a way. This God did. He provided the way through His Son Jesus Christ and the church. The person who believes in His Son Jesus Christ is forgiven for his rebellion and accepted into the new body of people God is creating, the body called “the church.”

- ⇒ This is what the church is: a body of people who have approached God through the Lord Jesus Christ to worship and serve God.

2. This is the reason Jesus Christ is to have the preeminence in all things: He is the Person who came to earth to suffer and die. He is One who has loved and given Himself for the church. He is the One who died to establish the church (Eph.5:25). Therefore, God has made Christ the preeminent and supreme Majesty of the universe.

⇒ Jesus Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God the Father.

**“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mk.16:19).**

**“[God’s power] which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:20).**

⇒ Jesus Christ has been given a name above every name.

**“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Ph.2:9).**

⇒ Jesus Christ has been given all things.

**“Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev.5:12).**

⇒ Jesus Christ has been made both Lord and Christ (Messiah, Savior).

**“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).**

**“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Cor.8:6).**

⇒ Jesus Christ has been exalted above all.

**“He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all” (Jn.3:31).**

⇒ Jesus Christ is Lord of both the living and dead.

**“For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Ro.14:9).**

⇒ Jesus Christ has a more excellent name than the angels.

**“Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb.1:4).**

⇒ Jesus Christ has more glory than even the greatest of men.

**“For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house” (Heb.3:3).**

⇒ Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

**“Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” (Rev.1:11).**

⇒ Jesus Christ has all things put under His feet.

**“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church” (Eph.1:22).**

⇒ Jesus Christ has all things subject to Him.

**“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (1 Pt.3:22).**

**5** (1:19) **Jesus Christ, Person:** Jesus Christ is filled with all the fulness of God Himself. All that God is dwells in Jesus Christ. This is what this verse means. Jesus Christ is fully God in all God’s divine nature. The word “dwell” (katoikeo) means to make *permanent* abode or to be at home *permanently*. All the fulness of God was *at home* in Christ before He came to earth, *at home* in Him while He was on earth, and shall continue to be *at home* within Him throughout all eternity. Jesus Christ is God, the Son of God who possesses the perfect nature of God the Father in all His Being and attributes.

This is significant for the church because it means...

- that God is the Head of the church.
- that God is the beginning of the church.
- that God is the One who came to earth, died, and arose from the dead.
- that God is the preeminent Person of the universe.
- that God in all His fulness dwells in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It means that the church worships God when it worships the Son of God. It means that God the Father is honored when God the Son is honored. Both the Father and the Son have the same perfect nature; therefore, what is done for the Son is done for the Father. The Son is to be worshipped and served even as the Father is. In fact, because of what God the Son has done in coming to earth—dying and arising from the dead—God the Father wants His Son to have the preeminence. Note the word “pleased”: it pleases the Father that His Son has His nature and is the preeminent majesty of the universe. (See outline and notes—Ph.2:5-11 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** The church can please the Father only by praising and serving the Lord Jesus Christ, the One in whom dwells all the fulness of God.

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (Jn.1:1-2).**

**“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (Jn.1:16).**

**“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col.2:9).**

**“[Christ] is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph.1:23).**

**“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim.3:16).**

**“Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim.6:15).**

**“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:3).**

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>1 God has reconciled all things to Himself—through Christ</b><br/> a. The need: To make peace<br/> b. The means: The cross<br/> c. The result: All things in heaven &amp; earth reconciled</p> <p><b>2 God has reconciled those who were alienated &amp; enemies of God—through</b></p> | <p><b>E. God &amp; Christ (Part IV): Christ the Reconciler of All Things, 1:20-23</b></p> <p>20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.</p> <p>21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works,</p> | <p>yet now hath he reconciled</p> <p>22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:</p> <p>23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;</p> | <p><b>Christ</b></p> <p><b>3 God had one great purpose in reconciliation: To present the believer perfect</b></p> <p><b>4 God has made reconciliation conditional</b><br/> a. Must continue in the faith<br/> b. Must not be moved away from the gospel</p> |
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**DIVISION II**

**THE PREEMINENT CHRIST: GOD'S DEAR SON, 1:12-23**

**E. God and Christ (Part IV): Christ the Reconciler of All Things, 1:20-23**

(1:20-23) **Introduction:** this passage is one of the great studies of Scripture, the message of reconciliation. Man can now be reconciled to God because of Christ. It is an astounding passage, for it reveals that God has not only reconciled man to Himself, but He has reconciled the whole universe—all of creation—to Himself. And not only this, He has reconciled all things to Himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.

1. God has reconciled all things to Himself—through Christ (v.20).
2. God has reconciled those who were alienated and were enemies of God—through Christ (v.21-22).
3. God had one great purpose in reconciliation: to present the believer perfect (v.22).
4. God has made reconciliation conditional (v.23).

**1** (1:20) **Reconciliation:** God has reconciled all things to Himself—all creation, both in earth and in heaven. (See outline and notes, *Reconciliation & Peace*—Eph.2:11-18 for more discussion.) This is one of the great verses of Scripture, but it is a shocker, an eye-opener. It seems to be teaching universal salvation, that is, that everything in heaven and earth has been saved through the blood of Christ. This, of course, could not be what Paul meant, for it is not what the rest of Scripture teaches. Note three significant facts.

1. There is a great need for peace between God and man. Man is not at peace with God. His soul is restless and disturbed, lonely and empty, without direction and purpose: his soul is as separated from God as it can be. Man's relationship with God can be described in three ways.

- a. Man is not at *peace with God*. Note the word "with." *Peace with God* refers to man's relationship with God. Man does not know God personally; he is not near God nor close to God. He often questions the very existence of God, and even if he believes that God exists, he knows little if anything about talking and sharing with God.

Instead of sensing *peace with God*, he senses separation from God, as though God is out in space somewhere, far away from the earth.

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ro.5:1).**

- b. Man does not experience the *peace of God*. Note the word "of": the peace "of" God refers to possessing the peace of God within one's heart and life. As man walks throughout the day taking care of his affairs, his heart is not settled; he lacks peace; he knows little if anything of the peace of God. He lacks complete assurance as he faces the circumstances, problems, difficulties, trials, and temptations of life.

**"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Ph.4:6-7).**

- c. Man does not experience the *God of peace* dwelling within his heart and flooding his soul. As he walks through life, he does not know what it is to have the presence of God with him; he does not know what it means to have the God of peace helping him face the affairs and trials of daily life.

**"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Ph.4:8-9).**

The point is this: man has a need, a great need for peace with God. God has met that need by reconciling all men to Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ.

2. There is the means of reconciliation: the blood of the cross. How does the *blood of the cross* reconcile us to God? There are two pictures that show us.

- a. There is the picture of unjust punishment and death. The cross was the place where criminals were executed. This means that Jesus Christ died as an unjust criminal, yet He was not a criminal. He did not deserve to die, for He had broken no law. He was not upon the cross because He deserved to die; He was not there because of His own sins. Therefore, He was bound to be dying for someone else. He was the Just dying for the unjust.

This is very significant. If the Just died for the sins of the unjust, then the unjust is no longer guilty of sin. He is freed from the charge of being a sinner: he is no longer considered unjust; he is considered just. How? By faith. When a person truly believes that the Just Christ died for his unjust sins, God counts it so. God takes the person's faith and *accepts it as his identification with Christ*. Being freed from the charge of sin, the person becomes acceptable to God. The person is reconciled and brought near God by Christ dying for his unjust sins.

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pt.3:18).**

- b. There is the picture of blood or of sacrifice. When the blood of Christ is mentioned, the idea of sacrifice is meant. The blood of Christ is tied to the blood of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament. Down through the centuries God had told man that sin was serious, very serious—a matter worthy of death. It was sin that separated man from God. Therefore, man either had to die for his sins or else someone else who was innocent and without transgression had to be sacrificed for him. That Someone, of course, had to be God Himself, for no one else is innocent and perfect. But it was not yet time for God to come to earth in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; the fulness of time had not yet come. Man had not yet learned the awfulness of sin and the great price that God would be paying in sacrificing His Son for man.

Animal sacrifice was one of the ways God was going to teach these truths to man. A man was to believe that the animal was sacrificed for him. If he truly believed, then God accepted the animal sacrifice as bearing his sins. This, of course, meant the man was freed from the charge of sin. He was thereby reconciled and made acceptable to God by the blood that was shed.

The point is this: the shed blood of Christ is the supreme sacrifice. The perfect blood of God's own Son has now been sacrificed for man's sins. Therefore, the sacrifice of animals find their fulfillment in Christ. If a man believes that the blood of Christ (His life) was sacrificed for his sins, then God accepts his faith as the fact. God credits the believer's faith as the death of Christ. The believer is identified with the death of Christ, as having already died. Therefore, he never again has to die. He is reconciled and brought near God by the blood or sacrifice of Christ.

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).**

- c. There is the picture of the cross or of being cursed. The death of Christ on the cross is always the picture of a curse:

**“Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).**

The curse, of course, is death. Everyone who ever hung on the cross was doomed to die as a criminal. However, the picture goes much deeper than physical death. Spiritual and eternal death are also meant. Man is doomed to spiritual and eternal death and there is no escape other than Christ. When Christ hung on the cross, He bore the curse of condemnation, punishment, and death for man. The man who truly believes that Christ bore his curse and condemnation becomes acceptable to God. Very simply, God loves His Son so much that He will accept any person who honors His Son through genuine trust and belief. If a person believes that his sins are forgiven through the cross of Christ, then God will forgive his sins. God loves His Son that much. He will make His Son's death effective for whatever a man believes. Therefore, if a person believes that the blood of Christ reconciles him to God, God will reconcile him. God will honor His Son by doing it; God will allow the person of true faith to draw near Him.

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:8-9).**

3. There is the result of the death of Christ. All things are reconciled to God, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. As stated earlier, this does not mean universal salvation. Scripture does not teach that every person shall be reconciled to God. Common sense and looking around with a dose of honesty tell us this. The next verse and point make it clear that only true believers are reconciled to God. The height of injustice would be for the unjust to be accepted by God. If the unjust continues to deny and curse God and to act selfishly toward his neighbor, God would not be God if He accepted the unjust. What this verse means is this:

- a. God has reconciled all things in earth: both man and his world have been reconciled to God. The door of reconciliation with God is now open, and man is to enter and live with God forever. God has done all He can: He has made it possible for man to draw near Him through reconciliation. It is up to man to draw near. God has done His part; man must now do his part. Man must now turn to God through faith in the blood of Christ.

Note another point as well. The reconciliation of “all things” includes all of creation, the world itself. The earth was created for man, to be his place of residence; therefore, creation shall be redeemed even as man shall be redeemed. There shall be a new heaven and a new earth even as there shall be a new man that lives eternally.

“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Ro.8:21-23).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pt.3:10-13).

- b. God has reconciled all things in heaven: by heaven is probably meant all the worlds of all dimensions. All worlds, all dimensions of being, have been reconciled to God by Christ. No matter what dimensions there are—even if there is only one other dimension, the spiritual dimension—every being in it has been reconciled to God through the death of Christ. The death of Christ is so great and wonderful, it embraces all worlds, no matter what or where they are.

Note: the idea of the verse is looking ahead—looking ahead to the life that will exist in the new heavens and earth. The life of the future will be a life of reconciliation with God, a life that will see everything in the new heavens and earth reconciled to God. This does not mean that murderers, adulterers, idolaters, and the host of other unbelievers will be there. It means that everyone who is there will be reconciled to God.

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor.5:18-19).

“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph.2:16).

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).

“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb.2:17).

**2** (1:21-22) **Reconciliation—Jesus Christ, Death:** God has reconciled those who were alienated and were enemies of God. This verse shows that Paul was not thinking about universal salvation. He is addressing believers, those who truly believe that the blood of Jesus Christ has reconciled them to God. He wants them to remember how wonderful reconciliation is. God had done a marvelous thing for them.

1. Believers had been *alienated* (*apellotriomenous*) from God. The word means estranged, alienated, and separated because of dislike; it means to be unattached because of indifferent and unfriendly feelings. Man is alienated from God...

- because he dislikes who God is. Man is unwilling to submit to the sovereignty of God and to the Lordship of Christ.
- because he dislikes what God says, and he refuses to give up all he is and has and to obey God fully.
- because he feels God will overlook his sin. Man just feels that God would never condemn him, not in the final analysis.
- because he thinks God is far away, mostly removed from the world and the affairs of daily life. Man thinks God is unconcerned and that He has little interest in day to day living.

2. Believers had been *enemies* (extrous) of God. The word means hostile, hateful, and rebellious. Just think for a moment: think about how men act toward God. They...

- |                 |                                |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| • ignore Him    | • deny Him, His very existence |
| • curse Him     | • disobey Him                  |
| • blaspheme Him | • falsely profess Him          |
| • mock Him      | • half-heartedly serve Him     |
| • neglect Him   |                                |

Note where rebellion takes place: in the mind and in the thoughts. A man thinks about doing something and he knows it is against God’s will and Word. But the thought is planted in his mind, and he harbors the thought. It is the thought, the mind that leads to wicked works. And any behavior or act that is not in accordance with God’s will is rebellion. When the human heart is aroused to disobey God, it acts against God. And acting against the King of kings is insurrection. It is going contrary to the *explicit orders* of the King of kings. The terrible tragedy is that every person has rebelled and too often does rebel against God. Every human being has stood or is standing upon the earth as an enemy of God, an enemy who is

in open defiance against God. Every human being has refused to obey the commandments of the King, and every human being who is open and honest knows it. The great task of man...

- is not to disprove the charge that he is an enemy of God.
- is not to prove that he is good enough to be acceptable to God.
- is not to deny and disprove God (denial and disproof can never eliminate truth and fact).

The fact of man's alienation—that he is an enemy of God—is clearly seen. The great task of man is to seek how to be reconciled to God.

3. Believers have been reconciled to God by the body of Jesus Christ *through death*. Note the unique wording of this statement (v.22<sup>a</sup>). The body of Jesus Christ is being stressed. He came to earth in the body of a human being. He actually partook of flesh and blood. He had to—it was necessary.

- a. Jesus Christ had to have a real body so that He could secure perfection for the human body. He had to live a perfect and righteous life; He had to live a sinless life as a Man. By living a perfect and sinless life, He became the Ideal and Perfect Pattern of righteousness for all men. He stood before the human race as the Ideal and perfect Man, and as the Ideal and Perfect Man, His perfection and righteousness could stand for all men. All men who really trust Him are covered by His perfection and righteousness. Thereby they become acceptable to God.
- b. Jesus Christ had to have a real body so that He could bear the sins and condemnation of men and die for man. As the Ideal and Perfect Man, whatever Jesus Christ did, it could stand and cover man. Therefore, if Jesus Christ was willing to bear the condemnation of sin for men, He could. This is the great love of God, for Jesus Christ was willing to die for man. When a man really believes that Christ died for him, God takes the man's faith and counts it as his death. Therefore, the man never has to die. When he passes from this life into the next, he will never taste or experience death. Quicker than the blink of an eye God will transfer the believer into His presence. Why? Because the death of Jesus Christ covers him. Jesus Christ has already paid the penalty and suffered the condemnation of the believer's sin. The believer is freed from sin; he is reconciled to God by the death of the body of Christ.

**"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (Jn.10:11).  
"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly"**  
(Ro.5:6).

**"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro.5:8).**

**"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal.1:4).**

**"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph.5:2).**

**"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev.1:5).**

**3** (1:22) **Reconciliation:** God had one great purpose in reconciliation—to present the believer perfect before Him. A great day of coronation is coming, a day when every believer will be presented to God face to face. What a moment! Being ushered into the presence of God and presented to Him. The excitement, awe, reverence, and ecstasy of the moment will be beyond imagination. This is the reason for the death of Christ. Three things are essential for us to be allowed to stand before God.

1. We must be holy (hagios): separated, set apart, and consecrated to God.
  - ⇒ We must live lives that are set apart to Christ, to the belief that He died for our reconciliation and that His death covers us.
  - ⇒ We must live lives that are separated from worldliness and selfishness and from the flesh and its sins.
  - ⇒ We must live lives that are set apart and consecrated to God and His service, lives that live for His cause.
2. We must also be "unblameable" (amomous): without blemish, without spot, faultless, without any defect whatsoever.
3. We must also be "unreproveable" (anegkletous): beyond reproach, blameless, unchargeable. Imagine standing before God holy, unblameable, and beyond reproach. Imagine how pleased God would be! How He would joy and rejoice in us—that we had honored Christ, His only Son, by trusting Him so much! As we are presented to God, what would He say? What would His first words be to us? We would be speechless, no doubt. But what a day of coronation, of glory, of greatness—standing face to face with our Father, the God of all glory, the Sovereign Majesty of the whole universe. This is God's one great purpose in reconciliation: to present us perfect before Him.

**"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (1 Th.3:12-13).**

**"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Th.5:23).**

**"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Pt.3:14).**

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Ro.12:1-2).**

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor.11:2).

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:13).

“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph.5:27).

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col.1:28).

**4** (1:23) **Reconciliation:** God has made reconciliation conditional. There are two conditions.

1. A person must *continue* to believe in Jesus Christ and to grow in his belief. He must become more and more grounded and settled in his belief in Christ.

⇒ The word “continue” (epimene) means to continue and then some (A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.483); to persist ever moving on; to stay with moving forward more and more.

⇒ The word “grounded” (tethemeliomenoi) means to be grounded in Christ like the firm, solid foundation of a building. This is the word that pictures the foundation of a building, the solid foundation that gives the greatest stability possible to a building. The believer must be so grounded in Christ that he can withstand the severest storms of life.

⇒ The word “settled” (hedraioi) means steadfast. The believer must actually stand firm and continue on in being steadfast if he wishes to be presented perfect before God.

2. A person must not be moved away from the hope of the gospel. What is it that would move a person away from the gospel?

- |               |          |                  |
|---------------|----------|------------------|
| • worldliness | • pride  | • friends        |
| • lust        | • fame   | • persecution    |
| • greed       | • power  | • job            |
| • comfort     | • family | • false teaching |

What is the hope of the gospel? The glory of God: that we might be reconciled to God and presented perfect before Him—that we might be given the wonderful privilege of living forever with Him, worshipping and serving Him throughout the universe—all to the glory of Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Thought 1.** It is not enough to profess Christ. A person must live for Christ. A person who professes Christ and does not live for Christ is living a lie. A person has to continue in the faith and grow to such a degree that he will never be moved away. If he moves away from Christ and stays moved away, he will never be presented to God as perfect. He will have denied the faith. Continuing on with Christ is an absolute essential. It is the one condition for reconciliation with God.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal.5:1).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pt.5:8-9).

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).

“But cleave unto the Lord your God as ye have done unto this day” (Josh.23:8).

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|   | <p><b>III. THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH, 1:24-2:7</b></p> <p><b>A. A Minister Who Will Tirelessly Labor For the Church, 1:24-29</b></p>                                      | <p>26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:<br/>27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:<br/>28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:<br/>29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.</p> | <p><b>3 A minister who will share the great mystery of God—“Christ in you, the hope of glory”</b></p>     |
| <p><b>1 A minister who will willingly suffer for the church</b></p>               | <p>24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church:</p> |   | <p><b>4 A minister who will preach Christ &amp; will warn &amp; teach every man</b></p>                   |
| <p><b>2 A minister who has been chosen by God to proclaim the Word of God</b></p> | <p>25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;</p>                                   |   | <p><b>5 A minister who will labor &amp; work—strive laboriously, depending upon Christ for energy</b></p> |

**DIVISION III**

**THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH, 1:24-2:7**

**A. A Minister Who Will Tirelessly Labor for the Church, 1:24-29**

(1:24-2:7) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Church:** this brief passage of thirteen verses deals with a most important subject: the needs of the church. Two basic needs are discussed.

1. The need for a minister who will tirelessly labor for the church.
2. The need for believers who will tirelessly labor for the church.

(1:24-29) **Introduction:** one of the most basic needs of the church is to have a minister who arduously labors for the church.

1. A minister who will willingly suffer for the church (v.24).
2. A minister who has been chosen by God to proclaim the Word of God (v.25).
3. A minister who will share the great mystery of God—“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (v.26-27).
4. A minister who will preach Christ and will warn and teach every man (v.28).
5. A minister who will labor and work—strive laboriously, depending upon Christ for energy (v.29).

**1** (1:24) **Ministers—Suffering—Faithfulness—Church:** the church needs a minister (servant) who will willingly suffer for others, that is, for the church, the body of Christ. Paul was such a minister. He paid any price and went to any length of suffering in order to reach and grow people for Christ. He literally poured out his life: he suffered much, and the suffering he bore, he bore willingly for the cause of Christ and His church. This is the message of this verse. It teaches a most wonderful thing: the minister of God actually *completes the sufferings of Christ*. When Christ was upon the earth, He loved the church and gave Himself for it; therefore, He poured out His heart and life for the church, that is, for believers. Christ ministered, served, worked, labored—and He did it all laboriously. Every day of His life He suffered to the point of exhaustion and fatigue, striving to reach and minister to people. Christ bore whatever was necessary in order to build up the church. And in so doing He left the *pattern* for all those who would follow after Him. When He left the earth, He expected all believers to *follow in His steps*, to give their lives to suffer whatever is necessary to reach and minister to people. Christ expects every minister and believer to suffer for the church: to complete the church, to bring it to its full measure; to fill it up to the fulness of His will. He expects us to pay whatever price is necessary to build the church. He expects us...

- to fill up whatever sufferings of pain, sacrifice, fatigue, and exhaustion are lacking.

Working and laboring for Christ on this earth are not easy. Serving the church in this world is not easy. The reason is due to the ideas and behavior of men toward Christ and His church. Men’s ideas and behavior are corrupt. They look at Christ and His church and feel...

- that the church is meaningless for modern man.
- that the church is acceptable just so it stays in its place.
- that the church is all right as a social service to the community.
- that the church is needed to lift high the volumes of morality and justice.
- that the church is good in that it meets the religious needs of man.

The list could go on and on, for the feelings of people about Christ and the church are almost endless. Some persons look at Christ and deny His relevance and curse His name. They could care less about His church. When it comes to the church, they...

- ignore it
- neglect it
- abuse it
- ridicule it
- persecute it
- attempt to destroy it

Other persons profess Christ and join His church, but their commitment is almost meaningless. They are...

- inactive
- sleepy-eyed
- complacent
- unconcerned
- non-supportive
- lacking vision

On top of all this, there are always those within the church who are...

