

The Letters of Paul

Presented with an amended version of the
King James Bible and including commentary.



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Preface

This manual is compiled for the simple reason that people needed a better way to study the King James Bible than using the archaic language of the original version. Another need was to balance the altering of the King James Bible so that any such version would maintain the word for word literalness of the King James Bible. I have accomplished both goals by retaining the grammar and sentence structure of the original version but replaced archaic words with the modern version of the word, so that the reader can better understand what the words say and mean.

The original translators did insert some words to make the text more readable. Such insertions are italicized and printed in a gray tone. When I altered the original word for either spelling or word replacement of archaic words, such as thee and thou, I made the change bold so that the reader could identify such changes to the original. Where there was an archaic word that was not replaceable without using an entirely different word, I placed the new word or definition in these brackets []. I also used the same brackets for offering some limited commentary or clarification to make the text clearer to the reader. I used a different insert for lengthy commentaries. I used these brackets { } to insert other bible references that were referred to in the text, such as Messianic prophecies, which were presented in purple for the color versions of this manual and in black for non-Messianic references.

I need to make a brief comment on the commentaries in this manual. All commentaries are subjective and represent the best understanding of the text that is being commented on. You may not agree with all the commentaries that I make and that is alright as long as you go to the Scriptures to see if what I am saying is right or not. No human being is infallible, that is GOD's domain, but we humans do the best we can to share the biblical knowledge that we have. I would encourage you to use this manual while praying to the Holy Spirit for understanding so that you may grow in the knowledge of GOD and learn of His wisdom.

It is my hope that the amended version of the King James Bible for the Letters of Paul will be an improvement in studying the Bible, which is the most important written work for gaining spiritual maturity, victory over sin and for preparation for the kingdom of God that is to come. This manual is the second of three New Testament manuals that I am preparing. The first manual covered the four Gospels and the Book of Acts. This manual covers Romans to Philemon. The final manual will cover the apostolic writings that extend from Hebrews to Revelation.

I believe that making the New Testament texts more readable and understandable will be a great aid in promoting spiritual growth in the reader and promoting greater spiritual power in the body of Christ as the final days of this age expire. May we all be ready for what is to come and to have a greater expectation for the blessed hope of being with Jesus for all eternity. May GOD richly bless you.

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The Letter to the Romans

Introduction

The epistle or letter to the Romans was written by Paul the Apostle circa AD 57 and thought to have been written from his ministry in Corinth. Paul had wanted to visit the church in Rome but had not been able to at the time of the writing. He would eventually get to Rome as a prisoner as detailed in the Book of Acts. The purpose of the letter was to encourage the home churches in Rome as they would suffer persecution from the Roman government. It was also to set forth the theological doctrines or teachings of the Church such as:

- The failure to worship the creator and instead to perform idol worship.
- For the Jewish believer to not take pride in the heritage
- The opposition of sin and righteousness
- The roles of the Law and Grace
- Justification by faith and not works
- Becoming servants of righteousness and not sin
- Life in the Spirit of GOD
- The Sovereignty of GOD
- Salvation to all people
- The role of Israel and the grafted in Gentiles
- Christian character and conduct
- Submission to authorities
- Walking in love
- Proper judgment and fellowship
- Our hope in Christ

Greetings from Paul

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, ² (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) ³ Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; ⁴ And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: ⁵ By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: ⁶ Among whom are **you** also the called of Jesus Christ: ⁷ To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Seeking to Go to Rome

⁸ First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. ⁹ For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; ¹⁰ Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. ¹¹ For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end **you** may be established; ¹² That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. ¹³ Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some

fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.¹⁴ I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.¹⁵ So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Righteousness by Faith

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to **everyone** that **believes**; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.¹⁷ For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Judgment for Forsaking GOD

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; ¹⁹ Because that which may be known of God is manifest [plainly seen] in them; for God **has** shewed [revealed] *it* unto them. ²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: ²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. ²⁴ Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: ²⁵ Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed **forever**. Amen. ²⁶ For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: ²⁷ And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence [penalty] of their error which was meet [proper]. ²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate [unfit for human behavior] mind, to do those things which are not convenient [fitting or proper]; ²⁹ Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness [greed], maliciousness [desiring to injure]; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity [depravity of heart]; whisperers [slanderers], ³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ Without understanding [of the things of GOD], covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable [unreasonable], unmerciful: ³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

God is Righteous in His Judgments

Chapter 2: ¹ Therefore **you are** inexcusable, O man, whosoever **you are** that **judge** [to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong]: for wherein **you judge** another, **you condemn** [pass sentence] yourself; for **you** that **judge do** the same things. ² But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. ³ And **think you** this, O man, that **judge** them which do such things, and **do** the same, that **you shall** escape the judgment of God?

Commentary: Paul is coming against self-righteous people who think they do nothing wrong but other people are wrong. GOD will judge them for the wrong that they think they are not doing.

⁴ Or **despise you** the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God **leads you** to repentance?

Commentary: it is the mercy and grace of GOD that allows us to come to repentance, even when we were not seeking GOD, for He was seeking us. We should therefore not reject His mercy and grace.

⁵ But after **your** hardness and impenitent [unrepentant] heart **treasures** up unto **yourself** wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; ⁶ Who will render [reward] to every man according to his deeds: ⁷ To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and **honor** and immortality, eternal life: ⁸ But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, ⁹ Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that **does** evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; ¹⁰ But glory, **honor**, and peace, to every man that **works** good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: ¹¹ For there is no respect of persons with God.

Commentary: GOD does not show partiality or favoritism to any individual regardless of their station in life. All who do evil will receive a just determination for their evil and all those who do righteously will receive heavenly rewards for their obedience to the will of GOD.

Judgment and the Law

¹² For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; ¹³ (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. ¹⁴ For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: ¹⁵ Which **show** the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Commentary: Paul is answering the age old question of what happens to people who have not heard about Jesus. People will be judged by the light that they have. For people who have not heard about Jesus or the Law of GOD will be judged by their actions that reflect the Law. In other words, those people who listen to their conscience and do good things that reflect the nature of the Law (acts of righteousness) will be judged as though they had heard the Law and Jesus. But those who override their conscience and perform acts of unrighteousness will be judged for their violation of their conscience, as will people who have heard the law and Jesus but have rejected it.

¹⁶ In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. ¹⁷ Behold, **you are** called a Jew, and **rest** [trust] in the law, and **make your** boast of God, ¹⁸ And **know** *his* will, and **approve** [accept as true] the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; ¹⁹ And **are** confident that **you yourself are** a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, ²⁰ An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which **has** the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. ²¹ **You** therefore which **teach** another, **teach you** not **yourself**? **You** that preach a man should not steal, **do you** steal? ²² **You** that **say** a man should not commit adultery, **do you** commit adultery? **You** that abhor [hate] idols, **do you** commit sacrilege [idolatry]?

Commentary: Paul is emphasizing the hypocrisy of self-righteous people who think that they do no wrong, but they judge others for the wrong that they perceive that they are doing. These self-righteous efforts are of no spiritual value and are very wrong in the eyes of GOD.

²³ **You** that **make your** boast of the law, through breaking the law **dishonor you** God? ²⁴ For the name of God is blasphemed [profaned, made on no effect] among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. ²⁵ For circumcision [a symbol of following the Law] **truly profits**, if **you** keep the law: but if **you** be a breaker of the law, **Your** circumcision is made uncircumcision

Commentary: Paul is making the point that it does not count in the eyes of GOD if you say you are keeping the Law but are not in reality keeping the Law; for then your breaking of the Law makes your self-righteousness of no effect.

²⁶ Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision [righteousness before God]? ²⁷ And shall not uncircumcision [those who are not self-righteous] which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge **you**, who by the letter and circumcision **do** transgress [break] the law? ²⁸ For he is not a Jew [a symbol the righteous people of GOD], which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: ²⁹ But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

Commentary: Paul is making the point that the real people of GOD are not those who only have an outward show of religion, but the real people of God are those people who have a soft and obedient heart towards God and want to do the will of GOD in their lives. The mere performance of religious rituals without a heart that wants to serve GOD is not pleasing to GOD. However, people who have a soft and obedient heart are pleasing to GOD even if they make errs along the way.

God is Righteousness

Chapter 3: ¹ What advantage then **has** the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? ² Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. ³ For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? ⁴ God forbid: **yes**, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That **you might** be justified in **your** sayings [declarations], and **might** overcome when **you are** judged. ⁵ But if our unrighteousness commends [establishes] the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who **takes** vengeance? (I speak as a man) ⁶ God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? ⁷ For if the truth of God **has** more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? ⁸ And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

Commentary: Paul is making the point that the Jews possessed the Law, which was to bring them to righteousness, but some did not obey, so did that make the Law of none effect? He then counters the argument that it was OK that some did disobey for it brought the grace of GOD into effect. We should never sin so than GOD can show His grace for all sin has negative consequences. We can enjoy the fruits of righteous in GOD by being obedient, thus invalidating the argument that sin is OK since we are covered in God's grace.

Humanity Is not Righteous

⁹ What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; ¹⁰ As it is written {Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3}, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹ There is none that **understands**, there is none that **seeks** after God. ¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that **does** good, no, not one. ¹³ {Psalm 5:9; 10:7; 140:3}; Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: ¹⁴ Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: ¹⁵ {Isaiah 59:7, 8} Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: ¹⁶ Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: ¹⁷ And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸ {Psalm 36:1} There is no fear of God before their eyes. ¹⁹ Now we know that what things soever the law **says**, it **says** to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Commentary: Paul clearly states the fallen nature of mankind and that the by the Law their evil deeds are made known. Therefore, since no person can keep the Law, all are condemned by the Law, but GOD provided a way of escape from the judgment of the Law (the Ten Commandments, GOD's Moral Law).

God's Righteousness through Faith

²¹ But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested [revealed], being witnessed by the law and the prophets; ²² Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: ²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ Whom God **has** set forth *to be* a propitiation [the appeasing sacrifice that cancels our guilt before GOD] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission [forgiveness] of sins that are past, through the forbearance [patient mercy] of God; ²⁶ To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which **believes** in Jesus [and His sacrifice for our sins]. ²⁷ Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? **No**: but by the law of faith. ²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. ²⁹ *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: ³⁰ Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. ³¹ Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: **yes**, we establish the law

Commentary: *Paul establishes the fact that no human being can be justified by keeping the Law (the Ten Commandments, GOD's Moral Law), so GOD provides justification or right standing with Him by the righteousness that Jesus had. In other words, since we cannot be righteous before GOD in our own efforts, we can be righteous before GOD by believing on Jesus and accepting His righteousness for our lives. It is in this manner that the righteousness of Jesus can be manifested in our life, as we live as Jesus lived by faith in GOD and His Power to help us live a holy life. And this opportunity for justification is being offered to both Jew and Gentile (non-Jew).*

Abraham Justified by Faith

Chapter 4: ¹ What shall we say then that Abraham our father [the father of all who believe in God by faith], as pertaining to the flesh, **has** found? ² For if Abraham were justified by works, he **has** *whereof* to glory; but not before God. ³ For what **says** the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. ⁴ Now to him that **works** is the reward not reckoned [computed] of grace, but of debt. ⁵ But to him that **works** not, but **believes** on him that **justifies** the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness

Commentary: *Paul is saying that we cannot earn our justification (the abolishing of our guilt and sentence for sin) by doing good works for we cannot earn our way into GOD's favor and grace. Grace is a free gift to all who believe and cannot be earned by our good works. Our good works however are a sign that GOD has forgiven us, and we show our appreciation for His great grace by good works.*

⁶ Even as David also **described** the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works {Psalm 32:1, 2}, ⁷ *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. ⁸ Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. ⁹ **Comes** this blessedness then upon the circumcision [Jews] *only*, or upon the uncircumcision [Gentiles] also? for we say that faith was reckoned [accounted] to Abraham for righteousness. ¹⁰ How was it then reckoned [accounted or imputed]? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision [Abraham was not circumcised at that time] . ¹¹ And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith [the Jewish males were circumcised as a sign of the covenant with GOD as GOD's people] which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed {accounted] unto them also: ¹² And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumcised.

Commentary: *Paul is appealing to the Jewish believers to accept the Gentile believers who were not circumcised in the flesh but were circumcised in the Spirit by GOD. This spiritual circumcision was more valued by GOD than the fleshly circumcision that was done to babies, for this circumcision was an act of voluntary surrender to GOD which a baby would not be able to perform.*

The Promise to Abraham was Fulfilled Through Faith

¹³ For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: ¹⁵ Because the law works wrath [breaking the Law brings wrath]: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression. ¹⁶ Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ (As it is written, I have made **you** a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who **quickens** [makes alive] the dead, and **call** those things which be not as though they were [just as GOD created the world out of nothing]. ¹⁸ Who against hope believed in hope, [Abraham and Sarah were beyond the normal child bearing years, yet Isaac was born to them] that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. ¹⁹ And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: ²⁰ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; ²¹ And being fully persuaded that, what he [GOD] had promised, he was able also to perform. ²² And therefore it was imputed [credited] to him for righteousness. ²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; ²⁴ But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed [credited], if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; ²⁵ Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Commentary: we have access to this same promise if we believe and trust GOD for our salvation rather than vainly trying to earn salvation through works. We simply believe what God has promised and it is credited to us as righteous standing before him.

Peace with God Through Faith

Chapter 5: ¹ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand [justified before God, forgiven], and rejoice in hope of the glory of God [our ultimate salvation]. ³ And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations [trials] also: knowing that tribulation works patience [endurance, as we wait on GOD to deliver us from the trial]; ⁴ And patience, experience [we experience GOD fulfilling His promises to us]; and experience, hope [our confident expectation that GOD will see us through all our trials]: ⁵ And hope makes not ashamed [of our past failures]; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost [Spirit] which is given unto us. ⁶ For when we were yet without strength [to save ourselves], in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure [maybe] for a good man some would even dare to die. ⁸ But God **commended** [proved] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. ¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled [made peace] to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. ¹¹ And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement [forgiveness for our sins].

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

¹² Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Commentary: *there was no codified Law as given on Mt Sinai, but there were commandments and instructions given to people to obey, such as the command to not eat from the Tree of Good and Evil and the honoring of the seventh day Sabbath, Genesis 2:1-3, which were the basis for sin and as such made the offender worthy of death.*

¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. ¹⁵ But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many. ¹⁶ And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. ¹⁷ For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) ¹⁸ Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. ¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. ²⁰ Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: ²¹ That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Commentary: *Paul is emphasizing the point that through one man, Adam, sin entered into all men leading to death. But the grace implied by the sacrifice of Jesus is given to many, for the gift of grace is for all who will accept it. We are blessed to have GOD want to bless us with eternal life.*

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

Chapter 6: ¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? ² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? ³ Know **you** not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: ⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Commentary: *Paul is making the point that we were not saved so that we could go on sinning, but we were saved so that we would be free from sin. Paul uses the analogy of baptism to emphasize the point that we are considered spiritually dead to sin by our rebirth. We surrender our old life that dies with Christ, and we assume a new life that is freed from the power of sin. Paul describes the following in Colossians 2:11, 12 NLT: When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. We are to emulate the sinless life of Jesus as GOD empowers us to walk in the following manner, Galatians 5:16 NKJV: I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh (be tempted to commit sinful acts). There is no longer any excuse for us to continue to sin after we have been set free from sin. This is the point that Paul is making.*

⁷ For he that is dead is freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: ⁹ Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead **dies** no more; death hath no more dominion over him. ¹⁰ For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he **lives**, he lives unto God. ¹¹ Likewise reckon [consider] **you** also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that **you** should obey it in the lusts thereof. ¹³ Neither yield **you** your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you: for **you** are not under the law, but under grace.