- worldly
- carnal
- fleshly
- divisive
- critical
- gossiping
- whispering
- murmuring
- criticizing
- making trouble

It is such ideas and behavior that puts so much pressure and weight upon the leaders of the church. This is what causes so much suffering for the genuine servant of Christ. The genuine servant longs for people to know Christ and the abundance of life which Christ brings. He wants people to grow into the image of Christ and to keep their eyes fixed upon the hope of glory which is to be given to every true believer. He knows that without Christ men are lost and doomed to judgment. Therefore, he suffers whatever burden and pain is necessary to reach and grow people.

**“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn.15:20).**

**“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph.1:29).**

**“But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:10-12).**

**“For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood [a picture of His struggle against evil in the Garden of Gethsemane], striving against sin” (Heb.12:3-4).**

**2** (1:25) **Minister—Church—God’s Word—Indwelling Christ:** the church needs a minister who has been chosen by God to proclaim the Word of God. Note two significant points.

1. Paul was made a minister by God. Paul was a minister because God had called him to be a minister. He was not in the ministry...

- because he thought the ministry was a good profession to enter.
- because some friends thought he would make a good minister.
- because he had the natural talents for the ministry.
- because he wanted to commit his life to teach the highest principles of morality and justice.

Note a most significant fact. The word dispensation (oikonomian) refers to the steward who oversees the household and property of the owner. The minister is the steward of God, the person chosen to oversee the house or church of God. This fact is almost unbelievable, but it is true: God has actually chosen some persons to oversee His affairs for Him. The minister has actually been chosen by God to be the steward of His world and church and people. God has literally taken His church and people and placed them into the hands of His ministers, into...

- their stewardship
- their supervision
- their administration
- their ministry
- their responsibility
- their management
- their care
- their lives
- their love

What an enormous call and responsibility, yet it comes from God; therefore, it must be fulfilled.

**“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is [still] committed unto me” (1 Cor.9:16-17).**

**“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God” (Col.1:25).**

**“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness” (1 Th.2:4-5).**

**“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you” (2 Th.3:1).**

**“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim.1:11-12).**

**“But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit.1:3).**

2. Paul was chosen to fulfil the Word of God, that is, to make the Word of God fully known.  
 ⇒ Robertson says that the minister is to “to give full scope to the Word of God” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.484).

- ⇒ Griffith Thomas says that the minister is to complete “the message of God’s grace,” that he is to “put his whole soul into...the divine gospel entrusted to him” (*Studies in Colossians and Philemon*, page number unknown).
- ⇒ Herbert Carson says that the minister’s task is to “fill out...the *Word of God*, by declaring...the gospel” (*The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians and Philemon*. “Tyndale Bible Commentaries,” ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960, p.52).
- ⇒ Marvin Vincent says that the minister is to “fully discharge [his] office...in the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles no less than to the Jews” (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol.3. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1946, p.478).
- ⇒ Wuest quotes Lightfoot as saying that the minister is “to preach fully, to give...complete development to the Word” (*Ephesians and Colossians*, Vol.1, p.192).
- ⇒ Matthew Henry simply says, “We are Christ’s ministers for the good of His people, to ‘fulfill the Word of God’ (that is...to preach it)” (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol.5, p.754).

**“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt.10:7).**

**“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).**

**“Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20).**

**“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you” (2 Th.3:1).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

**3** (1:26-27) **Minister—Indwelling Presence—Christ in You—Church:** the church needs a minister who will share the great mystery of God—the glorious message of “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” What does this mean? Remember that the word “mystery” means secret, some secret that God was not able to reveal to the world until man had been prepared to receive it. What is the mystery that God has kept secret, but now has been revealed? It is twofold; it has two parts to its revelation.

1. First, the mystery is that Christ actually lives within the believer. It is the truth of the *Indwelling Christ*—that Christ actually lives within the hearts and lives of believers and that His presence is their guarantee of living forever in glory.

This is exactly what Christ had promised when He was on earth. He was about to face the cross, but right before He died, He said:

**“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (Jn.14:16-18).**

The Holy Spirit is the personal presence of Christ. Christ is within the believer in the person of the Holy Spirit. (See outline and notes—Jn.14:15-26 for more discussion.) Note three facts.

a. Jesus said, “I will come to you.” He meant that He would return after He had gone away, that is, died. He would come back to give believers His personal presence. He would not leave them comfortless (orphanous); the word means to be orphaned, to be without parental help, to be helpless. Jesus would not leave them to struggle through the trials and temptations of life alone.

Jesus’ presence with His followers began with His resurrection and with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was saying that He would come to the believer in the person of the Holy Spirit.

b. The presence of Jesus is a living, eternal presence. He died, but He did not stay dead. He arose and conquered death; He arose to live forever. Now think: if Jesus Christ is living forever and He dwells within the believer, then that means the believer lives eternally. Christ the Eternal Presence lives *within* the believer; therefore, the believer becomes eternal. He never dies. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jn.8:51.) The believer is made eternal by the eternal presence of Christ *within* him.

In fact, when Jesus says “I live,” He means He lives abundantly and eternally: He lives life in all of its fullness and meaning. Therefore, by living *within* the believer, Christ imparts the same kind of life to the believer, a life that is both abundant and eternal. (See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Life*—Jn.1:4; DEEPER STUDY # 1—10:10; DEEPER STUDY # 1—17:2-3.)

c. The presence of Christ is a living union, a *mutual indwelling* between God, Christ, and the believer. “At that day” refers to Jesus’ resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Now note: when Jesus arose from the dead, believers knew something. His claim was true in an absolute sense. Jesus really was “in” God. God is eternal, so by being “in” God, Jesus was bound to live forever; He was bound to arise from the dead.

Something else was known. All that Jesus had said was true. He was placing all believers “in” Himself and Himself “in” them; or to say it another way, when the Holy Spirit came, believers were placed “in” His Spirit and His Spirit “in” them. (See note, *Holy Spirit*—Acts 2:1-4 for more discussion.)

This is the glorious truth of “Christ in you”—of Christ actually living within the believer. It is the first part of the great mystery of God that had been hid, but is now revealed to the children of men.

**“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (Jn.14:20).**

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (Jn.17:23).

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Ro.8:9).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love” (Eph.3:17).

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col.1:27).

“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him” (1 Jn.3:24).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).

2. Second, the mystery of God is that Christ will live within any person, no matter who they are—God is no respecter of persons. He shows no partiality and no favoritism. This may be a shock to some people such as Jews and some religionists who feel they are special to God. But this is the proclamation of Holy Scripture. Note the exact words of this passage:

**“The glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you.”**

It is *in the Gentiles* that Christ dwells; that is, He dwells within anyone who opens his heart and life to Him. When God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to die for men, God showed the world that He loves every person equally. He does not favor anyone—not one person—much less a class or nation of people. Every person can now approach God and become acceptable to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.

There is one other thing that needs to be noted: Christ in you, *the hope of glory*. Man’s only hope of ever entering and living in glory is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ must be living in the heart of a person when he dies if the person is to be allowed to enter glory. The guarantee of glory is the presence of Christ and His Spirit within the heart.

“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest [guarantee] of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor.1:21-22).

“In whom [Christ] also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest [guarantee] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Eph.1:13-14).

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pt.1:4).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev.3:20).

**4** (1:28) **Minister—Preaching—Evangelism:** the church needs a minister who will preach Christ and will warn and teach every man. This is the great task of the minister.

1. The minister is to preach Christ. This point is revolutionary, for it declares the very opposite of what man has always done. Man has always proclaimed principles, ideas, theories, positions, rules, codes, morals, laws, philosophies, institutions, and religions. But this is not to be the theme of the minister’s proclamation. As good and as helpful as some of these things are, they are not the task of the minister nor of God’s church. The minister preaches a Person, not things, no matter how good they may be. Griffith Thomas says it well:

*“The theme of Christianity is not a theory, not an institution, not a book, not a set of rules, not simply a code of morals nor a system of philosophy, and not even merely a statement of truth or of principle. It is manifestly impossible...to love, to worship, or to pray to a principle” (Studies in Colossians and Philemon, p.66).*

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk.16:15).

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor.4:5).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

2. The minister is to warn every man. Man must be warned: he cannot enter glory unless Christ is in him. No man is perfect; no man has enough righteousness to make himself acceptable to God. Man cannot earn or do enough righteousness to become perfect. Therefore, he shall be cast out of the presence of God, for God is perfect and only perfection can live in God’s presence. Man’s only hope is Christ, for Christ alone is righteousness. Christ alone is perfect. This is critical for man, for it means that...

- man’s only hope of ever becoming acceptable to God is to have Christ, His righteousness and perfection, living within his body.
- man’s only hope of conquering death when he dies is to have Christ, His righteousness and perfection, living within his body.

Man must be warned: he must repent of his evil and selfishness and turn to God in trust and obedience. He must trust and obey God's only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He must surrender his life to Christ and let Christ enter and control his life, or else he will be doomed to separation from God eternally. A person cannot live a life separated and apart from God and then at death expect to enter God's presence. If a person lives a life separated and apart from God, then he will continue on separate and apart from God—continue on eternally. God has done everything He can for man in His Son, Jesus Christ. He can do no greater thing, no more than give the life of His own dear Son for the salvation of man. There is nothing else to be done. The decision is up to every man. Man must be warned—warned by the person whom God has chosen to warn him, that is, the minister.

**“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph.5:11).**

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Th.5:14).**

**“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).**

**“To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Tit.2:5).**

**“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression” (Is.58:1).**

**“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand” (Ezk.3:18).**

**“Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul” (Ezk.33:9).**

3. The minister is to teach every man. It is not enough to warn men. Once they have been warned and have responded to the warning by inviting Christ into their hearts and lives, people need to be taught. They need to learn how to live and walk in Christ. Note the word “wisdom.” This means practical knowledge, knowing how to apply and practice and live out the great teachings of Christ. The minister is to teach “in all wisdom”; that is, he is to be practical in his teaching. Theory and principles, of course, are necessary; but they must be applied to everyday life. Believers must know how to follow Christ day by day as they face the trials and temptations of life.

4. The minister has one aim: to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. The minister is to labor and labor to *present* every person *perfect in Christ Jesus* (see note, pt.2—Eph.4:12-16 for discussion).

**“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Mt.5:48).**

**“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:13).**

**“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Heb.6:1).**

**“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (Jas.1:4).**

**5** (1:29) **Minister—Diligence:** the church needs a minister who will labor and work—strive laboriously, depending upon Christ for energy.

1. The word “labor” (kopiao) means to toil and to struggle in labor and work to the point of exhaustion, fatigue, and pain. It is the picture of an athlete struggling, agonizing, and pushing himself well beyond his capacity in order to achieve his objective. This is the call of God to the minister: to labor and work just as diligently as Paul and as the most dedicated athlete.

2. The word “working” (energeia) means energy and efficiency, and is only used of superhuman power (Wuest, *Ephesians and Colossians*, Vol.1, p.195). In this case, it is the power of Christ. When the minister has gone as far as he can, Christ steps in and infuses energy and power into his body—an energy and power that works in him mightily.

**Thought 1.** The minister who has truly labored to the point of exhaustion and experienced the energy and power of Christ knows how glorious the experience is. It is just tragic that there are too few who so labor and even fewer who consistently labor to the point that Christ has to step in with His energy and power. We seem to forget too easily:

⇒ as long as we have physical strength and energy left to labor, the energy and power of Christ are not needed.

The only way we can experience the physical energy and power of Christ is to use all of our own strength. When we are completely empty, then Christ has to step in or else leave us and abandon us and disregard the promise of His Word. And this He will never do. Therefore, when we have no more strength to walk and labor, it is then that He infuses us with His own supernatural energy and power.

**“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (Jn.4:34-35).**

**“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn.9:4).**

## COLOSSIANS 1:24-29

“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Ro.12:11).

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:2).

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Tim.1:6).

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim.4:2).

“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim.4:5).

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pt.3:14).

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise” (Pr.6:6).

“He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame” (Pr.10:5).

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Eccl.9:10).

| CHAPTER 2   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Mark 1: A minister who struggles in prayer &amp; concern for the church</b></p> <p><b>2 Mark 2: Possessing confidence &amp; assurance</b></p> <p>a. Comes from being knit together in love</p> <p>b. Comes from knowing that what one believes about the mystery of God is accurate</p> | <p><b>B. The Distinguished Marks of a Mature Church, 2:1-7</b></p> <p>For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;</p> <p>2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;</p> | <p>3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.</p> <p>4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.</p> <p>5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.</p> <p>6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:</p> <p>7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.</p> | <p>c. Comes from knowing that in Christ is all wisdom &amp; knowledge<sup>DS1</sup></p> <p><b>3 Mark 3: Resisting seductive teaching</b></p> <p><b>4 Mark 4: Maintaining military discipline: Order &amp; stedfastness</b></p> <p><b>5 Mark 5: Walking in the Lord</b></p> <p>a. Walk rooted &amp; built up</p> <p>b. Walk as taught</p> <p>c. Walk overflowing with thanksgiving</p> |

### DIVISION III

#### THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH, 1:24-2:7

#### **B. The Distinguished Marks of a Mature Church, 2:1-7**

(2:1-7) **Introduction:** the second great need of the church is for mature people, a people who are consistently growing in the Lord. The word *consistent* is to be noted: a mature people are consistent in all they do. They are consistently growing in the Lord. One of the great tragedies of today's society is the lack of consistency. Few people are consistent in their daily walk with the Lord. This is the subject of this great passage: the marks of a mature people.

1. Mark 1: a minister who struggles in prayer and concern for the church (v.1).
2. Mark 2: possessing confidence and assurance (v.2-3).
3. Mark 3: resisting seductive teaching (v.4).
4. Mark 4: maintaining military discipline—order and stedfastness (v.5).
5. Mark 5: walking in the Lord (v.6-7).

**1** (2:1) **Prayer—Concern—Minister:** a mature people must have ministers who struggle in prayer and concern for them. Remember Paul had never seen the Colossian church personally; he was not the minister on the field. (The pastor of the Colossian church was Epaphras.) This says something of enormous importance: ministers are to wrestle in prayer for believers and churches all over the world. In fact, churches can be mature in the Lord only as the ministers of the world wrestle in prayer for all the churches of the world. Picture the scene: imagine yourself hovering above the earth and looking down upon it—looking upon every church upon the earth. Imagine every pastor of the world wrestling in prayer for every church. Imagine every church being prayed for every day by every minister. Just imagine what would happen: the growth, the maturity, the ministry, the reaching out to save souls. This is what Paul was after, and it is the great challenge to us. A mature people must have ministers who struggle in prayer and concern for them. There is no other way they can mature. A half-hearted, half-committed minister can only produce half-hearted, half-committed people.

Note the word "conflict" (agona). It means to strive, agonize, struggle, and wrestle in prayer for the believers of the churches. It is the picture of an athlete exerting every ounce of energy he has in the struggle of the contest. The idea is that Paul labored hard, toiled, strove, agonized, struggled, and wrestled in prayer.

The ministers of the world are to labor and struggle in prayer for the believers and churches of the world, whether or not they know them or have seen them. Prayer is not easy; it is labor, demanding and difficult labor. The minister or believer who takes prayer seriously knows what it is to struggle in prayer; he knows what it is to face the interrupting attacks of...

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wandering thoughts</li> <li>• imaginations</li> <li>• strict schedules</li> <li>• thoughts that struggle against being obedient to prayer</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pressing matters</li> <li>• demanding work</li> <li>• pride and lofty things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

But against all these the minister must gain the victory. The minister must pray: agonize and struggle in prayer—work and toil in prayer for all the believers and churches of the world. It is the example of Paul and our Lord, and it is the will of the Lord for us. In fact, it is His command.

**Thought 1.** Without doubt, our failure to toil and agonize in prayer for each other is the major reason so many believers and churches are immature in the Lord. The Lord reveals Himself and blesses only those who pray and are bathed in prayer. Prayer—communion and fellowship with Him—is the primary channel through which He has chosen to bless His people.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Mt.7:7).

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mt.26:41).

“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mk.11:24).

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk.18:1).

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (Jn.14:13-14).

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Jn.15:7).

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Th.5:17).

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms” (Jas.5:13).

“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight” (1 Jn.3:22).

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will heal their land” (2 Chron.7:14).

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer.29:13).

**2** (2:2-3) **Church:** a mature people have hearts that are strong, confident, and assured. The word “comforted” (paraklethosin) means to be strong, strengthened, established and braced (Vincent. *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol.3, p.482). It means to be encouraged. It is the kind of strength...

- that stirs confidence and assurance.
- that braces a person to withstand the onslaught of false teaching, trials, and temptations.
- that comforts and builds assurance and confidence in life, both now and eternally.

The human heart aches for such strength, for this kind of confidence, assurance, and comfort. Where does such strength come from? Where is the spring from which such confidence and assurance flow?

1. Strong hearts come from *love*—from being knit together with others in love. Think of the people (and the times we ourselves have felt)...

- |                   |              |               |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| • all alone       | • neglected  | • unloved     |
| • without friends | • by-passed  | • uncared for |
| • left out        | • overlooked |               |
| • ignored         | • disfavored |               |

A person who feels these emotions seldom feels strong, confident, or assured. On the contrary, he feels weak, unacceptable, and incapable of handling situations. He feels insecure, which either causes him to withdraw or react in a superior and boastful attitude. We have all seen such reactions.

The point is this: the answer to a strong, confident, assured heart is love—being knit together in love with others. This is the task of the church and its believers: to love each other—to build love among themselves—to build love among everyone, not neglecting, overlooking, or ignoring a single person. When our hearts are knit together in love, then the hearts of every believer will be strong, encouraged, braced, assured, confident, and comforted.

**Thought 1.** Note that strong hearts do not come from religion, ceremony, ritual, laws, or rules and regulations. Strong hearts come from love—hearts knit together in love.

2. Strong hearts come from knowing that what one believes about God is accurate. Most people are not sure about God. They are not sure...

- that God really exists.
- that God really looks after their welfare.
- that God is really interested in their daily lives.
- that they can really know God in a personal way.
- that eternal life really exists.
- that they can really know there is life after death.

a. Note the phrase “mystery of God.” To most people God is a mystery. But this is not what mystery means in the Bible. “Mystery” means *a secret*, a secret of God’s that He has now revealed. The critical fact is that it is *now revealed*: it cannot only be known, but it is known by many persons. The point is this: a strong heart—assurance and confidence—comes from knowing the secret of God, from knowing that what one believes about God is accurate.

What is the great secret of God that has now been revealed? Note exactly what the verse says: “the mystery of God...even [kai] Christ.” Jesus Christ is the mystery of God. It is Jesus Christ that reveals God to men.

⇒ When people look at Jesus Christ, they see God.

⇒ When people come to know Jesus Christ, they come to know God personally.

Once a person approaches God through Jesus Christ, God places His Spirit within the person's heart. And God's Spirit infuses strength, both assurance and confidence, within the believer's heart. God's Spirit gives absolute assurance that we truly know God and are adopted as His dear sons and daughters. We know with absolute assurance that what we believe about God is accurate. The Spirit of God instills that confidence within our hearts.

**"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Ro.8:15-16).**

**"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest [guarantee] of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor.1:22).**

**"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal.4:4-6).**

**"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 Jn.3:24).**

**"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (1 Jn.4:13).**

**"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 Jn.5:6).**

- b. Note the words "understanding" and "acknowledgement." When a person understands and acknowledges Jesus Christ, then it is that he gains "*full assurance*" of God. He gains "*full assurance*" that his knowledge of God is accurate. Common sense tells us this fact: if we could be absolutely sure that our knowledge of God is accurate, then our hearts would be strong. And this is the glorious declaration of Scripture: we can be sure. In fact, we can have full assurance of understanding—through Jesus Christ—for Jesus Christ Himself is the revealed secret of God. Jesus Christ is the revelation of God, our assurance and confidence of God.

**"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (1 Th.1:5).**

**"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim.1:12).**

**"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb.10:22).**

**"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 Jn.2:3).**

**"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us [in the death of Christ]; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren....And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him" (1 Jn.3:16, 19).**

**"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (1 Jn.4:13).**

**"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 Jn.5:10-13).**

#### DEEPER STUDY # 1

(2:3) **Jesus Christ—Wisdom—Knowledge:** a mature people know that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ.

1. Men seek for wisdom and understanding. The word "wisdom" (sophia) means the ability to use the truth once the truth is known; it is using the truth wisely just as it should be used. It is knowing how to confront day to day problems and handle them wisely. It is practical wisdom, knowing how to apply the great truths of life to everyday living. The word "understanding" (gnosis) is the ability to grasp the facts and the truth. It means the ability to see and know the truth. It is seeing and knowing what to do. It grasps the great truths of life. It sees the answers to the problems of...

- life and death
- good and evil
- time and eternity
- God and man
- health and disease
- comfort and suffering

2. Note where the great treasures of wisdom and understanding are: they are hid in Jesus Christ. What does this mean?
- Jesus Christ is the very embodiment of all wisdom. He is the One Person who *lived out* the truth, who lived and never sinned. He is the Person who confronted every trial and problem in life and solved it—who lived exactly as all men are to live. The wisdom of life—of how to live life—is seen in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. In Him are all the treasures of wisdom, all the treasures of practical day to day living.
  - Jesus Christ is the very embodiment of understanding. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe; therefore, all the truth and facts of the universe are found in Him. (This is bound to be true, for when anything is made, the facts of its nature are found in the person who created it.) In Jesus Christ is the understanding of creation, the universe, good and evil, time and eternity, health and disease, comfort and suffering, and God and man.  
All the *treasures of understanding* are bound up in Christ. Man can *understand* himself and his world only in Christ Jesus. Any approach to understand the world apart from Christ leads to false conclusions and a world of corruption, discrimination, strife, division, and all the other evils that exist within the world.
3. Note that wisdom and understanding are “hid” in Jesus Christ. This does not mean that they are hidden from us, but rather *for us* (Matthew Henry. *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol.5, p.756). They are there for us to seek and search out and thereby to honor Christ as the Source and Substance of our hearts and lives.