Commentary: before we came to Christ we were under the Law because we were law breakers by our nature (1 Timothy 1:9). But after receiving a new nature by the born-again experience, we are no longer under the Law because we are not law breakers in nature. We can still commit sin by choice, but we are no longer compelled to sin since the power of the sin nature has been cut away. And just because we know that God will forgive us of such sin, is not an excuse to sin, for we need to remember that sin always carries a negative consequence even if it is forgiven.

Slaves to Righteousness

¹⁵ What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. ¹⁶ Know **you** not, that to whom **you** yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants **you** are to whom **you** obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? ¹⁷ But God be thanked, that **you** were the servants of sin, but **you** have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸ Being then made free from sin, **you** became the servants of righteousness. ¹⁹ I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as **you** have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity [wickedness]; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. ²⁰ For when **you** were the servants of sin, **you** were free from righteousness

Commentary: but the penalty for your freedom from righteousness was death and you had to face all the negative consequences of your sin.

²¹ What fruit had **you** then in those things whereof **you** are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. ²² But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. ²³ For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Released from the Law

Chapter 7: ¹ Know **you** not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law **has** dominion over a man as long as he **lives**? ² For the woman which **has** a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. ³ So then if, while *her* husband **lives**, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. ⁴ Wherefore, my brethren, **you** also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that **you** should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead [Jesus], that we

should bring forth fruit unto God. ⁵ For when we were in the flesh, the motions [afflictions] of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. ⁶ But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

Commentary: *Paul is making the point that the Law being for the lawless increased the awareness of sin for the sin warred against the righteousness of GOD. But now that we have experienced spiritual death in Christ, we are free from the negative effects of the Law for we are no longer lawless but have been risen in obedience to the righteousness of GOD. So, we are no longer dealing with the letter of the Law which spelled out rules for us to follow (or disobey) but instead we are dealing with the spirit of the Law which is love. In other words, we no longer struggle with the adherence to rules for we are operating in the realm of love that is being selfless in our actions, which is being sinless, rather than being selfish in our actions, which is being sinful.*

The Law and Sin

⁷ What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. **No**, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet [be selfish]. ⁸ But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought [worked] in me all manner of concupiscence [forbidden desires]. For without the law sin *was* dead [we were not aware of sin until we were told the law or rules]. ⁹ For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

Commentary: Paul is using an extreme to make a point. We were always 'dead' in our sins before we knew about the Law, but we were not aware that it was sin, so we felt alive and free. But with the knowledge of the Law came guilt and death.

¹⁰ And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*. ¹² Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. ¹³ Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful [revealing to us the need for a savior]. ¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. ¹⁶ If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. ¹⁷ Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that **dwells** in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) **dwells** no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. ¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. ²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Commentary: *Paul is describing the plight of the unsaved person who struggles to be and do good, yet they find that they fail by engaging in sin. The sin nature has a natural gravity to it that drags a person ever deeper into greater sin and depravity. A sinner is one who is compelled by the sin nature to sin. So, what is the solution? Fortunately, through the grace of GOD we can become born again and receive a new nature that seeks to do good and be good. We turn our life around not by our own power but by the power and grace of GOD. We walk from the darkness of sin into the great light of obedience to the righteousness of GOD through the sacrifice of Jesus and guidance of the Holy Spirit.*

Life in the Spirit

Chapter 8: ¹ *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus **has** made me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: ⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ⁵ For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally [worldly] minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. ⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ But **you** are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. ¹⁰ And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make alive] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.

Commentary: *Jesus promised to give us the Holy Spirit after He ascended to heaven. The Holy Spirit will not only guide us into all truth, John 16:13, but will also dwell in us, John 14:7. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is what leads us to become like Jesus thus walking in righteousness, for the Spirit will direct us to heavenly things and away from sin. But if we do not have the Holy Spirit in us and we are just natural people, thus the sin nature will rule our lives and we will not walk in the righteousness of GOD. It is absolutely essential for eternal life to be born again unto the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, so that we can escape carnality and worldliness, to live in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus.*

Heirs with Christ as God's Children

¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors [obligated], not to the flesh [sinful desires], to live after the flesh. ¹³ For if **you** live after the flesh, **you** shall die [both physically and spiritually]: but if **you** through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, **you** shall live [though we die physically, we will be raised up to eternal life spiritually]. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ¹⁵ For **you** have not received the spirit of bondage [the sin nature] again to fear; but **you** have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father [we become GOD's adopted children]. ¹⁶ The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer [follow the selfless and humble example of Jesus to full obedience of the Father's will] with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

Future Glory

¹⁸ For I reckon [reason] that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waits for the manifestation [revealing] of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creature [creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who **has** subjected *the same* in hope, ²¹ Because the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Commentary: *GOD will restore the creation to what it was before the fall of mankind, which brought death and destruction to the creation. The children of God will honor the creation as God originally intended us to do*

²² For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. ²³ And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the **first fruits** of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man **sees**, why **does** he yet hope for? ²⁵ But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*. ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also **helps** our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself **makes** intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ And he that **searches** the hearts **knows** what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he **makes** intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

Commentary: *This is why it is important to surrender our lives to GOD and become born again, so we will have the Holy Spirit in our lives helping us to become like Jesus, so that we will inherit the heavenly blessing associated with being the children of GOD. Those people who resist Jesus will not be the children of GOD and will forfeit their heavenly blessing and will be separated from GOD for all eternity.*

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. ²⁹ For whom he did foreknow [who would accept Christ], he also did predestinate [determined] *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate [predetermined], them he also called [invited to His grace]: and whom he called, them he also justified [made to have right standing before Him]: and whom he justified, them he also glorified [honored].

Commentary: *we must remember that all things work out for our good as we experience the trials of this life, for these trials are designed to make us into the image of Jesus. We endure the pain and suffering of earthly trials for the promise of the joy of heavenly blessings when Christ returns.*

God's Everlasting Love

³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? ³² He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who

shall lay **anything** to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that **justifies**. ³⁴ Who *is* he that condemns? *It is* Christ that died, **yes** rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also **makes** intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, For **your** sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷ **No**, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Commentary: *Paul is emphasizing the truth that GOD loves us so much that nothing can cause Him to love us less. GOD is always with us, even if we experience extreme challenges and even if we are martyrs. It is true that GOD will work any situation for our eternal benefit. We can therefore have confidence in the midst of our trials and afflictions that GOD is there to support us and to work things out for our good.*

God's Sovereign Choice

Chapter 9: ¹ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost [Spirit], ² That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. ³ For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: ⁴ Who are Israelites; to whom *pertains* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises; ⁵ Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed **forever**. Amen.

Commentary: *The people of Israel were blessed with the many spiritual blessings that Paul mentions, yet most of them missed Jesus as the Messiah. They not only missed the Messiah, but they became opponents of Jesus, as was Paul in the beginning. This is one reason that Paul aches over the people of Israel for they were so close to the kingdom and missed it. We must not let that be the case for us.*

⁶ Not as though the word of God **has** taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel: ⁷ Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. ⁸ That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. ⁹ For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son {referring to Genesis 18:14}.