**“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord! or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever” (Ro.11:33-36).**

**“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks. Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor.1:24).**

**“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor.1:30).**

**“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col.2:3).**

**“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas.1:5).**

**“But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jer.9:24).**

**“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth” (Hos.6:3).**

**3** (2:4) **False Teaching:** a mature people resist seduction and deception. The word “beguile” (paralogizetai) means to mislead, delude, deceive, cheat, seduce, and lead someone astray. Note how the seduction takes place: by “enticing words” (pithanologiai), that is, by words that are persuasive, appealing, eloquent, flowery, and attractive.

1. Believers can be seduced by the persuasive and eloquent words of false teaching. People are easily influenced by...

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| • eloquence      | • arguments         |
| • reasoning      | • logic             |
| • persuasiveness | • thought processes |

Therefore when some idea, position, philosophy, religion, doctrine, or belief is presented in a reasonable and eloquent fashion, people are persuaded. They are beguiled, deceived, and led astray from Christ. It may be an argument against...

- the creation of the world by God.
- man being personally responsible to God.
- the virgin birth or the incarnation of God in human flesh.
- the perfect, sinless life of Christ.
- the substitutionary death of Christ.
- the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- salvation by grace through faith.
- the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- the bodily resurrection of the dead.
- eternal judgment and eternal death.
- the destruction of the world by fire and the making of a new heavens and earth.
- the existence of believers face to face with God, worshipping and serving Him throughout all eternity.

The argument can be against any of the major teachings of Scripture. If they are persuasive enough, some persons are led astray. They begin to question the truth and to wonder and doubt.

Note the words “this I say.” The very reason Paul has proclaimed that all wisdom and knowledge exist in Christ is to protect believers against false teaching. Believers are to know that all truth is in Christ, and they are to seek all truth in Christ.

2. Believers can be seduced by the enticing and appealing words of those who live after the lusts of the flesh. Human nature is easily influenced by...

- appearance
- attractiveness
- charisma
- thoughts
- insinuations
- suggestions
- imaginations
- desires

Therefore, when some idea is made in an appealing way, people are enticed and led astray from Christ. Again, the truth and the wise course of behavior for the believer is found in Christ. The course of wisdom is to turn away from the seduction of enticing words and suggestions. Christ Himself—the life of righteousness which He lived and the way of sinlessness which He walked—is the path of wisdom for the believer.

**“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Ro.16:17-18).**

**“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor.11:13-15).**

**“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).**

**“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim.3:13).**

**“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision [religionists]” (Tit.1:10).**

**“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (1 Jn.2:18-19).**

**“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” (1 Jn.4:2-3).**

**“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 Jn.7).**

**“And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived” (Rev.18:23).**

**4** (2:5) **Stedfastness—Orderliness:** a mature people maintain discipline—order and stedfastness.

⇒ The word “order” (taxin) means to maintain military discipline, array, and arrangement; to hold a solid front (The Amplified New Testament); to hold the military line unbroken and intact (A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.489).

⇒ The word “stedfastness” (stereoma) means to stand fast and persevere; to be immovable, steady, and unyielding; to never crack, give in, or back up. This, too, is a military word. A.T. Robertson says that it is “the solid part of the line which can and does stand the attack” of the seduction.

Note that the believers of the Colossian church were being attacked by false teaching even as Paul was writing to them. But they were responding like a victorious army. They were maintaining their discipline and holding their order and standing fast. Note also the importance of the minister’s encouragement: Paul says that he was with them *in spirit*, joying and watching them gain the victory over the false teachers.

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal.5:1).**

**“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph.4:14).**

**“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Ph.1:27).**

**“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved” (Ph.4:1).**

**“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Th.2:15).**

**“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in the world” (1 Pt.5:8-9).**

**“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Pt.3:17).**

**5** (2:6-7) **Believers, Walk:** a mature people walk in the Lord. This means at least two things. First, believers walk just as they have received Christ—by faith. They received Christ by faith, so they are to walk and continue with Christ by faith. When they received Christ, they trusted His righteousness and death to cover their sins and to make them acceptable to God. Therefore, they are *to walk continuing to trust* His righteousness and death. It is His righteousness and death that continues to cover their sins and make them acceptable to God. They have nothing within themselves to earn, merit, deserve, or make God accept them. They can do nothing and they can possess nothing that will secure the approval of God. The believer’s only acceptance before God is Christ, trusting the righteousness and death of Christ. (See note, *Jesus Christ, Death*, pt.3—Col.1:21-22 for more discussion.)

**“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor.5:7).**

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).**

Second, believers received Christ as *Christ Jesus the Lord*. That is, when believers received Him, they accepted Him as the true Messiah and Lord from heaven; they accepted Him as the *Lord of their lives*. Therefore, believers are to walk before Him as Lord; they are to continue walking and serving Him as the Lord of their lives.

**“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:4).**

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).**

**“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph.4:1).**

**“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

**“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (Eph.5:15).**

**“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).**

There are three things in particular the believer is to do.

1. The believer is to be rooted and built up in Christ. There are two pictures in this statement.

⇒ The picture of being rooted is that of a tree. The believer is to be like a towering tree that has its roots deeply planted in the ground. The ground provides strength against wind, storms, and nourishment for life. The believer is to draw his nourishment and strength from Christ.

⇒ The picture of being built or constructed is that of a building. Jesus Christ is the foundation for life, the only sure foundation. Therefore, the mature believer is a person who has built his life upon Christ.

The point to note is this: the emphasis upon a strong attachment and a flow of nourishment and life from Christ to the believer. That is, the believer is to walk in a continuous, unbroken communion and fellowship with Christ. His life and mind are to focus upon Christ without interruption, drawing all nourishment and strength from Him. This is critical, for there is no other *permanent* nourishment or strength—not that lasts forever and imparts eternal life to the human soul.

**“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand” (Mt.7:24-26).**

**“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).**

**“Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim.6:19).**

**“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).**

2. The believer is to walk established in the faith just as he has been taught. The word “established” means to be firm, stable, holding fast and not letting go. This shows the utter necessity for strong teachers in the church. When believers have strong teachers, they are to learn all they can about the faith and hold fast to it. They are not to let it go. Barclay points out,

*“There are certain beliefs which remain the foundation of all belief, and they do not change...the unchanging and unchangeable truth that Jesus Christ is Lord” (The Letters to the Philipians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.159)*

Mature believers are established in the faith, and they are to stand fast in the faith just as they have been taught.

**“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Ro.16:25).**

**“Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving:” (Col.2:7).**

**“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work” (2 Th.2:16-17).**

**“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace” (Heb.13:9).**

**“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings” (Ps.40:2).**

**“His heart is established, he shall not be afraid” (Ps.112:8).**

3. The believer is to walk overflowing with thanksgiving. Christ Jesus the Lord has done so much for the believer—so much that flows on and on, never ceasing, not even for one moment of any day. Therefore, the believer is to learn to walk in an unbroken spirit of thanksgiving—a thanksgiving that overflows in praise to the Lord moment by moment throughout the day.

**“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice....Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Ph.4:4, 6).**

**“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Th.5:18).**

**“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb.13:15).**

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|  | <b>IV. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST &amp; FALSE TEACHING, 2:8-23</b>   |
|  | <b>A. Christ vs. False Philosophy &amp; Astrology, 2:8-10</b>   |
| <b>1 Beware of false philosophy</b><br>a. Is only tradition<br>b. Deals only with the elements of the world<br>c. Is empty delusion            | 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. |
| <b>2 Christ is the Source of reality &amp; truth</b><br>a. Is the fulness of God<br>b. Is the completion of man<br>c. Is the head of all power | 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.<br>10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:         |

## DIVISION IV

### THE CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST AND FALSE TEACHING, 2:8-23

#### A. Christ vs. False Philosophy and Astrology, 2:8-10

(2:8-10) **Introduction:** the importance of this passage is clearly seen in the title of the subject, “Christ vs. False Philosophy and Astrology.”

1. Beware of false philosophy (v.8).
2. Christ is the Source of reality and truth (v.9-10).

**1** (2:8) **Philosophy—Astrology:** beware of worldly philosophy. The word “beware” (blepete) means to take heed, look out, guard yourself. Why? “Lest any man spoil you through philosophy.” The word “spoil” (sulagogeo) means to lead into captivity or slavery.

⇒ Some men are in a genuine search for truth and reality. They seek to learn the truth and reality of the universe and the problems that face them, but they limit themselves to the universe. This approach has one terrible flaw that leads either to incomplete or erroneous conclusions. This flaw will be discussed in a few moments.

⇒ Other persons have novel ideas or philosophies about truth and reality, but they become more interested in their position than the truth. They need others to accept their positions or else their ideas die. Therefore, they have to present and persuade people of their ideas and philosophies whether they are sound or not.

Believers must, therefore, beware and guard against worldly philosophies and ideas lest they become ensnared and enslaved.

What is meant by *worldly philosophy*? Paul tells us exactly what he means.

1. Worldly philosophy is philosophy that follows the very same traditions that men have followed down through the ages.

2. Worldly philosophy is philosophy that searches for reality by using the rudiments or elementary knowledge of this world. The word “rudiments” (stoicheia) means...

- the elementary principles, the ABC teachings of the universe.
- the rudimentary teachings (Heb.5:12).
- the crude notions of the universe.
- the elements or materials of the universe (2 Pt.3:10-12).

Worldly philosophy uses only human knowledge and worldly tradition to search for the reality and truth of the world and life. The only source worldly philosophy uses is the world and its elements or materials.

3. Worldly philosophy is philosophy that deals only with the elements and materials of this world (universe). Men have always tried to find the answers to life and the world within the world itself. Men want to know...

- What is the origin of the universe and life?
- Who is man and where did he come from? Why is man here and where is he going?
- Where did evil come from? Can it be controlled? Or better yet, abolished?
- Is there a God? How can we know?
- Is life upon this planet all there is? Is there life after death?

The questions could go on and on. The point to see is this: worldly philosophy tries to find the answers to these questions *only in the world* (universe). Worldly philosophy looks only at the elements or materials of this world and seeks the answers to life. The consequence is tragic, for everything in the world—every element of it—passes away. Therefore, if a philosophy bases itself upon the elements of the world, there is no *permanent answer or solution* to life. Why? Because man and his world will die and cease to exist, for the universe itself is physical and wasting away—granted, much slower than man—nevertheless it is still wasting away. (Actually, it will be destroyed; however, not by man, but by God. But this is a

discussion for another time. Cp. 2 Pt.3:3-18, esp. 10-13.) The point is this: a philosophy based upon the world is useless in finding *permanent answers and solutions to life*. The very best that a worldly philosophy or science can ever do is...

- make life more comfortable.
- make life safer and last longer.

But this is not permanent or eternal comfort and safety. It is not permanent truth or reality. Man and his world need something much more than a worldly philosophy, a philosophy that offers only *temporary and short term answers* to life.

**“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Ro.1:22).**

**“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain” (1 Cor.3:19-20).**

**“This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (Jas.3:15).**

**“Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid” (Is.29:14).**

**“For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know” (Is.47:10-11).**

**“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge” (Jer.4:22).**

**“With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures. By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches” (Ezk.28:4-5).**

**“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” (Ps.2:1).**

Since man needs something more than worldly philosophy, what is it that He needs? What is it that can meet the needs of man better than the sharpest thinking and sciences of men? Keep in mind that man needs life—true life, real life, a life that is abundant and eternal—that does not become diseased and suffer accident and death. Man needs a real world that does not suffer under the weight of corruption, decay, and deterioration and does not explode in natural disasters.

- ⇒ Man needs a true world, not a world that seems to be false, as though it is a mistake.
- ⇒ Man needs a real world, not a world that only fades away as an illusion.
- ⇒ Man needs a genuine world, not a world that is only an appearance as though it is counterfeit.
- ⇒ Man needs a purposeful world, not a world that is only chance without any lasting permanent meaning.

How can man secure such a world? How can man find permanent and eternal life? The answer is simple: he can't. If such a world does not exist, man can never find it, for it is not there to be found.

But, what if a *permanent world* does exist in a *spiritual dimension* of being? How then can man find it? He can't. If a *spiritual world* exists, man cannot find it, for he is physical, that is, material substance. And the physical or material cannot penetrate or move over into the spiritual, regardless of what some persons may claim or think.

- ⇒ The corruptible cannot move over into the world of the incorruptible, for it is already corruptible.
- ⇒ The dishonorable cannot move over into the world of glory, for it is already dishonorable (short of glory or perfection).
- ⇒ The weak cannot move over into the world of infinite and perfect power, for it is already weak (short of infinite power).
- ⇒ The natural cannot move over into the world of the spiritual, for it is already natural.
- ⇒ The mortal cannot move over into the world of the immortal because it is already mortal.
- ⇒ The dying (the process of death) cannot move over into the world of life because it is already dying (in the process of dying—even a body is in the process of dying).

Man is just totally incapable of penetrating or moving over into the spiritual world or spiritual dimension. He cannot know the spiritual world because he and his world are physical and material (corruptible and dishonorable, weak and natural, mortal and dying).

This means a critical point: there is only one way man can ever know the spiritual world and dimension. The spiritual world must *reveal* itself to the physical world. God must *reveal* Himself to man. This is exactly what God has done in Christ, and this is the startling and glorious message of the next point.

**Thought 1.** The “rudiments” (elements or materials) of the universe also refer to the signs and spirits of the stars and planets. The idea that these determine the fate of man has, of course, been with man from the earliest of time. *Astrology and the signs of the zodiac* are to be guarded against as much as any other worldly philosophy. The stars and planets are as much a part of the material universe as men are. They are of the physical world and dimension of being the same as man is. In fact, they are inanimate objects, possessing even less ability and power than man. They are even less capable of penetrating and moving over into the spiritual world or dimension than man is.

**2** (2:9-10) **Jesus Christ, Deity:** Jesus Christ is the Source of reality and truth, the very presence of God Himself. Note: reality and truth—the answers to the world and life—are not found in a philosophy nor in human ideas. They are found in a Person, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Think for a moment: if a Person (God) really created the world, then the answer to life and creation (truth and reality) are bound to be wrapped up in Him, not in the world He made. He is the Source to understanding the world; the world is not the source to understanding Him. True, we can look at the world and learn some things about God, but not all that we

need to know. For example, the world cannot tell us how to conquer evil and death, not perfectly. Therefore, if we seek the truth only in the world, we are left short, incomplete, unfulfilled, and in error. Thus, we must seek truth and the answer to all things in the Person who made all things. He alone knows the whole story.

The glorious message of the gospel and of this passage is that God does exist. He truly exists and He has revealed Himself in Christ. Christ is the revelation of God, of truth and reality, of life itself in all its origin, purpose, meaning, and destiny. Note three wonderful truths.

1. Christ is the fulness of God. Christ is God Himself who came to earth. Note the verse: "In Christ dwells *all the fulness of the Godhead*." All that God is dwells in Christ.

⇒ Christ is God in an absolute, full, and perfect sense.

Jesus Christ has the full nature and being of God just as God the Father has the full nature of God. (See notes, *Jesus Christ, Deity*—Ph.2:5-11; 2:5; Jn.1:1-2.) God the Father and God the Son have the same being and nature, that of God. The word "fulness" (pleroma) means that not a single part of God's nature is lacking in the nature of Christ.

The word "dwells" (katoikei) means to be at home, to be permanently settled and present. This tells us...

- that the fulness of God has always dwelt in Christ, even before He came to earth (Jn.1:1, 18; 17:5, 24; Ph.2:6).
- that the fulness of God dwelt in Christ when Christ was walking upon earth in a human body (Jn.1:14, 18; 1 Jn.1:1-3).
- that the fulness of God was not just a temporary gift to Christ.

What does all this mean to us in practical day to day living? It means two wonderful things.

- a. First, God is not far off in outer space someplace. God is not unconcerned with the world. God has not just created the world and wound it up and left it on its own to fly throughout space with man making out the best he can. God is interested and concerned with the world—so much so that He has come to earth to show how vitally concerned He is.
- b. God is love, not evil. Only a God of evil would leave man in the dark where he would have to grope and grasp and stumble about in order to find God. A God of love would reveal Himself and show man...
  - the way to God.
  - the truth of God, man, and his world.
  - the life that man is to live (Jn.14:6).

**"He that seeth me seeth Him that sent me" (Jn.12:45).**

**"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him" (Jn.14:7).**

**"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (Jn.14:9).**

**"All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you" (Jn.16:15).**

**"In Him dwelleth all the fulness of God" (Col.2:9).**

**"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim.3:16).**

**"Who [Christ] being the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person" (Heb.1:3).**

2. Believers are complete in Christ. The word "complete" (pepleromenoi) means to be made full. The Greek actually says, "In Him you are full." When a person truly believes and partakes of Christ, he receives the fulness of Christ. Just what is the fulness of Christ which believers receive? Scripture describes it in several ways.

- a. Believers receive wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

**"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor.1:30).**

- ⇒ *Wisdom* means that we understand God, the world, and man: the origin, purpose, and end of creation.
- ⇒ *Righteousness* means that we understand the evil in the world, both sin and death and that we know the only way to attain righteousness is through Christ.
- ⇒ *Sanctification* means that we have set our lives apart unto God to live for Him and to serve Him.
- ⇒ *Redemption* means that we have been saved from corruption and death and given eternal life.

- b. Believers receive the fulness of Christ's nature. The divine nature of God is actually placed in believers and they become new creatures in Christ.

**"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pt.1:4).**

**"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor.5:17).**

**"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph.4:24).**

**"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col.3:10).**

- c. Believers receive fulness of life now. From the time believers receive Christ, they should lack nothing. If a believer ever lacks anything—any fulness of life—it is because he has taken his eyes off Christ and has slipped away. When dealing with day to day living...

- the believer receives an abundance of life.

**“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn.10:10).**

- the believer receives fulness of joy.

**“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (Jn.15:11).**

- the believer receives all the necessities of life including food, clothing, and shelter (cp. Mt.6:24-34).

**“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:33).**

- the believer receives the fulness of God’s Spirit, of God Himself.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).**

**“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph.3:19).**

**“Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph.5:18).**

- d. Believers receive the fulness of life eternal.

**“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:15-16).**

**“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Jn.17:3).**

**“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal.6:8).**

- e. Believers receive the fulness of the knowledge of God’s will.

**“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col.1:9).**

**Thought 1.** Note that the fulness of life and the answers to truth and reality do not come from a philosophy, but from a Person, Jesus Christ.

3. Christ is the Head of all principality and power; that is, no rule, authority, or power stands between God and man. Nothing, absolutely nothing, stands between God (ultimate Truth and Reality) and man...

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|--------------|--|
| • no force   | • no law of the universe                     |
| • no power   | • no zodiac sign                             |
| • no energy  | • no sign or spirit of the stars and planets |
| • no person  | • no astrological energy                     |
| • no science |  |

The explanation and fate of man and his world are found in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. He is the only Intemediary between God and man. Man can approach God only through Christ. No one else—person or force—can present us to God and make us acceptable to God. God accepts only those persons who come to Him by Christ.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

**“He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all” (Jn.3:31).**

**“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn.6:68).**

**“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn.8:24).**

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn.14:6).**

**“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).**

**“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.3:11).**

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| <p><b>1 False religion: Stresses ritual &amp; outward form</b></p> <p><b>2 True religion: Stresses Christ &amp; the spiritual</b></p> <p>a. A cutting away of sins</p> <p>b. A burial in baptism &amp; a resurrection to a new life</p> <p>c. An operation of God by faith</p> | <p><b>B. Christ vs. False Religion, 2:11-12</b></p> <p>11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:</p> <p>12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.</p> |
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## DIVISION IV

### THE CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST AND FALSE TEACHING, 2:8-23

#### B. Christ vs. False Religion, 2:11-12

(2:11-12) **Introduction—Circumcision—Religion, False; True:** a false religion is any religion not based upon God’s love and Jesus Christ. For God has so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (Jn.3:16).

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).**

Common sense tells us this: if God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son for its salvation, then the only way to approach Him is through His Son. The only way He would accept us is through His Son.

God is not a God of indifference and hate, a God who has left us in the dark, trying to grope and grasp after God, seeking to discover the way to Him. God is love; He cares for man, deeply loves man. In fact, God loves man with an infinite, eternal love—a love so great that He has sent His Son into the world to reveal the truth to us and to bear the judgment of our transgressions against God. The point is this: any religion that *focuses upon anything* other than God’s love and God’s Son is not of God—not of the only living and true God. It is a false religion.

The problem of false religion had seeped into the Colossian church. Some were teaching that a ritual was necessary for salvation, the ritual of circumcision. This Scripture gives us an excellent discussion of a false religion that stresses ritual over God’s love and God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. False religion: stresses ritual and outward form (v.11).
2. True religion: stresses Christ and the spiritual (v.11-12).

**1** (2:11) **Religion, False—Circumcision:** there is a false religion that stresses ritual, ceremony, and outward form over Christ. Some in the Colossian church were stressing the ritual of circumcision. They said that a man had to be circumcised to be saved, that God would not accept him unless he was circumcised. Giving his heart and life to Jesus Christ was not enough. Even if he trusted Christ and gave all he was and had, God would not accept him unless he was circumcised. There was a reason for this belief. Circumcision was the ritual of faith to the Jews. It symbolized two things.

- ⇒ First, circumcision symbolized the faith of a man and his family in God. When a man trusted God, he was circumcised as a sign or testimony of his faith in God. His circumcision declared to the world that he and his family were going to follow God.
- ⇒ Second, circumcision also symbolized the cutting away of the “body of sins” that were in the flesh. When the foreskin was cut off and removed it was a picture of sin—the whole body or package of sin—being cut off and removed from the man.

This was the true picture of circumcision, what God had intended until Christ came. Very simply, a man was to trust God, surrendering his heart and life to God; then, as a sign or symbol of his faith, he was to be circumcised. But what happened was exactly what happens so often with spiritual things: man corrupted God’s purpose for circumcision. Man began to say that a person became acceptable to God...

- not because he trusted God,
- but because he was circumcised.

No matter how much a man trusted God, he was not acceptable to God unless he was circumcised. Circumcision was his badge of being admitted into God’s presence, and without it, he could not gain entrance into God’s presence.

The parallel with other false teachings is clearly seen. Down through the centuries, some have stressed that a person could not be saved—no matter how much he believed and gave his life to Christ—unless he...

- joined the church.
- was confirmed.
- was baptized.
- kept the law.

False teachings and religions have always tended to *add to* Christ in order to be saved. A person could believe and trust Christ with his whole heart, surrendering all he was and everything he had to Christ, but that was not enough. The person had to do something else in order to make himself acceptable to God.