Commentary: *Paul is making an especially important point as to who the real Israel is. The Jews thought that they were Israel because they had direct lineage to Abraham, but Paul refutes this reasoning by stating that Ismael was also a son of Abraham and his descendants were not of the promise. Only the descendants of Isaac were to be of the promise and then only those that believed God and obeyed Him. Many Jews gave lip service to GOD but did not really serve Him, thus they were not of spiritual Israel that would be made up of those people that actually believed GOD, just as Abraham did, and then obeyed God. Mere genetics were not sufficient for it took a heart that loved GOD to be considered spiritual Israel, the true Israel. And because of this promise to spiritual Israel, we Gentiles can be considered to be part of Israel as Paul explains later in this letter.*

¹⁰ And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; ¹¹ (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that **calls**;) ¹² It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger {Genesis 25:23}. ¹³ As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated {Malachi 1:2, 3}. ¹⁴ What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

Commentary: *GOD is often misunderstood over passages like this one where it seems to imply that GOD is showing partiality to one person over the other. But the Scripture says that GOD does not show partiality or favoritism, James 3:17. So why does GOD choose one person over another? GOD chooses based on His overall plan for humanity and has the benefit of knowing how each person will live out their life. In the case of Esau, God knew that he would be rebellious to Him but in the case of Jacob, God knew that Jacob would surrender to Him and that GOD's purposes would be fulfilled. So, the choice of Jacob over Esau was not due to partiality but was due to the response to GOD that the person would live out in their life.*

¹⁵ For he **said** to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion {Exodus 33:19}. ¹⁶ So then *it is* not of him that **wills**, nor of him that runs, but of God that **shows** mercy. ¹⁷ For the scripture **said** unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised **you** up, that I might **show** my power in **you**, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth {Exodus 9:16}. ¹⁸ Therefore **has** he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he **harden**.

Commentary: *This text has often been misunderstood regarding GOD hardening the heart of Pharaoh. It should be remembered that GOD will not impose His will on people for people have free will to make their own choices, which is fair by God. But GOD can choose by His sovereignty to place people in positions where they need to make a choice to work with GOD or go against Him. This is what GOD did with Pharaoh. GOD gave him opportunities to repent by way of the plaques, but it was Pharaoh who chose to harden his heart to GOD and become stubborn. Pharaoh could have chosen to soften his heart to GOD but he chose not to. It is the same for us. Will we soften our heart to GOD, or will we resist him and cause our hearts to be hardened?*

¹⁹ **You will** say then unto me, Why **does** he yet find fault? For who has resisted his will? ²⁰ **No** but, O man, who **are you** that **reply** against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why **have you** made me thus? ²¹ Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? ²² *What* if God, willing to **show his** wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: ²³ And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, ²⁴ Even us, whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? ²⁵ As he said also in Hosea {1:10; 2:23}, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. ²⁶ And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. ²⁷ Isaiah {10:22, 23} also cries concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: ²⁸ For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. ²⁹ And as Isaiah {1:9} said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

Commentary: Paul is explaining the sovereignty of GOD in the affairs of humanity. We first must acknowledge that since GOD is the creator of humanity, He has the right to deal with us as He pleases. Secondly, GOD knew before He created us that we would fall, but He had a plan for our rescue. Thirdly, every person is born with the opportunity to take advantage of His plan of rescue. Fourthly, if some people chose not to take advantage of the rescue and instead resist GOD and ignore Him, then He has every right to deal with them as He has purpose to do so. Finally, GOD has only the best of intentions for all of humanity, so if GOD chooses to use people who reject Him to benefit the people that accept Him, then what right do we have to complain. GOD could have destroyed us all due to sin, but He choose instead to bless the accepting ones with His blessing of eternal life. The ones who have rejected Him have nothing to say in their defense since they openly have refused the grace of GOD by the hardening of their hearts towards Him.

Israel's Unbelief

³⁰ What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. ³¹ But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. ³² Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that **stumbling stone**; ³³ As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a **stumbling stone** and rock of offence: and whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed.

Commentary: Paul is refuting the idea that it was unfair for the Gentile to receive salvation and the Jews to whom the oracles of GOD were first given did not receive salvation. First of all, some of the Jews did accept salvation through Jesus even though many Jews rejected Jesus. Secondly, when Paul preached the Gospel he went first to the Jews and then to Gentiles. If the Jews reject their Messiah, then why should the Gentiles have to miss out. Such reasoning is not proper for salvation is freely given to all people as Paul will point out in the next section.

The Message of Salvation to All

Chapter 10:¹Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. ² For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to **everyone** that **believes**. ⁵ For Moses **describes** the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which **does** those things shall live by them. ⁶ But the righteousness which is of faith **speaks** on this wise, Say not in **your** heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) ⁷ Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) ⁸ But what **says** it? {Deuteronomy 30:14} The word is nigh [near] **you**, *even* in **your** mouth, and in **your** heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; ⁹That if **you** shalt confess with **your** mouth the Lord Jesus, and **shall** believe in **your** heart that God **has** raised him from the dead, **you shall** be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart man **believes** unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the scripture says {Isaiah 49:23}, Whosoever **believes** on him shall not be ashamed. ¹² For there is no difference between the Jew

and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. ¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴ How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written {Isaiah 52:7}, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah said {Isaiah 53:1}, Lord, who **has** believed our report? ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. ¹⁸ But I say, Have they not heard? Yes **truly**, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. ¹⁹ But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses said {Deuteronomy 32:21}, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you. ²⁰ But Isaiah is very bold, and **said** {Isaiah 65:1, 2}, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. ²¹ But to Israel he **said**, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

Commentary: *Paul is using Scripture to state the plan of salvation and the problem with the Jews. GOD has often called the Jewish people as stiff-necked and stubborn. Many times, GOD reached out to them, but they would refuse GOD. But many Gentiles on the other hand did accept the outreach of GOD. Paul is hoping that the Jews will become jealous of the Gentiles and that they will accept their Messiah.*

The Remnant of Israel

Chapter 11: ¹ I say then, **Has** God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. ² God **has** not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot [know] **you** not what the scripture saith of Elijah? how he **made** intercession to God against Israel, saying {1 kings 19:10, 14}, ³ Lord, they have killed **your** prophets, and digged down [destroyed] your altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. ⁴ But what **said** the answer of God unto him {1 Kings 19:18}? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of* Baal. ⁵ Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Commentary: *The issue of the remnant is very important to understand for it reflects the nature of the church today. The remnant represents the true spiritual Israel, the people who like Abraham, believed GOD and it was accounted to them as righteousness. The rest of Israel was trying to please GOD in their own strength and were not spiritual, but they trusted in the natural, their genetic heritage. Jesus warned us about trusting in our own way in Matthew 7:13, 14: Enter **you** in at the strait [narrow] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that **leads** to destruction, and many there be which go in **there at**. Unfortunately, the majority of Israel chose to enter in by the broad gate to destruction, but the remnant entered the narrow gate to salvation. The church today is the remnant that choose to enter the narrow gate, while the rest of the world is trying to enter by the broad gate that leads to their destruction.*

⁷ What then? Israel has not obtained that which he **seeks** for; but the election [the responsive and obedient ones] has obtained it, and the rest were blinded ⁸ (According as it is written {Isaiah 29:10}, God has given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. ⁹ And David said {Psalm 69:22, 23}, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: ¹⁰ Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back **always**.

Commentary: It is important to understand what is meant by blindness and GOD's hand in the blindness. It is GOD's intention to bless the very people that He created but sometimes He must execute judgment on people when they are rebellious and disobedient to His will. GOD overrides His tendency to bless to execute judgment for the harm that these people create. The same is true for the blindness, for it is not so much that GOD blinds them, for their own rebellious nature causes the blindness. It is more of the matter that GOD does not lift the blindness due their rebellion.