**“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh” (Ro.2:28).**

**“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:2-4).**

**“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim.3:5).**

**“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men” (Is.29:13).**

**“For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hos.6:6).**

**“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam.15:22).**

**“For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Ps.51:16-17).**

**2** (2:11-12) **Religion, True—Circumcision, True—Baptism:** the true religion stresses Christ and Christ alone. Real religion is spiritual, not physical; and it is wrought by Christ, not by the hands of men. Note three critical points.

1. Real religion is undergoing the circumcision of Christ, letting Christ cut away the body of sins out of our flesh. Think for a moment: What man has the power to cut sin out of our lives? Where is a man who can take the sin of our flesh and remove it so that our bodies will stand perfect before God? Is there such a man? Has there or will there ever be such a man upon earth? Any thinking and honest person knows that no man can remove the sin from another person—not even one single sin, much less the whole body of sin. There is only one way that sin can be cut out and removed from our flesh—by Jesus Christ. How does Christ cut away sin from us? By death.

When Jesus Christ died, He died *for our sins*. That is, He bore the guilt and punishment for our sins. He hung upon the cross...

- as the guilty sinner for us: in our place, in our stead, as our substitute.
- as the Person who would bear the judgment and punishment of sin *for us*.

Therefore, when we really believe and trust Christ—that He died for us—God removes our sin from us. He cuts away both the sin and the guilt and throws it away. This means a most wonderful thing: we stand before God without sin. Imagine standing before God sinless, completely and totally forgiven—accepted by God as perfect. But never forget why: it is because of Christ and Christ alone, not a ritual nor any other man-made or religious thing. We are acceptable to God because of Christ, His dear Son, and not because of anything else. True religion is not *Christ plus something else*; true religion is *Christ alone*. Christ alone can cut away sin. True circumcision—true religion...

- is the “circumcision made *without hands*.”
- is “putting off the *body of sins* of the flesh by the *circumcision of Christ*.”

**“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Ro.6:6).**

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [cut off, put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro.8:13).**

**“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Ro.13:14).**

**“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (Col.2:11).**

**“Mortify [cut off, put to death] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).**

2. Real religion is being baptized and raised with Christ. What does baptism refer to here? Does it mean Jesus’ baptism of death or the baptism of water which the believer undergoes? Christ had said:

**“But I have a baptism to be baptized with [death]; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” (Lk.12:50).**

Commentators are split over the meaning. However, the meaning of the passage is the same no matter which interpretation is held. When a person believes in Christ, really believes, God takes his belief and...

- counts the person as having been buried with Christ in the baptism of His death.
- counts the person as having been raised with Christ when He arose.

When a person is baptized, the same message is proclaimed. The act of baptism proclaims to the world that the person has trusted Christ, His death and resurrection. Therefore...

- when the person is placed *under the water*, he is declaring that God counts him as buried with Christ.
- when he is raised up from the water, he is declaring that God counts him as risen with Christ.

The point to see is that the whole religious act is based upon and focused upon Christ—what Christ has done. Christ is the one who died and rose again. Therefore, it is Christ that man *believes in and trusts*, not the ritual of baptism. Christ alone can save: only His death can stand for the death of man; only His resurrection can stand for the resurrection of man.

- ⇒ No man shall ever escape death unless he truly trusts the death of Christ to stand for his death.
- ⇒ No man shall ever conquer death and live eternally unless he truly trusts the resurrection of Christ to stand for his resurrection.

Real religion focuses upon Christ, His death and resurrection, and nothing else. God saves and accepts a person because he focuses upon His Son and focuses upon Him alone.

**“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:3-4).**

**“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal.3:27).**

**“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Col.2:12).**

**“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt.3:21).**

3. Real religion is an operation of God and an operation of God alone. The word “operation” (*energeias*) means energy, power, working. God has to perform the operation or work upon a person if the person is to be acceptable to God. No person can operate upon any other person and make him acceptable to God. God alone has the ability and power to make a person acceptable to Him. Note two points.

a. How does God operate on us to make us acceptable to Him? By faith in Christ. It is a fact...

- that Christ died and was raised from the dead.

As stated in the previous point, when a person really believes in Christ, God takes that person’s *faith* and counts it as the death and resurrection of Christ. That is, God identifies, considers, credits, counts, looks upon the person as being *in Christ*—as having died and been raised with Christ. Therefore, the person never has to die because he has already died and been raised from the dead—*in Christ*. The person lives before God and is acceptable to God—all because he is *in Christ*. Another way to say the same thing is this: a person believes *in Christ*; therefore, God counts him as being *in Christ*—as being in all that Christ is. The person is identified with Christ, with all that Christ has done.

b. How do we know that God actually does this, that God actually saves us this way? Because He raised Christ from the dead. Note that this is exactly what this verse declares:

**“Buried with him in baptism [death], wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (v.12).**

- The resurrection of Christ proves that God has the power to do what He declares. He has the power to count us as *being in Christ* and the power to *raise us up from the dead*. The proof is that He has already raised up one Person, Christ Jesus. And look at who He was: the Person who was bearing *all the sins* of the world. The guilt and punishment for every sin ever committed was being borne by Him. If God would and could raise Him up, He can and will raise us up—if we will only believe and trust His Son.

True religion is the religion that is of God, of His operation. True religion is the religion that is created by the energy, power, working, and operation of God. True religion is of God and of God alone.

**“And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6).**

**“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).**

**“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:23-24).**

**“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ro.4:3).**

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro.5:1).**

**“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Ro.5:9).**

**“For he that is dead [counted dead, justified] is freed from sin” (Ro.6:7).**

**“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Ro.8:33).**

**“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).**

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

**“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal.3:6).**

**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).**

**“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph.3:9).**

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| <p><b>1 Point 1: Christ vs. man's idea of sin &amp; death</b><br/> a. Man's idea of sin &amp; death<br/> b. Christ quickens man, forgiving his sins</p> | <p><b>C. Christ vs. Man's Idea of Sin, the Law, &amp; Evil Spirits, 2:13-15</b></p> <p>13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;</p> | <p>14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;<br/> 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shrew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.</p> | <p><b>2 Point 2: Christ vs. man's idea of the law</b><br/> a. Man's idea of the law<br/> b. Christ has nailed the charges against man to His cross</p> <p><b>3 Point 3: Christ vs. man's idea of evil forces &amp; evil spirits</b><br/> a. Man's idea of evil spirits<br/> b. Christ has conquered all</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST AND FALSE TEACHING, 2:8-23**

**C. Christ vs. Man's Idea of Sin, the Law, & Evil Spirits, 2:13-15**

(2:13-15) **Introduction:** this passage discusses three basic concepts or ideas about man and his world. It pits man's concepts against God's work in Christ. It shows how weak man's ideas are in comparison to what God has done for man in Christ.

1. Point 1: Christ vs. man's idea of sin and death (v.13).
2. Point 2: Christ vs. man's idea of the law (v.14).
3. Point 3: Christ vs. man's idea of evil forces and evil spirits (v.15).

**1** (2:13) **Sin—Death—Man, State of:** point one concerns Christ vs. man's concept of sin and death.

~ 1. Man's concept of sin and death is far different from what the Bible teaches. When man thinks of sin, he does not see it as a violation of God's law nor as rebellion against God. Man sees sin as...

- a human error
- a personal slip
- a moral flaw
- a physical failure
- an unpreventable error
- psychological immaturity
- philosophical misunderstanding
- an evaluating mistake
- semantic mislabeling
- social irresponsibility
- educational shortcoming
- character defect

~ Just what a person calls sin depends upon where he is standing—upon his environment, training, heritage, and beliefs. Few persons are willing to submit to God and confess that sin is basically a violation of God's law or will, rebellion and insurrection against Him and the way He has told man to live.

Man's view of death also varies according to a person's background and beliefs. Man's concepts and views of death differ as much from the Biblical concept as night differs from day. When men look at death, they think of it as...

- ceasing to exist.
- passing into oblivion.
- some semi-conscious, sleepy-eyed existence.
- reincarnation into another form of life on earth.
- moving on into another world and being given another chance to work one's way into heaven, that is, into being acceptable to God.

Man's idea of death involves either the denial of a life hereafter or else the giving of another chance to work oneself into the favor of God.

Note the critical point: man's idea of conquering death is *man-centered*. It *focuses upon man's ability*...

- to deny a life hereafter and hope that his denial causes life hereafter not to exist.
- to work his way into heaven—into God's acceptance when God gives him another chance.

Man's concept of sin and death is based upon man—his ability, energy, and power to make himself acceptable to God. The point is this: there were those in the Colossian church who were teaching that a person secured the approval of God by their own efforts and work: they had to be circumcised, to undergo the basic religious ritual in order to be acceptable to God. They had to trust God *plus* be circumcised. They believed in the Biblical concept of sin and death, and they believed in Christ. But they added the religious ritual of circumcision to Christ.

**Thought 1.** This proclaims a forceful point to us: it is not enough to be biblically sound if we fail to approach God exactly as He says. It is not enough to say that we do not take anything away from God's Word; we must not add to God's Word. Men sin and men die, and there is a hereafter; but God is love, and He has provided the way for men to become acceptable to Him and given the right to live in the hereafter. It is absolutely critical that we pursue the way He has provided and that we pursue it exactly as He says.

2. ~ Christ stands opposed to man's idea of sin and death. Jesus Christ would have never come into the world if sin and eternal death were not realities. If there was not life hereafter—if sin and death were not keeping men out of life hereafter—Jesus Christ would have never come to earth. God would have never sent His Son into the world to die for man's sins and to conquer death if sin and death were not realities. Let no person ever fool himself: God would have never let Christ hang upon the cross unless men were sinners and doomed to eternal death. Note two points.

- a. This verse says: “You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh.” Man is said to be already dead because of sin and because he is uncircumcised; that is, sin has not been cut out of his flesh by God. (See note—Col.2:12 for more discussion.) The emphasis is upon death—the fact that man is *already dead*. True, man is what he calls living, yet he is in the process of death. He is aging, deteriorating, decaying, and dying at every given moment. There is not a moment man is not in the grip of death: even from the moment of conception man begins the process of dying; and while he is growing and maturing, he is still in the process of death. He is living in what may be called a *world of death, a realm of death, a dimension of death*. Every hour that passes sees man age, deteriorate, and die one more hour. (See notes—Heb.9:27. See outline and notes—Ro.5:12-21.)

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn.5:24).

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.2:1).

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pt.1:23).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).

“All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is.53:6).

“And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost....And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost” (Lk.15:6, 9).

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk.19:10).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Pt.2:24-25).

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ” (Ro.6:23).

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).

“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:15).

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev.21:8).

- b. God quickens the believer with Christ. The word “quicken” (sunezoopoiesen) means to make alive, to bring to life. The believer is brought to life *from the dead*. How?

⇒ By being “*together with Christ*.”

What does this mean, to be “together with Christ”? Simply this: when we trust Christ—really trust Him—God takes our trust and identifies us with Him. God places us *together with Christ*. This means a most wonderful thing: it means that we were with Christ in His death and resurrection.

Therefore, when Christ died for our sins, we died with Him. God identifies us with Him, therefore, we never have to die for our sins. The penalty for our sins has already been paid; Christ paid for them. Christ bore the guilt, judgment, condemnation, and punishment for our sins. Consequently, we are *forgiven all trespasses*.

**Thought 1.** This is the true concept of sin and death, the only conceivable way we can ever be forgiven and delivered from death. Honest thought tells us this, for there is nothing else that can deliver man from sin and death...

- no person
- no force
- no ability
- no material substance
- no science
- no energy
- no physical thing

No matter how long or how much we search, nothing will ever be discovered that can give eternal life to man. We may discover ways to extend life and make it more comfortable, for long, long ago men did live to be hundreds and hundreds of years old. The Bible tells us this. But men will never conquer death completely and perfectly. Life eternal—the approval and acceptance of God—comes only through the quickening power of Jesus Christ.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn.3:3).

“For as the Father raiseth up the dead [spiritually dead], and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will” (Jn.5:21).

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn.6:63).

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11).

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.2:1).

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph.2:4-5).

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph.4:22-23).

“Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col.3:10).

**2** (2:14) **Law—Jesus Christ, Cross—Man, State of:** point two concerns Christ vs. man’s concept of the law.

1. Man’s concept of the law is twofold.

⇒ Some men see the law as a list of rules that God has led great religious men to write down in either the Bible or other religious books.

⇒ Other men see the laws of God as unwritten laws that are rooted in the nature of man and the world. Man just instinctively senses what is right and wrong and he is to live as his instinct tells him (cp. Ro.2:14-15).

Man just senses the handwriting of laws against him—laws that condemn him when he goes contrary to what they say or what he senses. Note the word “handwriting” (cheirographon). It actually means a legal note or debt, what Barclay calls a *charge list* or a list of charges against man (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.170). The point is this: man senses the list of charges against him. And he should sense the wrong he has done, for it is his violation of God’s law that condemns him to eternal death. Only as he senses and acknowledges his transgressions will he ever turn to God to save him.

**Thought 1.** Think how many people are defeated, discouraged, and whipped by the guilt of their transgressions. How many are bowed down ever so low and depressed, feeling unworthy and unacceptable before God. How many are crushed because they feel they have just failed God so much. No matter how much they have tried to keep the law—to do good—they have failed. Therefore, God would never accept them, or so they feel.

2. Christ stands opposed to man’s idea of the law. It is true, man shall face God *in his own righteousness* and be judged by the law. If that is the way he chooses to face God, he will be allowed to stand before God in his own righteousness. Man can claim a *righteousness by law*. In fact, there are only two ways to face God, and law or self-righteousness is one of the ways. But note: no person can ever be acceptable to a *perfect*, sinless God unless the person is perfect and sinless. And no honest and thinking person is going to claim to be perfect and sinless. Therefore, no person will ever be acceptable to God by law or self-righteousness. However, this is the glorious message of this verse. God has provided a way for the law and the list of charges against us to be removed. That way is Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ has taken the law or list of charges against us and nailed them to His cross. This means two things.

a. Christ “took the law out of the way” for man. How? Christ kept and fulfilled the law perfectly. He lived a sinless life as a Man upon earth. By so doing He became the standard or the higher law for man. Man is now to look to Jesus Christ and follow Him as the standard of life. The law is set aside out of the way. Christ has now fulfilled the law and become the standard for men. (See *DEEPER STUDY # 2—Mt.5:17.*)

b. Christ “nailed the law to the cross.” That is, Christ bore the judgment and punishment passed down by the law upon man. Christ took the judgment of the law upon man and paid the penalty Himself. How was He able to do this? By keeping the law perfectly. In obeying the law perfectly Christ became the Pattern and Ideal for all men. As the Ideal Man, He embraced and covered all men. It is His righteousness that is the *ideal righteousness*; therefore, His righteousness covers all men. It is His death that is the *ideal death* or the ideal bearing of judgment; therefore, His death covers all men. It is His life that is the *ideal life*; therefore, His life covers all men. (See note-Mt.5:17-18.)

When a person trusts Jesus Christ as his Savior, God removes the list of charges against the person. How? By Christ—by the cross of Christ. When Christ died upon the cross, He actually bore the guilt and condemnation of the charges for the person. Therefore, the person stands guiltless and sinless before God—all because Christ took the list of the charges and nailed them to the cross with Him when He died.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mt.5:17).

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro.8:3).

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:13).

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal.4:4-5).

**3** (2:15) **Evil Spirits—Man, State of—Jesus Christ, Work of:** point three concerns man’s concept of Christ vs. evil spirits.

Man’s idea of the universe is that all kinds of forces exist within the universe.

⇒ Some persons view the forces as natural energies and powers within the universe such as gravity.

⇒ Other persons view the forces as living beings such as angels, among which some are good and some are bad.

Men have always recognized forces, energies, powers, or principalities within the universe. Men either see natural forces or supernatural spirits behind the stars and planets and life within the universe—either natural forces or supernatural spirits that control the lives and destinies of both man and his world. Just think of the millions down through the centuries who have looked to the signs or spirits of the planets or stars in astrology and the signs of the zodiac.

The point to see is this: the Bible declares without hesitation or equivocation that there are other forces within the universe. In fact, the Bible teaches that there is at least one other world in another dimension of being—another dimension other than the physical dimension. That world is the spiritual dimension of being. And there are living beings in that dimension, both good and bad, just as there are good and bad beings or men in this world.

The glorious declaration of this verse (v.15) is that Christ has spoiled all principalities and powers, no matter who they are or what their force or energy is. The word “spoiled” (apekdusamenos) means to disarm and strip the evil forces of all their power.

Barclay describes the scene well:

*“[The evil forces] were hostile, malicious, malignant to men. Jesus conquered them for ever. He stripped them: the word that is used is the word for stripping the weapons and the armour from a defeated foe. Once and for all Jesus broke their power. He put them to open shame and led them captive in His triumphant train. The picture is the picture of the triumph of a Roman general. When a Roman general had won a really notable triumph, he was allowed to march his victorious armies through the streets of Rome, and behind him there followed the wretched company of the kings and the leaders and the peoples he had vanquished and conquered. They were openly branded as his victims and his spoils. Paul thinks of Jesus as a triumphant conqueror, enjoying a kind of cosmic triumph; and in His triumphal procession are the powers of evil, beaten for ever, for every one to see” (The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.172).*

Wuest gives an additional picture of the scene:

*“Our Lord, after His death on the Cross, needed to present Himself at the heavenly Mercy Seat...as the great High Priest, thus completing the atonement....In order to do this, our Lord had to pass through the kingdoms stripping them off and away from Himself...displayed them boldly...leading them in triumph in it” (Ephesians and Colossians, Vol.1, p.209).*

The point of this verse is to declare that Christ has defeated Satan and his evil spirits—all the forces and energies, power and principalities of the universe. Christ has triumphed over Satan and his evil forces, broken their power and destroyed their works. Christ has triumphed over evil by four acts.

1. He conquered evil spirits and forces by never giving in to the devil’s temptations (Mt.4:1-11) and by never sinning (2 Cor.5:21; Heb.4:15; 7:26; 1 Pt.1:19; 2:22). Christ lived a perfect life; he was perfectly righteous. Therefore, He became the Perfect Man, the Ideal Man (see note—Mt.8:20), the Ideal Righteousness...

- whom all men are to trust.
- whom all men are to follow.
- whom all men are to use as the *pattern* for their lives.

Satan was defeated in that an Ideal Righteousness was now provided for man. Man could now become acceptable to God by putting on the righteousness of Christ *through faith* (2 Cor.5:21; Eph.4:23-24. See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Justification—Ro.4:22; note—5:1.*)

2. He conquered evil spirits and forces by dying *for man*, bearing all of man’s guilt and punishment for sin. In behalf of man, Christ took all of man’s sins upon Himself and bore the judgment of God against sin. He is the *Ideal Man*, so His death becomes the *Ideal Death*. Just as His *Ideal Righteousness* stands for and covers every man, so His *Ideal Death* stands for and covers every man. Thus, the penalty and punishment for sins has now been paid. Man no longer has to die and be separated from God (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Death—Heb.9:27*). The way to live forever in the presence of God is now open. Satan’s power is broken and destroyed.

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15).**

**“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die” (Jn.12:31-33. Cp. Jn.14:30, esp. v.28-31; 16:11.)**

**“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col.1:13-14).**

3. He conquered evil spirits and forces by being raised from the dead. Again, as the *Ideal Man*, Christ’s resurrection becomes the *Ideal Resurrection*. His resurrection stands for and covers every man. Note two facts.

- a. It was the *perfect spirit of holiness* (perfect righteousness) that raised Christ from the dead. Death could not hold perfection, for death is the result of sin. Christ, being perfect, was bound to arise.
- b. When Christ arose, He triumphed over Satan, openly showing that death is the work of Satan. Death is not to be the natural experience of man. Death was never the purpose of God; life is the purpose of God. The resurrection of Christ openly shows this.

**“God, who hath raised him from the dead..and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col.2:12, 15).**

4. He conquered evil spirits and forces by His Incarnation, that is, by coming into the world and being revealed as the Son of God. Think about it: the fact that the Son of God came into the world destroys the works of the devil. As soon as the Son of God appeared on the scene, His coming meant that the works of the devil were to be destroyed.

**“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn.3:8).**

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (Jn.3:16-17; cp. Jn.3:18-21).**

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| <p><b>1 Christ vs. rules &amp; ritual,</b><br/> a. The false approach to God: Thru the shadows of rules &amp; rituals &amp; judging others by them<br/> b. The true approach to God: Thru Christ, the only acceptable body</p> <p><b>2 Christ vs. spiritism</b></p> | <p><b>D. Christ vs. Rules &amp; Ritual &amp; Spiritism, 2:16-19</b></p> <p>16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:<br/> 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.<br/> 18 Let no man beguile you</p> | <p>of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,<br/> 19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.</p> | <p>a. The false approach to God: Spiritism—thru the worship of angels or spirits &amp; visions</p> <p>b. The true approach to God: Thru Christ who is the Head<br/> 1) He alone supplies &amp; nourishes life<br/> 2) He alone binds life together</p> |
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**DIVISION IV**

**THE CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST AND FALSE TEACHING, 2:8-23**

**D. Christ vs. Rules, Ritual, and Spiritism, 2:16-19**

(2:16-19) **Introduction:** this passage pits Christ against two false teachings that have hounded men down through the ages—false teachings that are constantly infiltrating the church as well as attacking the man out on the street.

1. Christ vs. rules and ritual (v.16-17).
2. Christ vs. spiritism (v.18-19).

**1** (2:16-17) **Rules and Regulations—Ritual—Jesus Christ, Deity—Christian Liberty—Legalism:** Christ vs. rules and ritualism. Every thinking person knows that we have to have rules and laws in order to live a controlled and just life. But when we adopt a rule, at some point we fail to keep it. Somehow, someway, we just fail and come short of keeping the rule perfectly. This means something of critical importance: we can never approach God and become acceptable to God through rules or laws or rituals or through anything else we might undertake by our own efforts. Why? Because God is perfect, and to approach God we have to be perfect. But this is the very problem of human life: we are already imperfect and can never be perfect because we have already failed. How then can we ever become acceptable to God whose very nature demands perfection? There is only one way: through the love of God. We have to trust that God loves us enough to provide a way that He can count and consider us perfect. We are not perfect, so we have to believe that He will provide a way for us to be credited or imputed with perfection. This is the glorious gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ. When we trust the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ, then God counts our trust in His dear Son as righteousness. When we focus upon God’s Son, that is, honor Christ with our trust and our lives, God honors us for honoring His Son. God honors us by counting us righteous and perfect *in the righteousness of Christ*.