Gentiles Grafted In

¹¹ I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. ¹² Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? ¹³ For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify [impart glory to] mine office: ¹⁴ If by any means I may provoke to emulation [a sense of rivalry] *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them. ¹⁵ For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead? ¹⁶ For if the firstfruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches. ¹⁷ And if some of the branches be broken off, and **you**, being a wild olive tree, **were grafted** in among them, and with them partake [the Gentiles benefit of the rich Hebraic heritage of Abraham] of the root and fatness of the olive tree; ¹⁸ Boast not against the branches. But if **you** boast, **you bear** not the root, but the root **you**. ¹⁹ **You will** say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be **grafted** in. ²⁰ Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and **you stand** by faith. Be not **high minded**, but fear [have respect]: ²¹ For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not **you**. ²² Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward **you**, goodness, if **you** continue in *his* goodness: otherwise **you** also **shall** be cut off. ²³ And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be **grafted** in: for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if **you were** cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and **were grafted** contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be **grafted** into their own olive tree?

Commentary: There is a common misunderstanding regarding the nature of Christianity that Paul is addressing here. Many people believe that Christianity is a new religion, but this is false. Christianity is merely the extension of spiritual Israel, the Hebraic covenant with Abraham. This is why Paul emphasizes that the Gentiles are grafted into the spiritual root and are not a new religion. Judaism is a new religion in that they left the Torah or GOD's instructions for their own traditions. This is why they crucified Jesus. But today many Jews are coming to accept Jesus as their Messiah and thus they are being grafted back into the spiritual root of the Hebraic covenant. We need to be wary of people who deny the spiritual root of the Hebraic covenant with Abraham, for true believers are of his seed.

The Mystery of Israel's Salvation

²⁵ For I would not, brethren, that **you** should be ignorant of this mystery, lest **you** should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel [spiritual Jews and spiritual Gentiles] shall be saved: as it is written, {see Isaiah 59:20} There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: ²⁷ For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. ²⁸ As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election [those who respond positively to GOD], *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes. ²⁹ For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance [a changing of the mind]. ³⁰ For as **you** in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: ³¹ Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God **has** concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. ³³ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ³⁴ For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been his counsellor? ³⁵ Or who has first given to him, and it shall be recompensed [returned] unto him again? ³⁶ For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory **forever**. Amen.

Commentary: *It is important to understand that just as GOD gave Israel a 70-week (490 years) probation, which corresponded to the ministry of Jesus on earth, the Gentiles are given a probationary period until the time of their fulness. The Jews crucified Jesus during the middle of the seventieth week and refused to repent of this sin by end of the seventieth week, thus bringing judgment on their heads. The Gentiles are also under a probation period in which they will be judged on how they handled the light that they were given. Unfortunately, many Gentile believers have forsaken the truth of God's Word to form their own theologies and will thus bring judgment on them by the second coming of Jesus. It is important that the true believers in GOD's Word and the ministry of Jesus share their light in the days remaining so as many people as possible, both Jew and Gentile, can be saved before Jesus returns.*

A Living Sacrifice

Chapter 12: ¹ I beseech [encourage] you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that **you** present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And be not conformed to this world: but be **you** transformed by the renewing of your mind, that **you** may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Commentary: *Paul packs a lot of truth in these two verses, so it is important to attempt to cover the major points. The first being that we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. Just as Isaac willingly went on the altar so that Abraham could sacrifice him according to GOD's instruction (Genesis 22:1-19; Isaac was not sacrificed), we are to place our lives on the altar of sacrifice. This means that we give up our desires, wants, and ambitions so that we can assume GOD's will for our life. We also need to transform our minds into the mind of Christ so that we can execute the will of GOD for our life. We must overcome our worldly thoughts by replacing them with GOD's thoughts found in the Bible. It is in this manner that we live the life of the true believer, lest we be constantly in battle with our own desire versus GOD's desires for our life and ministry to others.*

Gifts of Grace

³ For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly [with a sound mind], according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ⁵ So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. ⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; ⁷ Or ministry, *let us wait* [perform service] on *our* ministering: or he that teaches, on teaching; ⁸ Or he that exhorts, on exhortation: he that gives, *let him do it* with simplicity [not showy]; he that rules, with diligence; he that **shows** mercy, with cheerfulness.

Marks of the True Christian

⁹ *Let* love be without dissimulation [not fake but sincere]. Abhor [hate] that which is evil; cleave [joined together] to that which is good. ¹⁰ *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in **honor** preferring [being a good example] one another; ¹¹ Not slothful [sloppy] in business; fervent [zealous] in spirit; serving the Lord; ¹² Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation [trials]; continuing instant in prayer; ¹³ Distributing [sharing] to the necessity [needs] of saints; given to hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. ¹⁵ Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. ¹⁶ *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind [be modest] not high things, but condescend [yield, submit] to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits [opinions]. ¹⁷ Recompense [respond] to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it be possible, as much as **lies** in you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Dearly beloved, avenge [pay back] not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath [turn it over to GOD]: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, **says** the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore if **your** enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head {Proverbs 25:21, 22}. ²¹ Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Submission to the Authorities

Chapter 13: ¹ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers [authorities]. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained [appointed] of God. ² Whosoever therefore resists [opposes] the power, resists [opposes] the ordinance [will] of God: and they that resist [oppose] shall receive to themselves damnation. ³ For rulers are not a terror [fearful] to good works, but to the evil. **Will you** then not be afraid [reverence, be obedient] of the power? do that which is good, and **you shall** have praise of the same: ⁴ For he is the minister of God to you for good. But if **you** do that which is evil, be afraid; for he **bears** not the sword in vain [ready to judge evil]: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that **does** evil. ⁵ Wherefore **you** must needs be subject [obedient to], not only for wrath [to avoid judgment], but also for conscience sake [peace of mind]. ⁶ For for this cause pay **you** tribute [taxes] also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. ⁷ Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; **honor** to whom **honor**.

Commentary: *Government is of GOD's design and we are to submit to earthly authorities as long as they are performing their duties within GOD's rules. We are not required to submit to authorities that usurp GOD's rules. This is why we need to pray for the authorities so that we can live peaceful and not in fear of them.*

Fulfilling the Law Through Love

⁸ Owe [do not deny others your love] no man **anything**, but to love one another: for he that **loves** another **has** fulfilled the law. ⁹ For this, **You shall** not commit adultery, **You shall** not kill, **You shall** not steal, **You shall** not bear false witness, **You shall** not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended [understood] in this saying, namely, **You shall** love thy neighbour as thyself. ¹⁰ Love [being selfless in nature] **works** no ill to his **neighbor**: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law. ¹¹ And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the **armor** of light. ¹³ Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness [uncontrolled lusts], not in strife and envying. ¹⁴ But put **you** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

Commentary: Paul is encouraging us to cast off our previous darkness when we did not know the way of GOD and to walk in the love of Christ to others. It is in this manner that we are no longer under the bondage of the Law, for we have risen above the Law by walking in the Holy Spirit, performing acts of love that reflect the holy nature of Christ in our lives. In other words, we no longer walk as citizens of the wicked world, but we walk as redeemed citizens of GOD's holy kingdom here on earth as we will in heaven.