Note: the emphasis of the present passage is upon focusing and concentrating upon Christ, God’s Son. God the Father loves His Son with an eternal love, the greatest love in existence. Therefore, God accepts any person *in His Son* and no person *out of His Son*. He honors any person who *completely trusts* His Son, and no person who comes short of *complete trust*. Now, note the points of these two verses.

1. Rules and rituals were the problem that had seeped into the Colossian church. Some believers were reverting back to rules and rituals and judging others by them. Some false teachers were diverting the attention of some believers away from Christ. They were saying...

- that rules and rituals were to be the *focus of man’s attention and life*.
- that man *became acceptable to God* by keeping certain rules and rituals.
- that man *pleased God* by eating and drinking the right foods and by keeping certain religious rituals and holy days.

Note how this teaching led a person to focus upon rules and rituals instead of Christ. This emphasis found its roots in the false teaching of Gnosticism which had seeped into the Colossian church. (See note, *Gnosticism*, pt.2—Col.1:15 for detailed discussion on this point. This note discusses the person of extreme discipline and the person of license and indulgence.)

**Thought 1.** People tend to approach God by keeping rules that discipline their body, minds, and spirit. A person feels that God will accept him if he can present himself to God with...

- a body that is clean and moral.
- a spirit that is religious and that keeps the rituals and holy days of religion.
- a life that serves and gives.

2. The true approach to God is Christ. Rules and rituals are only shadows in approaching God; Christ is the real body that enables us to approach God and to please Him. The point is this: Christ was the perfect Son of God; that is, He kept all the rules of the law and never broke a single rule. He was sinless, the perfect Man. Therefore, He stands before the human race as the Ideal Man, the Pattern to whom every man is now to look. We no longer have just rules and rituals to lead us to God; we have a human life, the very body of Christ Himself—a body that lived life just like God wants life to be lived. Therefore, we are no longer to approach God through rules and rituals, but through Christ. Christ is to be the *focus and concentration* of our lives. We are to *live and move and have our being* in Him, following the Ideal life and pattern He has set before us.

- ⇒ Christ is our only approach to God.
- ⇒ Christ is our only acceptance by God.
- ⇒ Focusing upon Christ is the only way we can please God.

Note: rules and rituals were shadows that were used by God before Christ came. They were used by God to teach men that nothing could provide real life, not the real substance of life that satisfies and gives absolute assurance of living forever with God. Rules and rituals never satisfy the human heart, not permanently. Only the presence of God living within the human heart can satisfy man. This is where Christ comes in: Christ dwells within the lives of believers, actually lives within the bodies of believers in the person of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the believer experiences the satisfaction and assurance of being acceptable to God and of living forever with God.

The point is this: no rule and no ritual can give life and assurance to man. Rules and rituals are only inanimate, lifeless objects. But not Christ. He is a living Person who can relate and infuse the very life and assurance of God into the heart of a person. Rules and rituals may point us toward God, but they are not the real substance of life. Christ is the real substance of life—the only substance, body, and life that can bring us to God and present us as acceptable to God.

**“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Ro.3:21-22).**

**“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:3-4).**

**“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:17).**

**“But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse” (1 Cor.8:8).**

**“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments [notions and elements] of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances” (Col.2:20).**

**“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim.3:5).**

**“[The Old Testament tabernacle] which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposes on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb.9:9-14).**

**Thought 1.** We must always remember something when dealing with this issue. When a person follows Christ, he lives as Christ lived. That is...

- he eats as Christ ate, eating only what He needed and what was good for His body.
- he worships faithfully as Christ worshipped.
- he lives soberly, righteously and godly as Christ lived.

The list could go on and on. The point is that Christ fulfilled the law to give us a living pattern of how life is to be lived through the fulness of God’s Spirit. He did not fulfill the law to turn us loose to live in the indulgence and license of sin. He, the very Son of God, is now a Pattern. We now have more than just written laws and rituals, more than just ink on paper. We have the life of Christ to follow.

**2** (2:18-19) **Spiritism—Worship, False—Visions, False—Humility, False—Jesus Christ, Deity—Church:** Christ vs. spiritism. Note the word “beguile” (katabrabeueto). It means to rob; to defraud; to cheat a person out of his reward. It is possible for believers to be cheated out of their reward by false teachers. How? By following those who teach that there is another approach to God other than Christ. Christ is God’s appointed way to approach Him, and there is no other way. Note the points of these verses.

1. The false approach to God now being discussed is spiritism, the worship of God through angels or spirits and visions. Again, the Colossian church had been heavily influenced by the Gnostic teaching of intermediaries or mediators between God and man. (See note, *Gnosticism*, pt.1—Col.1:15 for more discussion.) Note the words “intruding into those things which he hath not seen.” This is a reference to visions, seeing into the spiritual realm, into a world other than the physical world. Some of the believers were claiming all kinds of visions—visions of spiritual beings and of angels. And, as so often happens when people have deep spiritual experiences, the Colossians began to focus upon the visions and angels whom they claimed were appearing to them: they focused upon the spirits instead of Christ.

Men tend to feel God is far off in outer space someplace or in some unreachable dimension of being, at least unreachable to the common person. They feel too sinful and unworthy to approach God or to secure God’s interest and care. Therefore, they feel the need for intermediaries to stand between them and God—intermediaries who can present them and their lives and situations to God. As a result, men tend to look and pray to lesser beings such as angels or spirits of departed saints. Others turn to seeking visions or deep spiritual experiences in order to know God and secure His help in life.

Note another fact as well: there is false humility in this approach to God. A person who approaches God through visions and spirits is claiming that he is unworthy to approach God himself. He needs others to appear before God for him. But note: this is false humility, for the person claims to have visions of angels or spirits which other people do not have. Some in the Colossian church were claiming that they possessed special gifts and that they had experienced special visions, yet they were unworthy of such experiences. There was a voluntary (self-imposed) air of humility about them that really

## COLOSSIANS 2:16-19

came across as being more spiritual than other believers. Paul says that they were deceived, and that they were in danger of losing their reward. They were “puffed up” by a fleshly mind (see note—1 Cor.4:6).

The point is this: spiritism focuses attention upon the spiritual experience—the angels, spirits, and visions—not on God’s appointed way to approach Him which is Christ. A person’s mind and thoughts are centered more on the spirits or the spiritual experience than on Christ. Christ is relegated to a lower position in the person’s life than the spirits and visions. The person seeks to have visions of the spirits more than he seeks Christ.

What Barclay says at this point stands as a warning to all believers, even to those who walk faithfully and know what it is to have deep experiences with the Lord:

*“No one will deny the visions of the mystics, but there is always a danger when a man begins to think that he has attained a height of holiness which enables him to see what common men—as he calls them—cannot see; and the danger is that men will so often see, not what God sends them, but what they want to see” (The Letters to the Phillipians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.175).*

2. The true approach to God is Christ. Christ is the Head, the only mediator who can stand before God and...
  - secure the approval and acceptance of God for man.
  - secure the love and care of God for man.

No spirit—no angel or vision—can do what Christ can do. Christ alone has access into God’s presence *in behalf of man*. Christ alone stands before God as the representative or *Head of man*. No other person or being can stand before God in behalf of men. Why? Because the body has only one head, not two. The answer is found in the analogy or picture of the human body. A body has only one head. And God’s people are a body of people—a body of people who live under the *will and control of the Head* who is Christ. Note two things about the Head, who is Christ.

- a. The head is the part which supplies and nourishes the body. So it is with Christ. Christ alone can supply and nourish the body of believers, the church. Christ alone can give men the strength and nourishment of God to help them as they walk day by day through life.
- b. The head is that which knits the body together and makes it function as it should. So it is with Christ. He alone...
  - can knit a person together—all the thoughts, emotions, and other things that are needed to make him a whole person.
  - can knit all people together as one body in love, joy, and peace—worshipping, serving, and living for God like they should.

**Thought 1.** The point is well made. Man cannot approach God nor receive the help of God through any means other than His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. No spirit or angel and no vision can bring the knitting or nourishing power of God to men. Only Christ, God’s appointed Head, can knit and nourish men throughout life.

**“He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all” (Jn.3:31).**

**“Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am” (Jn.13:13).**

**“For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Ro.14:9).**

**“[God’s power] which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:20).**

**“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Ph.2:9).**

**“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col.1:18).**

**“Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb.1:4).**

**“For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house” (Heb.3:3).**

**“Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” (Rev.1:11).**

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>1 Believers are dead with Christ to man's crude notions about God &amp; the world</p> <p>2 They enslave &amp; subject</p> | <p><b>E. Criticisms of Worldly Philosophy &amp; Man-Made Approaches To God, 2:20-23</b></p> <p>20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,</p> <p>21 (Touch not; taste not;</p> | <p>handle not;</p> <p>22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?</p> <p>23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.</p> | <p><b>men to the rules &amp; teachings of men</b></p> <p>3 They are based upon the works &amp; efforts &amp; pride of men</p> <p>4 They profess humility before the world, but the humility is a false humility</p> |
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DIVISION IV

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST AND FALSE TEACHING, 2:8-23

E. Criticisms of Worldly Philosophy and Man-Made Approaches To God, 2:20-23

(2:20-23) **Introduction:** this passage closes the contrast between Christ and false teaching. It stands as a bulwark, a mighty fortress against false teaching. It gives three strong criticisms against worldly philosophy or man-made approaches to God.

1. Believers are dead with Christ to man's crude notions about God and the world (v.20).
2. They enslave and subject men to the rules and teachings of men (v.21-22).
3. They are based upon the works and efforts and pride of men (v.23).
4. They profess humility before the world, but the humility is a false humility (v.23).

**1** (2:20) **Jesus Christ, Death—Christian Liberty:** believers are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world. Remember that the word "rudiments" (stoicheia) means two things and Christ saves us from both. (See note, *Philosophy*—Col.2:8 for more discussion.)

1. *Rudiments* means crude notions of men about the universe—that is, about God, reality, and truth. It is man's ideas and philosophies; their elementary or rudimentary teachings; their ABC understanding of God and the universe, reality, and truth. When men think of God, they come up with all kinds of ways and laws to reach Him and to secure His approval and acceptance. However, there are three basic problems with man's approach to God.

- a. First, we cannot keep rules and laws—not in a perfect sense. No matter what way we choose to reach God, we cannot walk a straight path to Him. We cannot stay on the way—not every moment and not perfectly. This poses an insurmountable problem, for God is perfect and we are not. Therefore, we are not acceptable to Him; we are automatically rejected because of our imperfection. Imperfection cannot live in the presence of a perfect God. This is the first problem with trying to keep rules and laws in order to be good enough for God.
- b. Second, once we have broken a rule or law, we stand guilty before God. Therefore, we must be judged, condemned, and punished for having broken the law. A law-breaker is guilty and unacceptable and the punishment must be borne. Therefore, rules and laws cannot make us acceptable to God and they can only lead to guilt and condemnation.
- c. Third, we die; we do not live forever. And there is no law or force on this earth that can give us the energy and power to live forever. If there was, there would be all kinds of people laying hold and obeying that law. Rules and laws only condemn us when we break them. They have no power to save us from death nor to give us eternal life. Because of this, rules and laws cannot be the way to approach God.

How then can we approach God? If the best thinking of men about the universe and God are not the way to approach God, what is the way? The answer will be discussed in a moment, but first look at the second meaning of the word *rudiments*.

2. *Rudiments* means the basic elements or materials of the universe, the things that men say lie behind the universe or at the very base of reality. Down through the centuries men have posed all kinds of forces, energies, powers, principalities, spirits, angels, and beings as standing behind the universe and life. As a result men have committed their lives and worshipped all sorts of creatures and forces or elements and materials. However, there is a critical problem with this approach to God, a problem that dooms all who seek truth and approach God through the elements of this universe or through the spirits of the spiritual world.

- a. First, there is the problem of corruption. Everything in the universe is corruptible, aging, dying, deteriorating, and decaying. Therefore, there is nothing in the universe that can save man, for the way of all things—all elements and all materials—is the way of death.
- b. Second, the problem with seeking truth and God through the spirits or angels of a spiritual world is a twofold problem.
  - ⇒ First, man cannot penetrate the spiritual world. He is physical, and the physical just cannot move over into the world of the spiritual no matter what any person claims. If the spiritual world is ever to be known, then the spiritual has to reveal itself to us.
  - ⇒ Second, those who claim to have been given visions or revelations by the spiritual world still have the same problems that everyone else has: the problems of imperfection (unrighteousness), death, and eternal life. No angel, spirit, or any other intermediary has ever taken care of the problem of sin and death and of eternal life for us. We have already sinned, and we are already imperfect.

Therefore, someone, someplace must *bear our sin* or punishment for us or else we have to pay for it ourselves. And, on top of that, someone has to go through the experience of death and conquer it and tell us how to do the same or else we are going to die and never reach God.

This is the glorious message of the gospel. God is love, eternal and infinite love, so He has done all this for us. He did it through His Son, Jesus Christ.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn.3:16).**

God’s Son, Jesus Christ, has secured righteousness for us. He came to earth and lived a sinless and perfect life. Therefore, He stood before God and the world as the Ideal and Perfect Man. As the Ideal and Perfect Man He could take our sins upon Himself and die for them. And this He did: Christ actually took our judgment and bore the punishment for our imperfections or sins. Then, He arose from the dead, conquering death.

Now note the verse: “if ye be *dead with Christ* from the rudiments of the world.” The death of Christ is the way God has established for us to approach Him. A person is...

- to repent and turn from the rudiments of the world, that is, from man’s approaches to God.
- to believe that God loves the world, that He is not far off, leaving man in the dark having to grope and grasp after the truth and God.
- to believe that God’s Son died for him, bearing his punishment and death.

If Christ has done this for us, then we are free from having to seek after God through rules, laws, angels, spirits, and through the forces and energies of the universe. How? By believing in Christ. When we believe in Christ, we are trusting the Ideal Man. Therefore, His death and resurrection can stand for us. That is, when He died, He was dying as the Ideal Man and when He arose from the dead, He arose as the Ideal Man. This simply means that the Ideal, Perfect Man stands for all other men. Everything He did stands for man. When He died, He died for us; and when He arose to live with God forever, he arose for us. Therefore, when we believe in Christ, we are accepted by God in the righteousness of Christ. And being accepted by God, we are freed from having to use any other approach to reach Him. Christ has freed us from all other approaches.

Simply stated, God loves us; therefore, He has taken care of the problems of imperfection (sin) and death. He has provided the way and given us the right to approach Him face to face—*through His Son*. In *Christ* we are free from the corruptible and insufficient approaches to God, from the elements and materials of the universe and from the crude notions and ideas of men about how to approach and please God.

⇒ If you are dead with Christ, then you are free from having to approach God through the rudiments of the world.

**2** (2:21-22) **Backsliding—Seeking God—Rules—Philosophy:** the first criticism against philosophy or man-made approaches to God is this—they enslave and subject men to the rules and teachings of men. Some in the Colossian church were returning to the rules and regulations of men as to how to please God. They returned to the idea...

- that man can please God by controlling the defilement and weaknesses of the flesh—that man can secure God’s approval by presenting a clean and pure body to God. Therefore, they began to come up with all the rules necessary to eat the right foods and to take care of their bodies and to live a clean life. Note how simply Paul puts it: they were saying “touch not; taste not; handle not.”

There is no question, discipline and control and a clean body are wise; and every person should develop the healthiest and most moral body he can. But this is not what makes us acceptable to God. This approach to God has two critical flaws.

- ⇒ First, a person can have the healthiest and most pure body in the world, but that person is still imperfect and still dies. Health and morality, no matter how undiseased and pure, do not keep us from aging and dying. We are still corruptible and are still going the way of all flesh—the way of death and separation from God.
- ⇒ Second, the approach to God by rules and discipline forces us to focus upon the rules instead of Christ. We have to keep our minds upon the rules or else we break them before we know it. Contrary to pleasing God, this displeases God. God wants our lives focused upon His Son Jesus Christ.

The point is this: the philosophies and ideas of men enslave us: they force us to commit our lives to them and to focus upon them, and then they leave us enslaved to the bondage of death. Man-made ideas do not free us; they can carry us no higher than the man who made up the idea, and that height is not a height at all. It is a depth, the depth of death to which all men go.

The question is this: If you are dead with Christ and never have to die again—if you are in union with Christ—if you are already acceptable to God...why then are you still trying to become acceptable to God? Your task is not to become acceptable to God. Your task is to focus upon God’s Son, Christ, who has given you so much in His death and resurrection. Your task is...

- to study His life and will.
- to follow and pattern your life after His life.
- to serve Him in His mission, giving all you are and have to reach all men with the gospel of eternal life.

*Life in Christ* is not slavery; it is freedom. Life in Christ is a life freed from corruption and death—a life which is already acceptable to God and which has already been given eternal life by God. Life in Christ is enslaved by nothing—it is set free from all the elements and materials of this world including death—it is set free to live and move and have its being face to face with God Himself. Not because we are worthy or merit it, but because of Christ and what He has done. God loves Christ so much that He accepts anyone who comes to Him acknowledging and praising Christ for what He has done in dying for man.

Since you are dead with Christ, why are you returning to the ideas and rules of men and now trying to please God by your own works and efforts? Man is to please God, yes! But he is to please God by being enslaved to Christ and following Him, not by being enslaved to the rules, religions, philosophies, and ideas of men. Man is to focus upon Christ, not upon the enslaving elements and materials of this world, and he is certainly not to focus upon man's fluctuating notions of God and how to approach Him.

**"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Mt.7:6).**

**"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mt.7:21; cp. 1:Jn.3:23).**

**"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (Jn.6:29).**

**"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (Jn.8:34).**

**"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Ro.6:16).**

**"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Ro.7:23).**

**"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Ro.14:17).**

**"But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse" (1 Cor.8:8).**

**"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Tit.1:16; cp. Jn.6:29).**

**"Which [the first tabernacle, the first approach to God] stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb.9:10-14).**

**"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (2 Pt.2:19).**

**"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (1 Jn.3:23).**

**3 (2:23) Philosophy—Religion, False—Pride—Works—Seeking God:** the second criticism against philosophy and man-made approaches to God is this—they are based upon the human works, efforts, and pride of men. Very simply, the most that man can come up with in saving himself is a religion of works which is nothing more than a religion of pride. Note: Scripture admits that man can have a worldly wisdom and a strong will. The rules and ideas of man is a "self-imposed worship," that is, in self-made worship. Men are very capable in...

- thinking
- reasoning
- intelligence
- controlling
- disciplining
- acting

But there are critical flaws existing in men that man cannot solve. These flaws need to be closely heeded.

⇒ Man's wisdom and will cannot destroy sin in the life of men. Man cannot keep from sinning through wisdom and will—no matter what he does.

⇒ Man's wisdom and will cannot destroy death. A man cannot keep from dying.

Therefore, no matter how wise and how much man controls his body and life—no matter what kind of values and morality he follows; no matter what kind of self-made religion he worships—man still sins and still dies. He is still unacceptable to God. Therefore, when man uses his own wisdom and will to create ways to approach God...

- he is only exalting himself and his own wisdom and discipline.
- he is by-passing and ignoring God and the approach God has provided and established.
- he is following a way that is totally meaningless and utterly inadequate, for nothing man-made can end up anywhere other than as decayed matter.
- he is totally incapable of destroying sin and death in man.

**"And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he, that made that which is without, make that which is within also?" (Lk.11:39-40).**

**"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Ro.1:22).**

**"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (1 Cor.3:19).**

**"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward" (2 Cor.1:12).**

“This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (Jas.3:15).

“This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings” (Ps.49:13).

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good” (Ps.53:1).

“Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour” (Pr.14:9).

“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered” (Pr.28:26).

“Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid” (Is.29:14).

“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge” (Jer.4:22).

**4** (2:23) **Philosophy—Religion, False—Works—Seeking God:** the third criticism against philosophy and man-made approaches to God is this—they profess humility before the world, but the humility is a false humility.

⇒ When a person follows a set of rules or of religion, he is confessing a *need*—either a need for something more than what he has or for something higher than himself. The confession of need is a sign of humility—of lacking something.

But note a significant point: when he begins to follow the rules and rituals of his religion—begins to control and discipline his life by the rules—he is showing his ability to control and discipline, to make himself acceptable to God. Therefore, his humility is contradictory; it is a false humility. The only true humility is to confess total inadequacy—total depravity—and the utter necessity for God Himself to save us. When God saves us, we can be saved by no higher person, and we are saved by no merit or work of our own. Therefore, God and God alone is praised, not us. True humility is focusing totally upon God as the Savior of the world and never seeing man as having any part in salvation. As Paul says: there is no “honor to the satisfying of the flesh”—not in true humility and salvation.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Lk.18:10-14).

“Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth” (Jn.9:41).

“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Cor.10:12).

“For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things” (1 Jn.3:20).

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev.3:17).

“If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse” (Job 9:20).

“I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me” (Job 33:9).

“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr.20:6).

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).

“Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned” (Jer.2:35).

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| <p><b>1 The believer's new life is a life that is risen with Christ</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>V. THE DEMANDS OF THE BELIEVER'S NEW LIFE: GREAT CHARACTER, 3:1-17</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A. The Basis of the Believer's New life, 3:1-4</b></p> <p>If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things</p> | <p>which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.<br/>                 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.<br/>                 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.<br/>                 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.</p> | <p><b>2 The believer's new life is a life that seeks the things above—in heaven—where Christ is</b></p> <p>a. The meaning: Set your mind on things above, not on things on earth<br/>                 b. The reason: You are dead &amp; hid with Christ<br/>                 c. The reward: You shall appear in glory with Christ</p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE DEMANDS OF THE BELIEVER'S NEW LIFE: GREAT CHARACTER, 3:1-17**

**A. The Basis of the Believer's New Life, 3:1-4**

(3:1-4) **Introduction:** this is one of the great passages of Scripture, a passage that believers often turn to in seeking a deeper and more committed walk with the Lord. It is the basis of the believer's new life.

1. The believer's new life is a life that is risen with Christ (v.1).
2. The believer's new life is a life that seeks the things above—in heaven, where Christ is (v.1-4).