Do Not Pass Judgment on One Another

Chapter 14: ¹ Him that is weak in the faith receive **you**, *but* not to doubtful [hesitant, unsure] disputations [judgments, opinions]. ² For one believes that he may eat all things: another, who is weak [in the opinion of the other person], eats herbs. ³ Let not him that **eats** despise him that **eats** not; and let not him which **eats** not judge him that **eats**: for God has received him [in fellowship]. ⁴ Who **are you** that judges another man's servant? to his own master he **stands** or **falls**. **Yes**, he shall be holden up [established in their faith]: for God is able to make him stand. ⁵ One man esteems one day above another: another esteems every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. ⁶ He that regards the day, **regards** *it* unto the Lord; and he that **regards** not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that **eats**, **eats** to the Lord, for he **gives** God thanks; and he that **eats** not, to the Lord he **eats** not, and **gives** God thanks. ⁷ For none of us **lives** to himself, and no man **dies** to himself. ⁸ For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. ¹⁰ But why **do you** judge **your** brother? or why **do you** set at nought [despise] **your** brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹ For it is written, *As I live*, **said** the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹² So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Commentary: There is a body of doctrines that relate to the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus that require correction if misapplied and they are labeled as non-refutable salvation issues. It is required of believers to accept these fundamentally sound doctrines in order to receive and maintain their salvation. There is a larger body of non-salvation issues that are based on preference, opinion, and interpretation that are not ...

... subject to correction for they do not affect one's salvation but are instead matters that are subject to differences, as each believer works to understand the Scriptures and to understand how these Scriptures apply to their individual lives. In other words, it is not our job to lead people into all truth (referring to non-salvation issues), for that is the Holy Spirit's job, John 16:13. We can cause great division within the body if we treat these non-salvation issue with the same importance as the genuine salvation issues. We are instead to withhold judgment (condemnation) and so that we can share the Word of GOD in love and concern for one another, which allows the Holy Spirit to perform His work without us creating walls of misunderstanding between each other. In other words, we are to focus on our own salvation and growth, while leaving others to grow in understanding of these non-salvation issues that Paul is giving example of in this passage. We must realize that we are not to condemn the other of GOD's servants if they disagree with is. Unity within the Body of Christ is of a far greater value that mere conformity of opinion that is subject to personal interpretation and application.

Do Not Cause Another to Stumble

¹³ Let us not therefore judge one another **anymore**: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way. ¹⁴ I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that **esteems anything** to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. ¹⁵ But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat [food], now **walk you** not charitably [lovingly]? Destroy not him with **your** meat [food], for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Let not then your good be evil spoken of: ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not meat [food] and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost [Spirit]. ¹⁸ For he that in these things **serves** Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men. ¹⁹ Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify [build up] another. ²⁰ For meat [food] destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who **eats** with offence. ²¹ *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby **your** brother **stumbles**, or is offended, or is made weak [in conscience]. ²² **Have you** faith? have *it* to **yourself** before God. Happy *is* he that **condemns** not himself in that thing which he allows. ²³ And he that doubts is damned [judged by his conscience] if he eat, because *he eats* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

Commentary: *Paul is expanding on His point mentioned above, by adding two new aspects to this issue of judging. The first is the perspective that food, drink and other such things are not primary concerns for the Kingdom of GOD, for these things are material and the Kingdom of GOD is spiritual. Paul states that the real objective is not conformity in food and drink but unity in peace, joy and righteousness. Secondly, one must obey their conscience for if they partake in violation of their conscience then they bring judgment on themselves. This is why we must be gentle with others who have differing views on non-salvation issues, so we do not force them to violate their conscience and promote false guilt within them. We are to be gentle and understanding thus allowing the Holy spirit to do His work and we do not injure the faith of our brother or sister.*

The Example of Christ

Chapter 15: ¹We then that are strong ought to bear [be patience and loving] the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ² Let every one of us please *his neighbor* for *his* good to edification [maturity in the Spirit of GOD]. ³ For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written {Psalm 69:9}, The reproaches [reviling, curses] of them that reproached **you** fell on me. ⁴ For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. ⁵ Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: ⁶ That **you** may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Wherefore receive **you** one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Commentary: Jesus suffered many things that were not merited on His behalf, for He was innocent and righteous. We may have to 'suffer' things from believers who are not as mature as we are. We are to walk in the righteousness of Christ and bear with these believers with love and patience so that they may eventually grow mature in the Lord.

Christ the Hope of Jews and Gentiles

⁸ Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision [Jews] for the truth of God, to confirm [fulfill] the promises *made* unto the fathers: ⁹ And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written {Psalm 18:49}, For this cause I will confess to **you** among the Gentiles, and sing unto **your** name. ¹⁰ And again he **said** {Psalm 117:1}, Rejoice, **you** Gentiles, with his people. ¹¹ And again {Deuteronomy 32:43}, Praise the Lord, all **you** Gentiles; and laud [praise] him, all **you** people. ¹² And again, Isaiah **said** {Isaiah 11:10}, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. ¹³ Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that **you** may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost [Spirit].

Paul the Minister to the Gentiles

¹⁴ And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that **you** also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish [encourage] one another. ¹⁵ Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, ¹⁶ That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified [made holy] by the Holy Ghost [Spirit]. ¹⁷ I have therefore whereof I may glory [give praise to GOD] through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. ¹⁸ For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not wrought [worked] by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, ¹⁹ Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum [a region that would be in the Balkans (Yugoslavia) of our day], I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. ²⁰ Yes, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: ²¹ But as it is written {Isaiah 52:15}, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

²² For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. ²³ But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; ²⁴ Whensoever I take my

journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward [towards you] by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*. ²⁵ But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. ²⁶ For it **has** pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. ²⁷ It **has** pleased them **truly**; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things [the Gospel came to the Jews and was spread by the Jews], their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal [material] things. ²⁸ When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed [confirmed] to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. ²⁹ And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. ³⁰ Now I beseech [sincerely ask] you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that **you** strive [fervently pray] together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; ³¹ That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; ³² That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. ³³ Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Commentary: *We know from the Books of Acts that Paul was not delivered from the unbelievers in Jerusalem and was thus arrested and faced death threats from the people. Paul was then taken to the Roman fortress at Caesarea where he was protected from the Jewish leaders who sought his death. Paul was forced to appeal to Caesar rather than being forced to back to Jerusalem where he would have been killed. It was in this manner that Paul was able to go to Rome, but it was in chains and not in freedom. Paul was eventually released and is believed to have made to Spain before being arrested in the persecution by Nero.*

Personal Greetings

Chapter 16: ¹ I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: ² That **you** receive her in the Lord, as **becomes** saints, and that **you** assist her in whatsoever business she **has** need of you: for she **has** been a succourer [helper and supporter] of many, and of myself also. ³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: ⁴ Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute [welcome] my **well beloved** Epaphroditus, who is the **first fruits** of Achaia [Greece] unto Christ. ⁶ Greet Mary, who bestowed much **labor** on us. ⁷ Salute [welcome] Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my **fellow prisoners** [servants of Christ], who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. ⁸ Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. ⁹ Salute [welcome] Urbanus, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. ¹⁰ Salute [welcome] Apelles approved in Christ. Salute [welcome] them which are of Aristobulus' *household*. ¹¹ Salute [welcome] Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. ¹² Salute [welcome] Tryphena and Tryphosa, who **labor** in the Lord. Salute [welcome] the beloved Persis, which **labored** much in the Lord. ¹³ Salute [welcome] Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. ¹⁴ Salute [welcome] Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. ¹⁵ Salute [welcome] Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. ¹⁶ Salute [welcome] one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

Final Instructions and Greetings

¹⁷ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark [pay attention] them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which **you** have learned; and avoid them. ¹⁸ For they that are such serve not our Lord

Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple [naive, innocent]. ¹⁹ For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple [pure from evil] concerning evil. ²⁰ And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen. ²¹ Timothy my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute send greetings] you. ²² I Tertius, who wrote [down] *this* epistle, salute [greet] you in the Lord. ²³ Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, **salutes** [greet] you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city **salutes** you, and Quartus a brother. ²⁴ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Doxology

²⁵ Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, ²⁶ But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: ²⁷ To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ **forever**. Amen. *Written to the Romans from Corinth, and sent by Phebe servant of the church at Cenchrea* [a city near Corinth].