**1** (3:1) **Believer, Identification with Christ—Resurrected with Christ—New Life:** the believer's life is a life that is risen with Christ. God loves His Son, Jesus Christ—loves Him with an eternal and perfect love. Therefore, when a person believes, really surrenders his life to Christ, God forgives the person's sins and accepts Him *in Christ*. God actually *identifies the person* with Christ in His death and resurrection. God begins to *consider the person* as having died and risen with Christ. The new believer was not bodily present when Christ died and arose, but God considers the believer to have been there. God reckons, credits, and counts it so.

Remember: God does this for us because He loves His Son, Jesus Christ, so much. He loves Him so much that when we believe in Christ, God does *exactly what we believe*. He does this because our belief *focuses upon and honors Christ*. And because it honors God's Son, God counts our belief as the real thing. He counts us as having actually died and risen with Christ.

This means a most wonderful thing. It means that we are in union with Christ; we are identified with Christ. Our faith *in Christ* has placed us *in Christ*. Therefore, whatever Christ experienced we experienced. When He arose from the dead, we arose with Him. His resurrection means...

- that we have risen with Him.
- that we have conquered death.
- that we are raised to a new life.
- that our old life in this sinful world is over; it no longer has a claim upon us. We are, as stated, raised to a *newness of life*.
- that we are walking in newness of life, living a life that is dead to sin, but alive to God—alive to righteousness and holiness.

**“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro.8:11).**

**“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins....and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:1, 6).**

**“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened [made alive] together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col.2:13).**

**“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col.3:1).**

**2** (3:1-4) **New Life:** the believer's life is a life that seeks the things above, that is, the things that are in heaven where Christ is. Note three significant points.

1. Note the meaning of the charge: “seek those things which are above.” The meaning is clearly and pointedly explained in two statements:

- ⇒ First, seek those things above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. That is, seek heavenly things, the things of heaven.
- ⇒ Second, set your “affection” (phromeite), your mind on things above and not on things on the earth. The word “affection” means mind; to set and focus your mind constantly upon heavenly things, not upon earthly things.

Very simply, the things of Christ and of heaven are to consume the believer's life and mind. But for the believer to keep his mind upon the things of Christ he must know what those things are. Therefore, the question naturally arises: What are the things of Christ and the things of heaven which are to consume our thoughts?

**“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:5-6).**

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro.12:2).**

**“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:3-5).**

**“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph.4:22-24).**

The resurrection of Christ tells us what the things of Christ and of heaven are. It is His resurrection that allows us to be *“risen with Christ.”* Remember: we actually take part and participate in the resurrection of Christ. This is a *positional relationship* to God. As stated in the former note, when we accept Christ, God places us in Christ positionally. He begins to see us *in Christ, already seated in the heavenlies and perfected forever* (cp. Eph.2:4-7). It is because of this glorious position which God has given us that we should seek the things of Christ and of heaven. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ has done at least seven wonderful things for us. These seven things should consume the thoughts of our minds and the praise and prayer of our lips.

- a. The resurrection of Christ shows and guarantees that Christ is the Son of God. Our thoughts should focus upon this glorious fact: that God has sent His Son into the world to save us.

**“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Ro.1:3-4).**

Jesus Christ claimed that He was the Son of God, that He possessed God’s very own nature, that He was One with the Father (Jn.10:30-33, 36. See note—Jn.5:19 for more verses.) He claimed time and again that God was His Father (Jn.5:17-30, 36-37, 43, 45; 6:29, 32-34, 37-40, 44-46, 57, 65; 8:16, 19, 25-29, 38, 42, 49, 54-55. See note, *Jesus Christ, Son of God*—Jn.1:34 for a complete list of references.) When God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, He set His seal to Christ’s claim. And by the resurrection God declares that Christ is His own dear Son.

- b. The resurrection of Christ saves and justifies us. The glorious truth of salvation and justification should consume our thoughts and praise all through the day.

**“[Christ] who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Ro.4:25).**

- c. The resurrection of Christ gives us or raises us up to a new life—a life that is abundant and eternal. It is the only way we can keep from walking after the flesh.

**“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:4).**

**“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Ro.6:5-13).**

**“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:3-5).**

**“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:1-4).**

- d. The resurrection of Christ gives us power to live victoriously over the sins and trials of this world and to bear the fruit of God’s Spirit as we walk throughout this world.

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him [Christ] who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Ro.7:4).

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live “ (Ro.8:11-13).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23).

“[That ye may know] what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph.1:19-20).

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name....Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh [energizes] in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Ph.2:8-9, 12-13).

“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power [resurrection power], unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col.1:10-11).

Imagine living a life of power bearing the fruit of God’s Spirit as we walk day by day—conquering the sins and walking through the trials of life victoriously. It is through our union with Christ that we *receive the power* [energy] to triumphantly walk day by day (cp. Jn.15:1-5 for an excellent description of our union with Christ).

- e. The resurrection gives us a living hope, the hope of glory. Our minds and praise should focus upon the glory of heaven which shall be ours when either God takes us home or Christ returns.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pt.1:3-4).

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you....For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Ro.8:11, 18).

“Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Pt.1:21).

- f. The resurrection guarantees our resurrection (cp. 1 Cor.15:12-58). Our thoughts and praise should center upon the wonderful praise of the new and glorious body God has promised us.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Ro.6:5).

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor.4:14).

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Th.4:14-18).

- g. The resurrection assures that God will judge the world by Christ. Our minds and prayers should be focused upon evangelism and the terrible fact that judgment is coming. Every person will have to give an account to Christ and all those who have rejected Him will be eternally separated from God.

“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

“And [God] hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves

**shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jn.5:27-29).**

Christ claimed that God had committed all judgment to Him: that He is the One whom God has appointed to judge the world. God stamped His approval to what Christ said by *raising Him* from the dead. Christ Himself shall judge the world. Judgment is coming: the resurrection of Christ proves it.

2. Note the two reasons why we are to seek the things of Christ and of heaven: because we are dead, and our lives are *hid with Christ* in God.

a. The believer is dead. He is not actually dead; he still lives upon earth. But God *counts the believer dead* in the death of Christ. When Christ died, the believer died—right along with Christ *in God’s mind*. God counts it so, and whatever God counts so, it is a fact. Therefore, the believer is actually dead in God’s mind. This means a significant fact: a dead man cannot sin, for a dead man no longer lives for this earth. He lives for the next world.

**Thought 1.** Since we are dead, we are to seek the things of Christ and of heaven.

b. The believer is *hid with Christ*. What does this mean? It means that God counts the believer *hid* in the resurrection and life of Christ. When Christ arose, He arose to a new life, not to His *old life*. He had just died to the old life once for all. Therefore, when the believer is said to be *hid* in Christ, it means that God counts the believer risen with Christ. God counts the believer as risen to a new life. God sees the believer *hid* in Christ day by day. God sees him walking *in* Christ and in Christ’s righteousness. And because he is in Christ, the believer sets his mind upon things above, upon the things of Christ and of heaven. He sets his mind and life upon things that please Christ.

An excellent illustration of what it means to be “*hid with Christ*” is this: take the index finger of your right hand and wrap your left hand around it. Say that the index finger represents you and the left hand represents Christ. Where are you (the index finger)? *In Christ*. You are hid in Christ. When God looks at you, He sees you *hid in Christ*. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Believer, Position in Christ*—Ro.8:1 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** When you are hid in Christ...

- Christ is the only life that God sees as living. Christ is your life in the eyes of God, the life in which you live.
- you live and move and have your being and roam around in the life of Christ. You are hid in the life of Christ. You are not seen living and moving, for you are *hid in Christ*. Christ is the only life, the only body that is seen by God and that is to be seen by the world.

Just think how surrendered and given over to Christ we are to be—so given over that Christ’s life is all that is seen. How is such possible?

- ⇒ By seeking those things which are above, where Christ sits.
- ⇒ By setting our mind on things above, not on things on earth. By working to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, even to the point of captivating every thought for Christ.

In practical day to day living, turn the television off; set aside the magazines and books. Get into the Word of God; meditate and pray through the Word, and memorize and live out the Word. In addition, get alone and pray—at least every morning and evening—and learn to silently whisper a prayer every few minutes. Surrender your life totally to Christ; present your body as a *living* sacrifice to God: to know, believe, and understand Him and to make Him known. You are His witness—do it.

**“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Is.43:10).**

There is no way to know Him apart from setting our minds upon Him. Therefore, let us do it and do it now by getting to our secret place of prayer and seeking His face with a renewed commitment.

- ⇒ Our lives are hid with Christ.
- ⇒ We live, yet not us, but Christ lives in us (Gal.2:20).
- ⇒ We are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our flesh (2 Cor.4:11).
- ⇒ For us to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Ph.1:21).
- ⇒ We know this: we have passed from death unto life—therefore, let us live for Christ (1 Jn.3:14).

3. Note the reward for being hid in Christ and for seeking the things of Christ and of heaven: the reward is that of appearing with Christ in glory. Think for a moment: God sees us *hid with Christ*; therefore, we are risen with Christ. This means that being risen from the dead, we never have to die. Christ already lives in the presence of God. Since God sees us *hid with Christ*, God sees us in His presence. He has already accepted us as being in His presence forever and ever—all because we are there “*hid with Christ*.”

Now, in practical terms we are still on earth. God has left us here to be witnesses for Him. But when He is ready to take us home to heaven, what happens is this: when we confront death—in the last second, in the last moment, right before we are to leave this world for the next—God shall fix our minds upon Jesus and immediately transport us into His heavenly

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kingdom (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Tim.4:18). God will give us a *fixation of mind* and we will never taste or experience death (cp. Jn.8:51-52; Heb.2:9).

Note that the verse has to do with the return of Christ. When Christ returns, we shall appear or return with Him *in glory*. There is to be a new heavens and earth and Christ is to reign forever and ever, and we are to reign in glory with Him.

**“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mt.13:43).**

**“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:17).**

**“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:21).**

**“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4).**

**“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim.2:10).**

**“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Pt.5:1).**

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| <p><b>1 The first demand is violent: Put to death all sins that enslave the body &amp; its members</b></p> <p>a. The sins listed</p> <p>b. The reasons</p> <p>1) Such sins bring down the wrath of God upon man</p> <p>2) Such sins belong to the old life</p> <p><b>2 The second demand is</b></p> | <p><b>B. The Violent Demands of the New Life, 3:5-11</b></p> <p>5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:</p> <p>6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:</p> <p>7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.</p> <p>8 But now ye also put off all</p> | <p>these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.</p> <p>9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;</p> <p>10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:</p> <p>11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.</p> | <p><b>violent: Strip off the sins that enslave the emotions &amp; tongue</b></p> <p>a. The sins listed</p> <p>b. The reasons</p> <p>1) We have put off the old man</p> <p>2) We have put on the new man</p> <p>3) We are all <i>one body</i> in Christ</p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE DEMANDS OF THE BELIEVER'S NEW LIFE: GREAT CHARACTER, 3:1-17**

**B. The Violent Demands of the New Life, 3:5-11**

(3:5-11) **Introduction:** this is a violent passage of Scripture, a passage that attacks many persons right where they are living. But it is a passage that is desperately needed by us all. It covers the violent demands of the believer's new life in Christ.

1. The first demand is violent: put to death all sins that enslave the body and its members (v.5-7).
2. The second demand is violent: strip off the sins that enslave the emotions and tongue (v.8-11).

**1** (3:5-7) **Body, Sins of—Mortify—Wrath of God:** the first demand is violent—put to death the sins that enslave the body and its members. The word “mortify” means to put to death or to act as though the body is dead. The believer is to take the various parts of his body and put them to death in so far as sin is concerned. How does a believer do this? He considers his body to be *hid in the death of Christ*. He acts as though his body is dead with Christ. And remember: a dead man cannot sin; a dead man can do nothing. Therefore, the believer is dead to sin.

The point is this: it is all an act of the mind or spirit. A person wants to live for God; therefore, he looks at his body and at sin. The only way he can possibly conquer sin is to treat his body as dead to sin or to consider sin as dead to his body. The person has to live as though his body has no part in sin, and sin has no part in his body. But note: this life is possible only in Christ. Christ alone—through the Holy Spirit—can work within the human heart and give it the energy and power to conquer sin *permanently and eternally*. Some men can discipline themselves to overcome some sin, but not *all sin, not permanently and not eternally*. This can be done only through Christ. There is an enormous difference between human discipline and godly control, and that difference is Jesus Christ. (See notes—Ph.2:13; Col.3:4 for more discussion.)

What sins are to be mortified or put to death? The Bible is very specific, for there are some very specific sins which tend to enslave the human body. In fact, note the term “children of disobedience” (v.6). These particular sins are not only terrible *acts of disobedience* to God, they are sins that can enslave the human body so much that they make a *child of disobedience* out of a person. They cause a person to actually become a *child of disobedience*. Shocking!

1. What are the sins that enslave the human body so much?
  - a. There is the sin of *fornication* (see note, pt.2—Gal.5:19-21 for discussion).
  - b. There is the sin of *uncleanness* (see note, pt.3—Gal.5:19-21 for discussion).
  - c. There is the sin of *inordinate affection* (pathos): passion, craving, strong desire, intense arousal, a driving lust. It is, of course, a desire and craving for the wrong things such as the second and third helping of food, alcohol, drugs, nudity, pornography, suggestive and filthy literature, illicit affairs, extra-marital sex, etc.

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Mt.5:28-29).

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet” (Ro.1:26-27).

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal.5:16-17).

“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal.5:24).

“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim.2:22).

- d. There is *evil concupiscence* (epithumian kaken): evil desire, a yearning and an aching for all kinds of evil. It is that within a person that pulls him to desire, grasp, grab, and take hold of all forms of evil that give pleasure to the body and its members. It is that which drives the man to...
- look and look
  - feel and feel
  - touch and touch
  - listen and listen
  - smell and smell
  - seek and seek

**“Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God” (1 Th.4:5).**

**“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas.1:14-15).**

**“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pt.2:11).**

- e. There is *covetousness* (pleonexian): craving, grasping, grabbing, desiring to have something. It is desiring to have something when it is not needed; it is desiring more than what we need and more than what we should have. Note that covetousness is idolatry. If a person looks at something so much that he covets it, he has set it up as a god which he pursues with the energy and effort of his mind and body. (See note, pt.7—Eph.4:17-19; Ro.13:9 for more discussion.)

**“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Ex.20:17).**

**“For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely” (Jer.6:13).**

**“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezk.33:31).**

**“And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage” (Mic.2:2).**

**“Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!” (Hab.2:9).**

**“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15).**

**“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col.3:5).**

**“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim.6:10).**

2. There are two strong reasons for putting to death the sins that enslave the body.

- a. It is such sins that shall bring down the wrath of God upon man. The word “wrath” (orge) means anger, but it is not the outburst of anger that quickly blazes up, not the anger that arises solely from emotion. Rather, it is a decisive and a deliberate anger. It is an anger that comes from a thoughtful decision, an anger that comes from the mind because someone has done something evil and hurtful. It is an anger that judges and condemns sin and evil, violence and slaughter, immorality and injustice. It is an anger that hates sin and evil and that metes out a just revenge and equal punishment.

**“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (Mt.3:7).**

**“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Ro.1:18).**

**“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Ro.2:5).**

**“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile” (Ro.2:8-9).**

**“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph.5:6).**

**“For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Th.1:9-10).**

- b. It is such sins that were common to our old life. We used to walk and live in such sins, but not now. What is the difference? Christ. We are *hid in Christ*. He has saved us from the sins that bring down the wrath of God upon us. To turn back and to begin walking in those sins again would be to deny Christ. And this we must not do...
- lest we break the heart of God by abusing the death of His dear Son.
  - lest we bring down the wrath of God upon us.

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph.2:1-2).

“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:17-21).

“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead” (1 Pt.4:3-5).

“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 17-21).

**2** (3:8-11) **New Man—Old Man—Emotions—Tongue:** the second demand is also violent—strip off the sins that enslave the emotions and tongue. The picture is that of putting off or stripping off clothes.

1. There are six sins that are to be stripped off. Note: all six have to do with either deep-seated emotions or else the tongue—reactions and feelings against another person.
  - a. There is the sin of *anger* (orgen): (see note—Eph.4:26-27 for discussion).
  - b. There is the sin of *wrath* (thumon): (see note, pt.10—Gal.5:19-21 for discussion).
  - c. There is the sin of *malice* (kakian): deep-seated feelings against a person, hatred that lasts on an on, intense and long-lasting bitterness against a person.

“Therefore let us keep the feast [the Lord’s Supper], not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor.5:8).

“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men” (1 Cor.14:20).

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (Eph.4:31).

“But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth” (Col.3:8).

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings” (1 Pt.2:1).

- d. There is the sin of *blasphemy* (blasphemian): speech that slanders, insults, hurts, injures, and shows contempt. It is railing at someone.

“But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming” (Acts 13:45).

“And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles” (Acts 18:6).

“Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim.1:20).

“But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?” (Jas.2:6-7).

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy” (Rev.13:1).

“And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds” (Rev.16:11).

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- e. There is the sin of *filthy communication* (aischrologian) (see note, pt.1—Eph.5:4 for discussion).
- f. There is the sin of *lying*: (see note—Eph.4:25 for discussion).
- 2. There are three strong reasons as to why we are to strip off the sins of the emotions and tongue.
  - a. We have put off the *old man* (see DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Old Man*—Eph.4:22 for discussion).
  - b. We have put on the *new man* (see DEEPER STUDY # 3, *New Man*—Eph.4:24; DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Renewed Mind*—Eph.4:23 for discussion).
  - c. We are all *one body* in Christ (v.11). Christ has made it possible for us to be adopted as children, sons and daughters, of God. We are all—everyone of us—children of God. We belong to the same family—the family of God. Therefore, there is no place for reacting against each other, no place for...
    - anger
    - wrath
    - malice
    - blasphemous, insulting, hurting talk
    - filthy talk
    - lying

Note how Scripture covers everything that could possibly cause feelings and divisions between us:

- ⇒ race and birth (Greek nor Jew)
- ⇒ religion and ritual (circumcision nor uncircumcision)
- ⇒ education and culture (Barbarian nor Scythian)
- ⇒ social class and wealth and property (bond and free)

**“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Ro.12:5).**

**“For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor.10:17).**

**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28).**

**“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph.4:13).**

| C. The Clothing of the New Life, 3:12-14 |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Are the elect of God, holy & beloved   | 12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;   |
| 2 The garment of mercy                   | 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. |
| 3 The garment of kindness                | 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.   |
| 4 The garment of humility                |   |
| 5 The garment of meekness                |   |
| 6 The garment of patience                |   |
| 7 The garment of forbearance             |   |
| 8 The garment of forgiveness             |   |
| 9 The garment of love                    |   |

DIVISION V

THE DEMANDS OF THE BELIEVER'S NEW LIFE: GREAT CHARACTER, 3:1-17

C. The Clothing of the New Life, 3:12-14

(3:12-14) **Introduction:** once a person has accepted Christ he has a new life. As seen in the former passage, the believer is to strip off the clothing of his old life, for the garments of his old life are unbecoming to his new life. Now, there are some garments that the believer is to put on, some garments that are becoming to his new life in Christ.

1. Are the elect of God, holy and beloved (v.12).
2. The garment of mercy (v.12).
3. The garment of kindness (v.12).
4. The garment of humility (v.12).
5. The garment of meekness (v.12).
6. The garment of patience (v.12).
7. The garment of forbearance (v.13).
8. The garment of forgiveness (v.13).
9. The garment of love (v.14).

**1** (3:12-14) **New Life:** the clothing of the elect. Believers are the “elect of God.” They are the persons whom God has chosen to be His holy and beloved people.

⇒ Believers have been elected to be *holy*. The word “holy” (hagios) means separated or set apart. God called believers out of the world and away from the old life it offered, the old life of sin and death. He called believers to be separated and set apart unto Himself and the new life He offers, the new life of righteousness and eternity.

⇒ Believers have been elected to be the *beloved* of God. God has called believers to turn away from the old life that showed hatred toward God, the old life that rejected, rebelled, ignored, denied, and was constantly cursing in the face of God. God has called believers to be the beloved of God, the persons who receive His love in Christ Jesus and who allow Him to shower His love upon them.

The point is this: the elect of God, holy and beloved, are those who have really believed and trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior. It is these persons, the believers, who now have a *new life* in Christ. Therefore, this passage is for the believer. Note one other thing: the command “put on” (enduno). This is the picture of putting on clothing; the believer is to *clothe the new man*. The new man must not be left naked; he must be clothed. What are the garments to be put on? There are eight garments of clothing for the new man.

**2** (3:12) **Mercy:** the believer must put on the garment of mercy. Mercy (oiktirmou) means compassion, pity, tenderheartedness. God has had so much mercy upon us, the one thing we should do is to show mercy to others. Compassion and pity should flood our hearts for the...

- |           |            |            |             |
|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|
| • lost    | • hurting  | • homeless | • empty     |
| • wayward | • diseased | • hungry   | • unclothed |
| • lonely  | • poor     | • aged     | • orphaned  |

Of course, the list could go on and on. The point is that the believer no longer has the right to overlook the needy of the world. He is now a new man, a part of the clothing of the new man is the garment of mercy. The believer is to be clothed with mercy. He is to have compassion and reach out to meet the needs of the world—reach out with all he is and has, holding back nothing so long as a single need exists.

“Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” (Is.58:7).

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” (Heb.13:3).

- 3** (3:12) **Kindness**: the believer must put on the garment of *kindness*. (See note, pt.5—Gal.5:22-23 for discussion.)
- 4** (3:12) **Humility**: the believer must put on the garment of *humility*. (See note and DEEPER STUDY # 1, *Humility*—Ph.2:3 for discussion.)
- 5** (3:12) **Meekness**: the believer must put on the garment of meekness. (See note, pt.8—Gal.5:22-23.)
- 6** (3:12) **Longsuffering or Patience**: the believer must put on the garment of *longsuffering*. (See note, pt.4—Gal.5:22-23.)
- 7** (3:13) **Forbearance**: the believer must put on the garment of *forbearing* or *forbearance*. Forbearing (*anechomenoi*) means to hold back; to put up with; to refrain; to bear with; to control.  
 Something is often forgotten: there are many things about everyone of us that people have to forbear. People have to put up with a great deal of things when dealing with us. Everyone of us is guilty of...
- some weakness
  - some unattractive behavior
  - some wrong behavior
  - some mistreatment
  - some neglect
  - some failure
  - some bad habit
  - some irritating behavior

There are some things about everyone of us that just turn some people off. None of us escapes the fact. In addition, everyone of us does things that irritate some people. Again, there is no escaping the fact. Any person can be looked at and have his flaws and weaknesses picked out.