The First Letter to the Corinthians

Introduction

1 Corinthians was written circa AD 55, from Ephesus, by Paul, as he was getting ready to travel to Macedonia on His missionary journey. Corinth was a seaport and as such was a filled with rough sailors and immoral people. Paul had to contend with people who were spiritual immature and presented many problems, yet Paul had a great love for these people. He had spent a great deal of time in Corinth and was therefore heavily invested in their spiritual welfare. This letter is filled with practical information on how to live for GOD and benefit other people. Here are the key points of this letter:

- Division in the Church
- The power of the Gospel
- The wisdom of GOD
- The issue of sexual misconduct
- Lawsuits between believers
- Practical instructions regarding marriage
- The impact of the calling of GOD
- How to instruct singles and widows
- The issue of food offered to idols
- The humbleness of Paul as servant of GOD
- The issue of Idolatry
- Doing all to the glory of GOD
- The issue of head coverings
- Instructions for the Lord's Supper
- Regarding spiritual gifts
- Unity of the Body of Christ
- The priority of love
- Instructions regarding prophecy and tongues
- Instructions for orderly worship
- The importance of the resurrection of Jesus
- Explanation of our resurrection
- Our victory in Christ
- Ministering to the needs of others

A Greeting from Paul

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother, ² Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: ³ Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Word of Thanksgiving

⁴ I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; ⁵ That in **everything you** are enriched by him, in all utterance [speech], and *in* all knowledge; ⁶ Even as the testi-

mony of Christ was confirmed in you: ⁷ So that **you** come behind [are lacking] in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁸ Who shall also confirm [establish and prepare] you unto the end, *that you may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God *is* faithful, by whom **you** were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Divisions in the Church

¹⁰ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that **you** all speak the same thing [be of the same voice], and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that you* be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment [view point]. ¹¹ For it **has** been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions [active strife] among you. ¹² Now this I say, that every one of you said, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. ¹³ Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were **you** baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; ¹⁵ Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. ¹⁶ And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. ¹⁷ For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Commentary: *The point that Paul is making is that no one in ministry ought to serve in such a manner that draws attention and affection to them instead of Jesus, where the attention and affection belongs. Conversely, no one should place their attention, affection, and loyalty to any man over that of Christ. It was Christ that died for us, it was Christ who ministers to us through the Holy Spirit. Humans are only the vessels that GOD uses, so they should never replace Jesus in honor and loyalty. Paul is 100% accurate in his assessment of this problem.*

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God

¹⁸ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written {Isaiah 29:14}, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. ²⁰ Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? **has** not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. ²² For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: ²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; ²⁴ But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ²⁶ For **you** see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: ²⁷ But God **has** chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God **has** chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, **has** God chosen, *yes*, and things which are not, to bring to nought [to no affect] things that are: ²⁹ That no flesh [no person] should glory in his presence. ³⁰ But of him are **you** in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification [holiness], and redemption: ³¹ That, according as it is written, He that **glories**, let him glory in the Lord.

Commentary: *The people of the world think that they are great by their knowledge and power but in comparison to GOD they are nothing. This is why GOD takes the foolish and weaker people of the world to defy the arrogance of the of the worldly people. The Jewish leaders at the time of Jesus had great knowledge and a measure of power but they missed the move of GOD that was embraced by the poor fishermen. It was the unlearned at that time that outperformed the learned because they embraced the power of GOD in their lives. It is not human wisdom, power and might that matters, but it is the wisdom, power and might of GOD that matters. We do not place our trust or confidence in humans for we only trust GOD.*

Proclaiming Christ Crucified

Chapter 2: ¹ And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. ² For I determined not to know **anything** among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: ⁵ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Commentary: *We sometimes hold back our work for GOD because we are not good speakers or charismatic in character, but as Paul is illustrating for us, he did not come as a great speaker or charismatic person. His power was not in himself, but it was in the power of GOD through the words that he spoke. We can all experience this power if we do not rely on ourselves, but we rely on the power of GOD through His Holy Spirit to perform the work. In other words, we are only the mouthpiece, for GOD will do the rest himself. We can all be mouthpieces regardless of our natural abilities for the result is not due to our ability but to His power and grace.*

Wisdom from the Spirit

⁶ Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect [spiritually mature]: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought of no affect]: ⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: ⁸ Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But as it is written, Eye **has** not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God **has** prepared for them that love him. ¹⁰ But God **has** revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit **searches** all things, **yes**, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man **knows** the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God **knows** no man, but the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom **teaches**, but which the Holy Ghost [Spirit] **teaches**; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ But he that is spiritual judges [discerns] all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. ¹⁶ For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Commentary: *The mystery that Paul is referring to is the mystery of salvation which was planned even before the world was created for GOD foreknew of the fall of man. But GOD loved us so much that He provided salvation or rescue from our fallen state through the lamb (Jesus) that was slain before the foundation of the world, Revelation 13:8. This plan of GOD is foolishness to the natural man who cannot think past his senses, but we have the Spirit of GOD that allows us to realize things that surpass our natural senses and aids us in the development of our spiritual senses, which are of faith and not of sight. Such is the plight of humanity without Christ. They cannot realize that they are lost. This is why it is important for us to minister the grace of GOD to them so their blindness can be turned to sight and their darkness turned to light.*

Divisions in the Church

Chapter 3: ¹ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. ² I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto [because] **you** were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are **you** able. ³ For **you** are yet carnal [worldly]: for whereas [because] *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are **you** not carnal, and walk as [natural not spiritual] men? ⁴ For while one **says**, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are **you** not carnal [worldly]? ⁵ Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom **you** believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? ⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither is he that **plants anything**, neither he that **waters**; but God that **gives** the increase. ⁸ Now he that **plants** and he that **waters** are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own **labor**. ⁹ For we are **laborers** together with God: **you** are God's husbandry [field in which He works], *you are* God's building [a holy temple unto GOD].

Commentary: *Paul is making the point that no human laborer is more important in the eyes of GOD than any other. Each person has a function to perform and it does matter to GOD how we value each worker for the evaluation that matters is the one that GOD makes. So, while Paul is an apostle, he is no more important to GOD than the widow who is a prayer warrior. They are all laboring in GOD's 'field' and hopefully to the best of their ability. In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25), The one that had five talent was no more important than the one with two talents for each was rewarded by the Master. It is important that we do not get caught up in esteeming others in a manner that is not consistent with GOD.*

¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. ¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; ¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he **has** built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Commentary: *Jesus is the foundation of our faith. Paul is building on that foundation with the doctrines that he is presenting. Others will build on what Paul has laid down. But each builder must be careful in what they build, for their work will be tested by fire. Those elements that can withstand the testing by fire (the Spirit of Truth's testing of that work) will be rewarded but the false work will be burned up. We always want to make sure that what we are 'building' or teaching is consistent with the Word of GOD or we will face loss.*

¹⁶ Know **you** not that **you** are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God **dwells** in you? ¹⁷ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

Commentary: *The presence of the Holy Spirit in our human bodies makes us a temple in the same manner as the presence of GOD dwelt in the tabernacle in the wilderness. We need to respect the presence of the Spirit within us and not grieve Him (Ephesians 4:30). How do we grieve the holy Spirit? We commit gross sin and unrighteous acts. The Holy Spirit is with us to make us holy and not carnal in our nature.*

¹⁸ Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you **seems** to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. ¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written {Job 51:13}, He takes the wise in their own craftiness. ²⁰ And again {Psalm 94:11}, The Lord **knows** the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. ²¹ Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; ²² Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; ²³ And **you** are Christ's; and Christ *is* God's.