But note: this is not what the Scripture says to do. The Scripture says that the believer is to put on the clothing of forbearance. The believer is to forbear the flaws of others. He is to put up with and bear with the weaknesses of other believers.

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro.15:1).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (Eph.4:1-2).

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col.3:13).

- 8** (3:13) **Forgiveness**: the believer must put on the garment of *forgiveness*; he must be forgiving (*charizomenoi*). The word means to be gracious to a person; to pardon him for some wrong done against us. Note: a quarrel or some difference has taken place. A person has hurt us and brought pain to us. But no matter what they have done, we are to have a forgiving spirit clothing us. We are to be so clothed with the spirit of forgiveness that no difference or quarrel can shake us.  
 Note why: because Christ has forgiven us. No matter how much wrong a person has done against us, it cannot match the wrong we have done against Christ. Yet, Christ has forgiven us. Therefore, we are to forgive those who have done wrong against us—no matter how great the wrong is.

“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (Mk.11:25).

“...ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Lk.6:35-36).

“And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Lk.17:4).

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:32).

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col.3:13).

- 9** (3:14) **Love**: above all, the believer is to put on the garment of *love* (*agapen*). Note that love is to be the main garment of the believer’s new life. It is called the *bond of perfection*; that is, love binds all the clothing or great qualities of the believer’s life together. If the believer has put on love—if he really loves people—then he is always clothed with...
- mercy
  - kindness
  - humility
  - meekness
  - longsuffering
  - forbearance
  - forgiveness

## COLOSSIANS 3:12-14

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro.5:6).

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro.5:8).

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Ro.5:10).

“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mk.12:29-31).

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Cor.13:13).

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1 A heart ruled by God's peace</b><br/> a. A choice: Let it rule<br/> b. The reason: One body<br/> c. The response: Be thankful</p> <p><b>2 A heart rich with the Word of Christ</b></p> | <p><b>D. The Heart of the New Life, 3:15-17</b></p> <p>15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.</p> <p>16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wis-</p> | <p>dom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.</p> <p>17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.</p> | <p>a. A choice: Let it dwell<br/> b. The reason: To teach &amp; admonish one another in wisdom<br/> c. The evidence: A singing spirit</p> <p><b>3 A heart that does all in the name of Christ</b><br/> a. A choice: Do all<br/> b. The response: Give thanks</p> |
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**DIVISION V**

**THE DEMANDS OF THE BELIEVER'S NEW LIFE: GREAT CHARACTER, 3:1-17**

**D. The Heart of the New Life, 3:15-17**

(3:15-17) **Introduction:** when a new life enters the world, a new heart enters the world. There is no life apart from a heart. A new life necessitates a new heart. So it is with the believer: the believer receives a new heart when he receives a new life. *The heart of the new life* is the great subject of this passage.

1. A heart ruled by God's peace (v.15).
2. A heart rich with the Word of Christ (v.16).
3. A heart that does all in the name of Christ (v.17).

**1** (3:15) **Peace:** first, the believer is to have a heart ruled by God's peace. He is to let the peace of Christ rule in all things and differences. The best Greek texts read the "peace of Christ" instead of the "peace of God." The word "peace" (eirene) means to be bound, joined, and weaved together. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God. It means to know that God will take care of us no matter the problem or circumstance. It means to be absolutely assured that God will allow nothing to swamp or defeat us. God will...

- strengthen
- encourage
- guide
- sustain
- deliver
- save
- provide
- give real life both now and forever

But note the critical point: this peace is the peace of Christ, and He alone possesses it. Therefore, a person can experience true peace only as he comes to know Christ. Only Christ can bring real peace to the human heart, the kind of peace that brings deliverance and the assurance of deliverance to the human soul. Three significant things are pointed out about the peace of Christ.

1. The choice is up the believer: the believer does not automatically experience the peace of Christ. He is supposed to, but he may not. This is a command, which means it demands obedience. The word "rule" (brabeueto) means to be or to act as an umpire. Peace is to be the umpire, the deciding factor in all circumstances and situations of life.

⇒ Matthew Henry words it well: "Let this peace rule in your heart—prevail and govern there...as an umpire [let it] decide all matters of difference among you" (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol.5, p.764).

⇒ William Barclay pointedly says: "Let the peace of God...be the decider [umpire] of all things within your heart" (*The Letters to the Phillipians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p. 190).

The point is this: the believer must make a choice—the decision is his whether he lets the peace of Christ rule or not. Scripture commands it, but the believer has to be willing to let the umpire of peace rule. He has to be willing to lay aside all the differences and circumstances—to be willing to give up differences and let Christ handle them through the rule of His peace.

**"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (Jn.14:27).**

**"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (Jn.16:33).**

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ro.5:1).**

**"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph.2:14).**

**"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Ps.119:165).**

**"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Is.26:3).**

**"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Is.48:18).**

2. The reason why believers are to let the peace of Christ rule is clearly stated: we are called to be *in one body*. We are not called to be *in two bodies*, but in one. Any believer who stands *out there* in another body is not a genuine believer. There is only one body of Christ, only one body of believers, only one church. This means something significant: believers are to act as one. They are to live and behave as one body, as a body of people in union with each other. How? By letting the peace of Christ rule in their hearts. Peace is to be the deciding factor, the umpire in all relationships between believers. (See notes—Col.1:18 for more discussion.)

**Thought 1.** Why is this exhortation given? Because too often some person arises within the church who is...

- cantankerous and divisive
- critical and judgmental
- murmuring and grumbling
- gossiping and spreading rumors

Too often some person becomes a troublemaker, a person who stirs up trouble within the body of Christ, the church. The person accepts the umpire of difference instead of the umpire of peace. He lets differences rule within his heart instead of Christ and His peace.

This is the reason for the exhortation. The exhortation is needed. Some persons desperately need to hear the challenge and demand of God: *Let the peace of God rule in your hearts...for you are called to live as one body in peace.*

**“Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee” (Job 22:21).**

**“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it” (Ps.34:14).**

**“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph.2:14).**

**“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Col.3:15).**

**“Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it” (1 Pt.3:11).**

**“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Ro.8:6).**

**“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Ro.14:17).**

3. Believers are to respond to the demand for peace with thankfulness. Believers should always thank Christ for His peace...

- the peace He has brought to their own hearts personally.
- the peace He has brought to all men who trust Him.
- the peace He has brought within His body, the church.
- the glorious privilege which all men have to know His peace.

**“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Eph.5:20-21).**

**“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:6-7).**

**“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col.1:20).**

**2** (3:16) **Word, The:** second, the believer is to have a heart rich with the Word of Christ. He is to let the Word of Christ dwell in his heart. Throughout Scripture this is the only time “the Word of God” is referred to as “the Word of Christ.” The emphasis of Colossians is Christ; therefore, the Word of God becomes the *Word of Christ* in this great book. (Cp. 2 Cor.2:17; 4:2; 1 Th.1:8; 2:13; 4:15; 2 Th.3:1.)

Three significant points are made about the Word of Christ.

1. The choice is up to the believer: the Word of Christ does not naturally dwell within the believer’s heart. The word “dwell” (enoikeito) means to be at home or to make a home; to abide or live within. The believer must make room within his heart for the Word of Christ. He must let the Word of Christ enter his heart and make a home within his heart. He must let the Word of Christ dwell and abide in his heart. The believer must clean out all the old furnishings of his heart and let the Word of Christ settle down as the permanent resident within his heart.

Note the word “richly.” It is important, for the Word of Christ must be allowed to dwell *richly* within our hearts. The believer is not to be satisfied with just a meager visit by the Word of Christ. He is to let the Word of Christ *dwell richly* within Him. The Word of Christ must be allowed to furnish the believer’s heart with all the wealth of its commandments and promises, instructions and warnings.

**“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart” (Dt.6:6).**

**“Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes” (Dt.11:18).**

**“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Ps.119:11).**

**“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col.3:16).**

**“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Jn.15:7).**

**“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).**

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).**

**“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Pt.2:2-3).**

2. The reason why believers are to let the Word of Christ dwell within them is clearly stated: believers are to teach and admonish one another in all wisdom. This is the believer’s task, the very reason God has not yet taken us home to heaven: to teach and admonish one another. By teaching is meant the instruction of the Word and by admonition is meant the warning of Scripture. But how can we teach and admonish others if we do not...

- know the Word of Christ?
- let the Word of Christ dwell in us?

The answer is obvious: we can’t. And note another fact: it is not enough to know the Word of Christ. We must be living the Word of Christ. Knowing the Word and not living it is hypocrisy. Our very lives must be the home, the dwelling place for the Word of Christ. When people look at us, they must immediately see that our lives are indwelt by the Word of Christ.

Something else should be pointed out as well. We can teach and admonish others in forbearance and not *in wisdom*. Worldly philosophy and teachings about reality and truth, God and the universe are only the crude notions of men. The truth and wisdom of life are found in the *Word of Christ and in the Word of Christ alone*. (See note—Col.2:8-10 for more discussion.)

**“These things command and teach” (1 Tim.4:11).**

**“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim.2:24).**

**“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Dt.6:6-7).**

**“And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean” (Ezk.44:23).**

3. There is a way to tell whether or not the Word of Christ dwells in us: Are we teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord? As we walk throughout the day are we...

- talking about Christ?
- sharing the Word of Christ with each other?
- teaching each other?
- admonishing and encouraging and warning each other?
- singing to ourselves and with others?

**Thought 1.** What a contrasting picture of how so many of us live! The believer is to live and move and have his being in Christ, and he is to let Christ live and move and have His being in him. For the believer, to live is Christ. We are to walk all day long talking about and sharing Christ, teaching and admonishing others in the Word of Christ, singing the psalms of Scripture, the hymns of the church, and the spiritual songs that arise out of a heart filled with the joy of the Lord and His Word.

**“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Dt.6:6-7).**

**“And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates” (Dt.11:19-20).**

**“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor.14:15).**

**“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col.3:16).**

**“O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation” (Ps.95:1).**

**3** (3:17) **Believer, Duty:** third, the believer is to have a heart that does all in the name of Christ. Whatever he does in word or deed, he does all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

1. The believer has a choice. He is the one who speaks and acts; no one speaks and acts for him. Whether or not he speaks and acts for Christ is his choice. The command is there: “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,” but the choice as to what he talks about and does is his. He and he alone is responsible for his words and deeds.

2. The believer is to do all *in the name of the Lord Jesus*. What does this mean? It means that the believer knows something: the name of Christ is the only name that God accepts in His presence. Therefore, the only persons He accepts are those persons who come to Him in the name of Christ. There is no other name given among men whereby men may be saved. Therefore, the believer approaches God “in the name of Jesus Christ,” that is, by surrendering his life to Christ and by living for Christ. This is the reason the believer does not dare speak or act outside the name of Christ. To do so would be evidence that he had not really approached God in Christ, that his profession was a false profession.

Again, what does it mean to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus? It means...

- to *live, move, and have our being* in the name of Christ.
- to *trust and depend* upon the name of Christ in all that we do.
- to *claim* the name of Christ in all that we say and do.
- to *represent* Christ in all that we say and do.

Simply stated, we must do nothing that dishonors Christ. Whenever we speak, Christ peppers and fills our conversation; and whenever we act, Christ is honored by our behavior.

We must always remember something: Christ hears every word and sees every deed. We love Him with all our hearts; therefore, we seek never to hurt or cause pain for Him by what we say or do. We diligently seek to bring only honor to His name.

**“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Lk.24:47).**

**“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (Jn.14:13).**

**“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn.20:31).**

**“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph.5:20).**

3. The believer's response is that of thanksgiving. God *the Father* has become the believer's Father by Christ and only by Christ. Therefore, the believer is constantly thanking God the Father. But note: even in thanksgiving, the believer still approaches God only by Christ. As important as thanking and praising God is, a person still has to approach God by Christ. God will accept no person apart from Christ, not even to offer thanksgiving and praise.

**“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (1 Cor.10:31-32).**

**“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Col.3:23).**

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|  | <b>VI. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BELIEVER, 3:18-4:6</b>                              |
|  | <b>A. The Believer &amp; His Family, 3:18-21</b>                                       |
| <b>1 Christian wives: Submit to your husbands</b>                                | 18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.          |
| <b>2 Christian husbands: Love your wives &amp; do not be bitter against them</b> | 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.                          |
| <b>3 Christian children: Obey your parents</b>                                   | 20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. |
| <b>4 Christian fathers or parents: Do not provoke your children</b>              | 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.              |

## DIVISION VI

### THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BELIEVER, 3:18-4:6

#### A. The Believer and His Family, 3:18-21

(3:18-21) **Introduction:** this is a critical passage of Scripture, no matter the generation. Every generation witnesses an attack upon the union of husband and wife and the family. The lust of man for sensual pleasure drives him to attack the faithfulness between husband and wife that is demanded by God. Christ and Christ alone must be at the center of every family if it is to survive the attacks made against it. And it is not enough for one or two members of the family to be obedient to Christ—every member has to make Christ the center of his life. One disobedient and unfaithful member dramatically affects the union of the family and brings trauma, pain, and often destruction to the family. This is the critical importance of this discussion on the Christian and the family.

1. Christian wives: submit to your husbands (v.18).
2. Christian husbands: love your wives and do not be bitter against them (v.19).
3. Christian children: obey your parents (v.20).
4. Christian fathers or parents: do not provoke your children (v.21).

**1** (3:18) **Family—Wives:** Christian wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands. This is the only fitting or right thing to do. Scripture pulls no punches: it tells the wife exactly what the Lord expects. The husband’s turn comes in a moment, but for now the Lord’s will for the wife is covered. His will involves two striking points.

1. First, Christian wives are to submit themselves to their husbands. The word “submit” (*hupotassesthe*) means to subdue and subject in obedience.

⇒ Vine points out that the word is primarily a military term meaning to rank under (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1940.)

⇒ Robertson says that the word has a military air and that the word is the same kind of obedience that a citizen is to give to the government (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.506).

In modern society this is strong; in fact, it is too strong for many. Many reject the idea of woman’s subjection as archaic, outdated, and old-fashioned. Some even react in anger and hostility against the Word of God and those who preach the duty of wives.

Are they right? Has Scripture gone too far in declaring that wives should be subject to their husbands? Has God made a mistake within the order of the family? To the Christian, the answer is no. The problem is not in what God has said, but in our *understanding of what He has said* or in our rebellion against what He wills. Any wife who reacts to God’s command is reacting either because she does not understand what God is saying or is just *unwilling to give her life to God and follow Him as He says*. What does God mean by subjection? God does not mean *dictatorial subjection*...

- that a wife is to subject herself to a tyrant.
- that a wife is to submit herself to the demands of a husband who acts like a beast.
- that a wife is to be a slave or footstool for the husband.
- that a wife is to serve her husband without restraint.
- that a wife is to be treated as inferior to her husband.

What God means by subjection is order, cooperation, relationship, partnership—the way a husband and wife are to walk together throughout life. Every body of people—even when the body is only two persons—must have a leader who takes the lead in plowing through the wilderness of the world and its trials, temptations, and difficulties. Between the two, wife and husband, one of them has to be the primary leader. God’s order for the two is that the husband take the lead.

2. Second, Christian wives must submit because it is the only fitting thing to do. The word “fitting” (*aneken*) means the right thing to do. Why is it the only fitting and right thing to do? Not because the husband is superior and the wife is inferior as a human being. The reason is because the wife is *in the Lord*. She has surrendered her life to live in the Lord and to love and follow Him and to witness for Him by *living just as He says to live*. Therefore, when the Lord says that it

is His will for her to submit to her husband, she submits. She submits because the Lord tells her that submission is the way He wants her to live with her husband. Again, submission is simply...

- God's order for the family.
- the relationship, cooperation, and partnership that is to exist between the wife and husband.

**“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband” (1 Cor.7:10).**

**“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Eph.5:22).**

**“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord” (Col.3:18).**

**“Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things” (1 Tim.3:11).**

**“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Tit.2:4).**

**“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [behavior] of the wives” (1 Pt.3:1).**

**“Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it” (Pr.3:27).**

**2** (3:19) **Family—Husbands:** Christian husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them. This command destroys all opposition and reaction to the command of subjection given to the wives. How?

The word “love” is not only the love of affection and feelings, but the *agape love* of God Himself. The Christian husband is to love his wife just as much and in the same way that God has loved us. *Agape love* is...

- a selfless and unselfish love.
- a giving and sacrificial love.
- a love of the will as well as of the heart.
- a love of commitment as well as of affection.
- a love that works for the highest good of the wife.

Very practically, the husband does not seek to have his wife fill his needs, desires, comfort, and interests; but he seeks to meet, nurture, and nourish all these for his wife. It is God's will for the husband to totally sacrifice himself for his wife. And note: he is to do it without bitterness. Wives are just like husbands; they sometimes fail to submit; and when they fail, the husband tends to become bitter or resentful. It is the very nature of men to sense resentment or bitterness; therefore, the Christian husband must struggle and fight against the temptation. A husband is to love sacrificially even if the wife does not deserve to be loved and is utterly unworthy of being loved. Husbands are to obey Christ regardless. It is the will of Christ.

**Thought 1.** Think what an enormous difference would exist between husbands and wives who loved and submitted as Scripture says.

**“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph.5:25).**

**“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pt.3:7).**

**“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen.2:24).**

**“Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth” (Pr.5:18).**

**3** (3:20) **Family—Children:** children obey your parents in all things. The word “obey” (*hupakouete*) means to heed, hearken, comply, and follow the directions or instructions of some guide. When parents guide and direct a child, the child is to obey. And note: he is to obey *“in all things.”* How about the terrible problem of sinful instructions sometimes given to children by abusive parents? This is not what Scripture is talking about. (See note, *Children—Eph.6:1-3* for discussion of child abuse.) Scripture is talking about the normal day to day instructions and guidance which parents give to children. Children are to obey their parents *in all instructions*. What happens when older children have different opinions? They feel like they should be able...

- to have something
- to do something
- to go someplace
- to come in late

Differences always arise, and yet God says that the child is to obey *in all* things. Does this mean the parent is always right? No. It means that the child has a unique opportunity to learn discipline, control, and order. When they go out to face life alone without their parents, they are going to be facing a world that is...

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| • self-centered | • powerful      |
| • demanding     | • competitive   |
| • corrupt       | • threatening   |
| • evil          | • dangerous     |
| • sinful        | • authoritative |

The child has to be prepared, and one of the major preparations is that of discipline or control. When the child becomes an adult, he will have demands made upon him, some of which will be unjust and unfair. He will have to obey the demands in order to survive in this corruptible world. It is up to the Christian children to learn to obey and follow instructions now—while they are still at home. They are to use the instruction of their parents as the training ground for the future—for their adulthood. The more obedient the child, the more disciplined and controlled and prepared he will be to face life when he goes out to face the world.

Note one other point: the child's obedience pleases the Lord. The Lord has one primary objective for the child: to prepare him to be the most balanced and productive adult he can be. Therefore, when the child obeys his parent, the Lord sees the child being disciplined and controlled; He sees the child preparing himself to become a strong adult. Therefore, the child's obedience pleases the Lord.

**“For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death” (Mk.7:10).**

**“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right” (Eph.6:1).**

**“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Col.3:20).**

**“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother” (Pr.1:8).**

**“My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of the mother” (Pr.6:20).**

**“My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee” (Pr.7:1).**

**“A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother” (Pr.10:1).**

**“Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right” (Pr.20:11).**

**“Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old” (Pr.23:22).**

**“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Eccl.12:1).**

- 4** (3:21) **Family—Father:** fathers and parents, do not provoke your children to anger (see note, *Parents*—Eph.6:4 for discussion).

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1 The slave (employee)</b><br/>                 a. Obey your master (employer)—not only when he is watching<br/>                 b. Work—fearing God<br/>                 c. Work heartily—as to the Lord</p> <p>1) Work will be rewarded by Christ</p> | <p><b>B. The Believer &amp; His Work, 3:22-4:1</b></p> <p>22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:<br/>                 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;<br/>                 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the</p> | <p>reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.<br/>                 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 4</b></p> <p>Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.</p> | <p>2) Work will be judged by Christ</p> <p><b>2 The master (employer)</b><br/>                 a. To give justice &amp; equity<br/>                 b. Reason: He has a master</p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BELIEVER, 3:18-4:6**

**B. The Believer and His Work, 3:22-4:1**

(3:22-4:1) **Introduction:** this passage is almost identical with the passage in Ephesians (Eph.6:5-9). It deals with the critical subject of the world's economy: slave and master, labor and management, employee and employer, workman and supervisor. It points out in no uncertain terms that the answer to the basic problems of the workplace is spiritual, not economic. Note that the discussion concerns slaves and their masters, but the instructions are applicable to every generation of workmen, no matter their status.

1. The slave (employee) (v.22-25).
2. The master (employer) (ch.4, v.1).

**1** (3:22-25) **Workman—Employee—Labor:** the workman is to obey; that is, he is to follow the instructions of the person over him. Note that he is to obey "in all things." In the workplace there is to be no instruction that is not to be obeyed. This, of course, does not mean he is to obey orders that are contrary to the teaching of the Lord and damaging to His people and creation. However, it does mean that the Christian workman is to do what he is told to do when he has been given the privilege of a job, the privilege...

- to earn a livelihood and provide for himself and his family.
- to serve humanity through providing some needed product or service.
- to earn enough to help meet the desperate needs of the world and to carry the gospel to the world.

The attitude of the Christian workman is that the energy and effort he puts into his job is important to the Lord. Therefore, the Lord spells out several clear and unmistakable instructions for the Christian workman.

1. The Christian workman is not to work with eyeservice, as a manpleaser; that is, he is not to work only when the boss is watching or standing around. The Christian workman is to work diligently all the time, doing exactly...
  - what he has been instructed *and more*.
  - what is expected of him *and more*.
  - what he should produce *and more*.

The Christian workman should never do the average—never do just what he has been instructed. The Christian workman should always be the best at his job, going beyond the call of duty. (See note, pt.3—Eph.6:5-8 for more discussion.)

**“For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (Jn.12:43).**  
**“The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer” (Pr.29:25).**

2. The Christian workman is to work in *singleness of heart* (see note, pt.2—Eph.6:5-8 for discussion).
3. The Christian workman is to work fearing the Lord. This is to be the very mark of the Christian workman. It is to be his fear and reverence for the Lord that stands out to those working around him. Every man is to be judged for what he does upon this earth, judged for the kind of things he does and judged for how diligently he did the good things. The Christian workman knows...
  - that God is watching his diligence.
  - that God is going to reward him for his diligence.
  - that the heavenly work that is to be awarded him is being delivered by his faithfulness and diligence upon earth.

Therefore, the Christian workman labors ever so diligently in the fear and reverence of the Lord—labors arduously lest he become a castaway and miss out on the best that God has.

**“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor.9:27).**

**“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt.10:28).**

**“And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation” (Lk.1:50).**

**“But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).**

**“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pt.1:17).**

**“What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose” (Ps.25:12).**

**“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!” (Ps.31:19).**

4. The Christian workman is to work heartily—as to the Lord and not to men. The word “heartily” (*ek psuches*) means *out of the soul*. The Christian workman’s labor is to arise out of his soul, from the innermost part of his being. He is not working for the men of this earth, but for the Lord. He is working for the deepest reason possible, for a reason that arises out of his very soul: the Lord Jesus Christ has told him to work and to work diligently. The Lord Jesus is his Lord; therefore, the Christian workman does what his Lord says. But note: there are two other critical reasons why he works diligently.

a. Diligent work will be rewarded by Christ. On earth the workman may be mistreated, used, misused, abused, cheated, bypassed, and taken advantage of; but the Lord knows, and He is going to abundantly reward the diligent workman. In fact, the reward of the inheritance simply explodes the human mind. It stretches far beyond and above all that we can ask or even think. It includes a new body that will be eternal, and a new heavens and earth, and positions of enormous leadership, authority, and service for the Lord Jesus. (See notes—Lk. 16:10-12; Ro. 4:13; DEEPER STUDY # 3—8:17 for more discussion.)

**“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor.4:2).**

**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor.15:58).**

**“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pt.4:10).**

b. Slothful work and idleness will be judged by Christ. Many workmen do wrong on the job; they do wrong by...

- being lazy
- being irresponsible
- being unconcerned
- being unproductive
- being uncaring
- being prejudiced
- cheating
- stealing
- lying
- being careless
- being selfish
- being unfair

The list could go on and on. The point is this: every single person on earth is going to face God for the wrong he has done on the job. He will give an account for his labor and be judged exactly for what he has done. And note: there is no respect of persons. Everyone is going to stand before God—no matter who he is.

**“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt.25:23).**

**“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10).**

**“But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (Col.3:25).**

**2 (4:1) Employer—Businessman—Managers—Masters:** the employer or manager is to be just and fair (equal) with the employee. There is to be just and fair treatment in...

- wages
- work assignments
- production and goals
- expectations and demands
- promotion

The reason is as clearly stated as it could be: the manager or employer has a Master in heaven. The Lord God sees everything management does, and He holds management accountable for every act. (See note, *Managers*—Eph.6:9 for more discussion.)

**“And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph.6:9).**

**“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven” (Col.4:1).**

**“Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning” (Lev.19:13).**

**“At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD” (Dt.24:15).**

**“If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me” (Job 31:13).**

**“Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work” (Jer.22:13).**

**“And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling [the hired workman] in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts” (Mal.3:5).**

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| <p><b>1 Pray &amp; continue in prayer</b><br/> a. Persevere in prayer<br/> b. Watch in prayer<br/> c. Pray with thanksgiving<br/> d. Pray for others, in particular for their ministries—be an intercessor</p> | <p><b>C. The Believer &amp; His Prayer Life &amp; Witness, 4:2-6</b><br/> 2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;<br/> 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ,</p> | <p>for which I am also in bonds:<br/> 4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.<br/> 5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, re-deeming the time.<br/> 6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.</p> | <p><b>2 Walk wisely before people who are without Christ</b><br/> <b>3 Speak with grace—answering &amp; sharing what it is that makes your life different</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VI**

**THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BELIEVER, 3:18-4:6**

**C. The Believer and His Prayer Life and Witness, 4:2-6**

(4:2-6) **Introduction:** this passage covers two of the most important subjects for the believer—that of his prayer life and his witness.

1. Pray and continue in prayer (v.2-4).
2. Walk wisely before people who are without Christ (v.5).
3. Speak with grace—answering and sharing what it is that makes your life different (v.6).

**1** (4:2-4) **Prayer—Believer, Duty:** the first duty of the believer is to pray and continue in prayer. Four important instructions are given—instructions that desperately need to be heeded.

1. First, *continue steadfastly in prayer*. The word “continue” (proskartereite) means to be constant, persevering, and unwearied in prayer. It means to be in constant and unbroken prayer—to be in constant and unbroken fellowship and communion with God. It means to walk and breathe prayer—to live and move and have our being in prayer. It means to never face a moment when we are not in prayer.

How is this possible? When we have so many duties and affairs that demand our attention, how can we continue and walk in unbroken prayer? What Scripture means is that we...

- develop an *attitude of prayer*.
- walk in a *spirit of prayer*.
- take a mental break from our work and spend a moment *in prayer*.
- *pray always* when our minds are not upon some duty.
- *arise early* and pray before daily activities begin. Spend a worship time with God in prayer. Make this a continued practice.
- *pray before going to bed*. Spend an extended time in prayer before going to bed. Make this a continued practice.

In all honesty, the vast majority of us waste minute after minute every hour in useless daydreaming and wandering thoughts—wasting precious time that could be spent in prayer. If we would learn to captivate these minutes for prayer, we would discover what it is to walk and live in prayer. Note a critical fact: this is the duty of the believer. It is not something God can do for us. We are the ones who have to discipline ourselves to pray. If we do not pray, then prayer never gets done.

Scripture is clear: the believer is to “continue in prayer.”

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:5).

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Mt.7:7).

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Ph.4:6).

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col.4:2).

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms” (Jas.5:13).

“Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually” (1 Chron.16:11).

2. Second, *watch in prayer*. The word “watch” (gregorountes) means to stay awake, be alert, be sleepless, be active, concentrate. It means to fight against distractions, drowsiness, sluggishness, wandering thoughts, and useless daydreaming. It means to discipline our minds and control our thoughts in prayer. Being very honest, this is a problem that afflicts every believer sometime. Overwork, tiredness, pressure, strain—an innumerable list of things can make it very difficult to concentrate in prayer. This is the very reason Paul stresses the need to *watch in prayer*. But note: vigilance in prayer is the duty of the believer. Again, it is not something that God does for us. We are responsible for watching and concentrating. We are the ones who are to discipline our minds and control our thoughts. For this reason, we must never give up in prayer. We must...

- always struggle against drowsiness and wandering thoughts.
- learn to concentrate—to discipline our minds and control our thoughts.
- teach ourselves to watch in prayer.

**“And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mt.26:40-41).**

**“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk.18:1).**

**“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Lk.21:36).**

3. Third, pray with thanksgiving. When someone does something for us, we thank that person. The One Person who has done more for us than anyone else is God. Therefore, we are to thank Him. In fact, God continues to bless and help us; His hand is constantly upon our lives, looking after and caring for us; therefore, we should continually thank Him. Our praise should be lifted up to Him all through the day as we go about our daily affairs. An hour should never pass when we have not praised and thanked God several times. We should never forget His Son—that He actually took our sins upon Himself and bore the judgment and punishment of them for us. This alone should continually fill our hearts with thanksgiving and praise.

**“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.15:57).**

**“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor.6:20).**

**“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Cor.9:15).**

**“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph.5:20).**

**“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Th.5:18).**

**“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb.13:15).**

**“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pt.2:9).**

**“Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people” (1 Chron.16:8).**

**“Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings” (Ps.9:11).**

**“Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High” (Ps.50:14).**

**“Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee” (Ps.67:3).**

**“Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation” (Ps.68:19).**

**“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High” (Ps.92:1).**

4. Fourth, pray for others, in particular for their ministry. Be an intercessor for God’s ministers. Remember Paul was in prison, but note that for which he requested prayer. William Barclay points out that Paul could have asked that the church pray for his release, for a *not guilty verdict* in his upcoming trial (he was not guilty), or for a peaceful end to his life (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.198f). But this is not what he requested. He requested prayer for his ministry. He wanted the believers praying that God would give him...

- opportunity for witnessing—for sharing the mystery or salvation of Christ.
- boldness in witnessing (v.4).

We must always remember that prayer is one of the laws of the universe. Granted, it is a law that is denied by most and ignored by others. Even those who understand it to be one of God’s laws often neglect it. Nevertheless, God has established the spiritual law that He works in response to prayer. Whether we believe it or not, God clearly says that prayer is a law of the universe. Prayer is the law by which He works and moves in behalf of men and their world. Therefore, if we want the blessings of God upon our lives and ministries—if we want the work of God going forth in power and bearing fruit, we must pray for the ministers of the gospel. We must learn to intercede in prayer.

**“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (Jas.4:1-3).**

**“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Mt.21:22).**

**“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Jn.15:7).**

**“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him” (Ps.91:15).**

**“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jer.33:3).**

**2** (4:5) **Believer, Duty—Witness:** walk wisely before people who are without Christ, redeeming the time. Note two significant points.

1. The phrase “*them that are without*” refers to the unbelievers of the world, those who are walking through life without Christ and God. Think what this means: they are walking...

- without hope beyond this life.
- without assurance of life hereafter with God.
- without help in facing the trials and traumas of this life.
- without peace.
- without security.
- without God’s care and deliverance.
- without fellowship with God and His family of believers.
- without freedom from guilt—no assurance of forgiveness of sins.
- without light—no freedom from the darkness of death and the grave.

Scripture paints a sharp contrast between unbelievers who are *without Christ* and believers who are *within Christ*.

**“That at that time ye were without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh [near] by the blood of Christ” (Eph.4:12-13).**

2. Believers are to walk in wisdom toward those who are without Christ, redeeming or making the best use of their time. To walk wisely means...

- that we walk thoughtfully, figuring out how to live for Christ before the world.
- that we walk righteously and godly.
- that we walk guarding every step.
- that we walk doing good works.

And note: we redeem the time; that is, we seek to grasp every moment to live for Christ before the lost of the world. We always look for opportunities to do good and to let our light shine before men. We try to figure out how to make opportunity to bear witness by the way we live.

**“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro.6:4).**

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Gal.5:16).**

**“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph.4:1).**

**“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).**

**“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (Eph.5:15).**

**“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col.2:6).**

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn.1:7).**

**“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn.2:6).**

**3** (4:6) **Believer, Duty—Witness:** speak always with grace, answering and sharing what it is that makes your life different. What an expectation God has of us: to be living a life so different and righteous that men ask us what it is that makes us different. How many live a life that is that different? That godly and righteous? Note exactly what is said.

When we are walking among unbelievers, we are to guard our speech and conversation. We are...

- to make sure that we speak with grace (en charita), that is, with kindness, courtesy, and graciousness.
- to season our conversation with salt; that is, we are to flavor and turn the conversation to tasteful and enjoyable subjects and away from corruptible and tasteless subjects.

What happens when this is done is striking: unbelievers will begin to notice our lives and conversation—that we are different in a good and wholesome way. And some will ask us what it is that gives us such peace and security and assurance in life. Then it is that we have a unique opportunity to witness. Then it is that we can reach out and bring in those who are so tragically without Christ, lost and doomed in despair and hopelessness forever.

**“But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Mt.5:37).**

**“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col.4:6).**

**“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.1:13).**

**“Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you” (Tit.2:8).**

**“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (Jas.3:2).**

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pt.3:15).**

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|---|---|---|--|
| <p><b>1 Tychicus: The believer who served others</b></p> <p><b>2 Onesimus: The believer who sought to correct his past &amp; to make it right</b></p> <p><b>3 Aristarchus: The believer who stood as a companion in trials</b></p> <p><b>4 Mark: The believer who redeemed himself</b></p> <p><b>5 Justus: The Jewish believer who turned from religion to Christ</b></p> | <p><b>VII. CONCLUSION: THE EXAMPLE OF SOME HEROIC CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, 4:7-18</b></p> <p>7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:</p> <p>8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;</p> <p>9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.</p> <p>10 Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)</p> <p>11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been comfort unto me.</p> | <p>12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.</p> <p>13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.</p> <p>14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.</p> <p>15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.</p> <p>16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.</p> <p>17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.</p> <p>18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.</p> | <p><b>6 Epaphras: The believer who fervently prayed &amp; worked hard for the believers of his church</b></p> <p><b>7 Luke: The beloved physician</b></p> <p><b>8 Demas: The believer who slipped back</b></p> <p><b>9 Nymphas: The believer who kept an open house<sup>DS1</sup></b></p> <p><b>10 Archippus: The believer who was given a special task &amp; needed encouragement</b></p> <p><b>11 Paul: The believer who was faithful to the point of suffering imprisonment</b></p> |
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**DIVISION VII**

**CONCLUSION: THE EXAMPLE OF SOME HEROIC CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, 4:7-18**

(4:7-18) **Introduction:** this is one of the great lists of God's Hall of Fame, some of the heroic Christian believers of history.

1. Tychicus: the believer who served others (v.7-8).
2. Onesimus: the believer who sought to correct his past and to make it right (v.9).
3. Aristarchus: the believer who stood as a companion in trials (v.10).
4. Mark: the believer who redeemed himself (v.10).
5. Justus: the Jewish believer who turned from religion to Christ (v.11).
6. Epaphras: the believer who fervently prayed and worked hard for the believers of his church (v.12-13).
7. Luke: the beloved physician (v.14).
8. Demas: the believer who slipped back (v.14).
9. Nymphas: the believer who kept an open house (v.15-16).
10. Archippus: the believer who was given a special task and needed encouragement (v.17).
11. Paul: the believer who was faithful to the point of suffering imprisonment (v.18).

**1** (4:7-8) **Tychicus:** the believer who served others (see note and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Eph.6:21-22 for discussion).

**2** (4:9) **Onesimus:** the believer who sought to correct his past and make it right. Onesimus was the runaway slave talked about in the Epistle to Philemon. Onesimus had fled from Colosse to Rome. Note what Paul says about him.

1. He was a faithful and beloved brother. He had been led to the Lord either by Paul or some other believer in Rome. In either case, Paul knew Onesimus and knew him well. Paul was able to declare...

- that he was faithful to the Lord. He obeyed the Lord and kept His commandments and faithfully walked in Him day by day and bore testimony to His saving grace.

He was also a beloved brother, a brother in the Lord, who was held so dearly by other Christian believers that he was known as a *beloved brother*.

2. He was so faithful to Christ and so beloved that he was now "one of you." Remember: he was a slave and some in the Colosse church were wealthy property owners who owned slaves. This is a significant point. There are to be no social distinctions in the Lord's church. The poorest person is to be as welcomed and loved as the richest person.

3. He was returning to Colosse with Tychicus. Why? Because he had broken the law by running away from his master, Philemon, and he wanted to make things right. He had been converted and God had forgiven him all his sins. He wanted Philemon to forgive him as well. (See The Epistle of Philemon for more discussion.)

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison” (Mt.5:23-25).

“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (Mk.11:25).

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col.3:13).

**3** (4:10) **Aristarchus**: the believer who stood as a companion in trials. Scripture says the following about Aristarchus:

- ⇒ He was a member of the Thessalonian church, a citizen of Thessalonica (Acts 19:29; 20:4).
- ⇒ He was one of the believers attacked by the violent mob in Ephesus. The citizens were rioting against Christianity because so many people were being converted that it was cutting into the sale of idols made to the goddess Diana. The fact that Aristarchus was one of the believers attacked and dragged before the mob shows that he was a leader and spokesman for Christ (Acts 19:29).
- ⇒ He went with Paul to minister in Asia (Acts 20:4).
- ⇒ He is seen travelling with Paul to Rome after Paul had been arrested and was being transferred to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:2).
- ⇒ He is seen as a fellow prisoner with Paul in Rome while Paul was awaiting trial on the charge of treason. Apparently he too was being charged with the same crime (Col.4:10; Phile.24).

The point is that he was a *real companion*, a companion who stood by the side of his fellow believers through thick and thin. He would never think of deserting his dear friends or the Lord, no matter how difficult the task or terrible the trial. He would face imprisonment and suffer death before he would be a traitor. He was a good man to have around when facing trials, for he would stand by your side.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” (Heb.13:3).

**4** (4:10) **John Mark**: the believer who redeemed himself. Mark had earlier deserted Paul and the ministry (see DEEPER STUDY # 4, *John Mark*—Acts 12:25; 13:13 for discussion). But note what Paul says to the Colossian church. He tells the church that they are to receive him if he is able to visit them. Apparently, some earlier instructions had been sent to the churches founded by Paul telling them about Mark’s desertion. But now the young man had repented and recommitted his life to Christ. He had redeemed himself; therefore, he was to be welcomed.

**Thought 1.** When a believer fails and sins, even if it is desertion of Christ, he is to be welcomed back with open arms once he has repented. We must not hold a person’s failure and sin against him. Christ has forgiven us for so much—all of us—therefore we must forgive and welcome our brothers and sisters back into our hearts and lives.

“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).

“Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Pt.4:9).

“Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities” (Ps.51:9).

“I, even I, am he that bloteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Is.43:25).

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Is.55:7).

**5** (4:11) **Justus**: the Jewish believer who turned from religion to Christ. Note the word “circumcision”: this means that he was a circumcised Jew who lived in Rome. Jews, of course, were strict religionists. Most of the Jews in Rome rejected Christ and turned a cold shoulder to Paul and his preaching of Christ (cp. Acts 28:17-29). But there were some who turned from religion to Christ (Acts 28:24). Justus was one, and he apparently became so strong in the Lord that he became a close companion of Paul, close enough for Paul to mention him to the Colossians.

Note: Paul says that all believers mentioned so far are Jewish believers, believers who had turned from religion to Christ. They were now working with Paul and other believers—working for the kingdom of God. Note that Paul also says that they had ministered to him personally and were a comfort to him while he was in prison.

**Thought 1.** It is an absolute essential for those who trust religion to turn to Christ. Religion cannot make a person acceptable to God; only Christ can.

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees [religionists], ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:20).

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt.7:21).

“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mk.7:6).

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Ro.10:3-4).

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim.3:5).

“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Pr.20:9).

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Pr.30:12).

**6** (4:12-13) **Epaphras**: the believer who fervently prayed and worked hard for the believers of his church.

⇒ He was the “*minister*” of the Colossian church (Col.1:7).

⇒ He was “a *faithful minister* of Christ” (Col.1:7).

⇒ He was “a *servant of Christ*” (Col.4:12).

⇒ He was a “*fellow servant*” who was held ever so dearly to Paul’s heart (Col.1:7).

⇒ He was so committed and dedicated to Christ that Paul called him “my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus” (Phile.23).

⇒ He was a believer who fervently labored and toiled in prayer for his dear people in Colosse (Col.4:12). He prayed in particular for one thing: that they might be perfect and complete in all the will of God; that is, that they might *know* the complete or full will of God and do it perfectly.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col.4:2).

“Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually” (1 Chron.16:11).

⇒ He was a minister who worked hard for his own church and for all the churches that surrounded him (Col.4:13, Laodicea and Hieropolis). He prayed and prayed much, but he also worked much—so much that his labor was even a testimony to the great minister Paul.

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (Jn.4:34-35).

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man work” (Jn.9:4).

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor.9:24-25).

“Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily” (Col.1:29).

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Tim.1:6).

**7** (4:14) **Luke**: the physician who was beloved by Paul and the church (see Introduction, *Author—the Gospel of Luke*; DEEPER STUDY # 2—Acts 16:10 for discussion). Note one other fact here in Colossians: Luke is said to be the “*beloved physician*”—a physician who was endeared to the hearts of believers. Apparently, his medical treatment of believers was diligent, compassionate, warm, and personal. He had an effective ministry for Christ among the believers.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).

“Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Ro.12:9).

“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (1 Th.3:12).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pt.1:22).

**8** (4:14) **Demas**: the believer who slipped back (see note, *Demas—Phile.24* for discussion).

**9** (4:15) **Nymphas**: the believer who kept an open house and opened his home to the church. Note that Nymphas lived in Laodicea and Paul knew about him and his great testimony for Christ. He was so committed to Christ that he had opened his home to all the believers in the city, allowing them to use his home as the meeting place for the church. Remember: the early church had no buildings; therefore they met in the homes of believers for joint worship and fellowship.

“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Ro.12:13).

“But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate” (Tit.1:8).

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb.13:2).

“Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Pt.4:9).

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

(4:15-16) **Epistle to the Laodiceans:** What is the letter sent to the Laodiceans?

- ⇒ Was it a letter that has been lost?
- ⇒ Was it the *Epistle to Philemon*?
- ⇒ Was it the *Epistle to the Ephesians*?

No one knows, and opinions vary as to what the letter was. But note Paul’s instructions to circulate it and the Colossian letters around and among the churches. This is a striking point: it means that the letters of the New Testament are not just casual letters between friends, but are for believers of every generation and for every church. They are the inspired Word of God, and therefore are to be available to all believers to study and to live out the Word day by day.

**10** (4:17) **Archippus:** the believer who was given a special task and needed encouragement. What was the ministry or task assigned to Archippus? We do not know. There is only one other mention of him and that is where Paul calls him his fellowsoldier (Phile.2). Whatever it was it must have been a task equal to the thrust of a military patrol. Military commitment and discipline must have been demanded. This is certainly understandable as the minister launches out to carry the gospel to a lost and ungodly world. Whatever the case with Archippus, he needed to be encouraged; he needed to *take heed and complete* his ministry.

**Thought 1.** How many quit and never finish the task and ministry given them? How many...

- need to “take heed” (blepe): to keep their eye on God’s call and not allow the world and its possessions and attacks to defeat them?
- need to “fulfil” (plerois): keep on fulfilling and completing the ministry?

**11** (4:18) **Paul:** the believer who was faithful to the point of suffering imprisonment and possible martyrdom. Paul signs the letter himself. Remember: his wrists were chained so he had to have a secretary write the letter while he dictated it. He simply closes by saying.

- ⇒ “Remember my bonds”—imprisonment; that is, pray for me.
- ⇒ “Grace be with you”—the favor and blessings of God—all of which we do not deserve but which He pours out upon us anyway.





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