Commentary: *Paul is concluding chapter by stating again the folly of human wisdom for all things whether human or of this world or celestial, are GOD's, so no one has the justification to glory in themselves or anything else that is not GOD's, for it all belongs to GOD.*

The Ministry of Apostles

Chapter 4: ¹ Let a man so account [judge] of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. ³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: **yes**, I judge not mine own self. ⁴ For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judges me is the Lord. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Commentary: *Paul is telling us not to worry about the judgment of man for it is the judgement of GOD that matters. People can only know in part and cannot discern the heart of a person, but GOD see the heart and knows all about a person, so he is qualified to judge as in the sense of declaring guilty or innocence, faithfulness and unrighteousness.*

⁶ And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and *to* Apollos for your sakes; that **you** might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. ⁷ For who **makes you** to differ *from another*? and what **have you** that thou **did** not receive? now if **you did** receive it, why **do you** glory, as if **you had** not received it? ⁸ Now **you** are full, now **you** are rich, **you** have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God **you did** reign, that we also might reign with you. ⁹ For I think that God **has** set forth us the apostles last [lowest], as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. ¹⁰ We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but **you are** wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but **you are** strong; **you are honorable**, but we *are* despised. ¹¹ Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted [mistreated], and have no certain **dwelling place**; ¹² And labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: ¹³ Being defamed, we intreat [encourage]: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring [scraps] of all things unto this day. ¹⁴ I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*. ¹⁵ For though **you** have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have you* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten [fathered] you through the gospel. ¹⁶ Wherefore I beseech you, be **you** followers [imitators] of me. ¹⁷ For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach **everywhere** in every church. ¹⁸ Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. ¹⁹ But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. ²⁰ For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power. ²¹ What will **you**? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness?

Commentary: One of the problems with the Corinthian believers is that they became puffed up in their understanding of grace, thus thinking more highly of themselves than they should. Paul contrasts their life of ease with that of the apostles who led a life of suffering. Children live a life free from responsibility but as they mature, they realize that life is full of problems and suffering. Those babes in Christ had not yet submitted themselves to fully obey Christ thus they were free from the suffering of the apostles. But one cannot live their life as a child and at some point, they must mature and face spiritual responsibility. Paul as their spiritual father is reminding them of this fact and will continue throughout this letter to treat them as a father would a child, to both instruct them and discipline them onto a greater walk in their faith.

Sexual Immorality Defiles the Church

Chapter 5: ¹ It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. ² And **you** are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that **has** done this deed might be taken away from among you. ³ For I **truly**, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged [by the standard of the Word of GOD] already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that **has** so done this deed, ⁴ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when **you** are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵ To deliver such an one unto Satan [withdraw the protection of the church] for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus [it is hoped that such action would lead to repentance in the individual]. ⁶ Your glorying *is* not good. Know **you** not that a little leaven [yeast] leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that **you** may be a new lump, as **you** are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth. ⁹ I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: ¹⁰ Yet not altogether with the

fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must **you** needs go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer [reviler], or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. ¹² For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not you judge [discern right and wrong] them that are within? ¹³ But them that are without God judges. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Commentary: Paul just gets done talking about their immaturity when he rebukes them for their tolerance of sexual impropriety in their midst. The Corinthians thought they were exercising grace for this person, but they were actually giving license to sin. Every improper act by a believer influences the body as yeast will cause the dough to rise. Paul is instructing the Corinthians to separate themselves from this fallen believer so that his sin did not pollute the rest of the body. This act is not as heartless as some may think. If a believer is allowed to continue sinning without rebuke, then their very soul is in jeopardy. But when the body forces the person to recognize their sinfulness, they may come to their senses as did the prodigal son. The rest of the body still loves that person and prays for them, but they cannot condone the sin without having a negative effect on the rest of the body of believers. Paul concludes this chapter with the instruction to not forsake the sinners in world as Jesus spent much time with sinners so that they might be saved. But people who profess to be believers and are unrepentant of their sin, must be separated until such a time as they will repent, so they can become a part of the fellowship again.

Lawsuits Against Believers

Chapter 6: ¹ Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? ² Do **you** not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are **you** unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Know **you** not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? ⁴ If then **you** have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. ⁵ I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? ⁶ But brother **goes** to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. ⁷ Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because **you** go to law one with another. Why do **you** not rather take wrong? why do **you** not rather *suffer yourselves to* be defrauded? ⁸ No, **you** do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren. ⁹ Know **you** not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you: but **you** are washed, but **you** are sanctified, but **you** are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Commentary: Paul is upset with the Corinthians for two reasons. The first is that brothers are trying to take advantage of each other, and such behavior can exempt one from the Kingdom. Secondly that they are not dealing with these matters themselves, but they are dragging them before non-Christians which gives the church a bad name. Since we have the Word of GOD and the Holy Spirit, the least of our brothers should be able to make righteous judgments thus not needing to go before the court to settle what the members can decide for themselves.

Flee Sexual Immorality

¹² All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. ¹³ Meats [food] for the belly, and the belly for meats [food]: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ And God has both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know **you** not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid. ¹⁶ What? Know **you** not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, **said** he, shall be one flesh. ¹⁷ But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. ¹⁸ Flee fornication. Every sin that a man **does** is without the body; but he that commits fornication sins against his own body. ¹⁹ What? know **you** not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [Spirit] *which is* in you, which **you** have of God, and **you** are not your own? ²⁰ For **you** are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Commentary: Paul starts out by making a puzzling statement of all things being lawful when we know that there are things against the Ten Commandment and the teachings of Jesus. So why is Paul making this statement? It is to combat the people in His day that were using grace as a license to sin, since it is obvious from the Bible that there are things that are unlawful. And the unlawful things are not helpful to the believer and can cause great harm physically, socially and spiritually. Paul then highlights fornication as a great harm. Contrary to the popular view that sex is merely a biological function, we know in reality that sex is the act of marriage where two people are joined physical, emotionally, and spiritually. They are no longer two single people, but they have been joined together by emotional bonds and they form a spiritual entity that is only to be formed in permanent marriage. We pay a heavy price for casual sex in the area of emotional and affectionate bonding and the breaking of the spiritual connection with GOD. This is why Paul says to flee fornication for it violates the sanctity of the temple of the Holy Spirit which is never a good thing and can affect our eternal destiny.

Principles for Marriage

Chapter 7: ¹ Now concerning the things whereof **you** wrote unto me: *It is* good for a man not to touch [have inappropriate relations with] a woman. ² Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. ³ Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence [relations]: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. ⁴ The wife has not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband **has** not power of his own body, but the wife. ⁵ Defraud [withhold relations] **you** not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that **you** may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency [lack of self-control]. ⁶ But I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment [Paul is not making a law]. ⁷ For I would that all men were even as I myself [single]. But every man has his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. ⁸ I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. ⁹ But if they cannot contain [be self-controlled], let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn [be in passion]. ¹⁰ And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart be [separated] from *her* husband: ¹¹ But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away [divorce] *his* wife. ¹² But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother **has** a wife that **believes** not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away [divorce]. ¹³ And the woman which **has** an husband that **believes** not,

and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave [be separated from] him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified [made holy or purified] by the [influence of the] wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified [made holy or purified] by the [influence of the] husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy [they retain influence with a believing parent]. ¹⁵ But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*: but God has called us to peace. ¹⁶ For what **know you**, O wife, whether **you shall** save *your* husband? or how **know you**, O man, whether **you shall** save *your* wife?

Commentary: Paul makes several comments regarding marriage. First due to the persecution of the times, Paul recommended staying single. It was for this reason to avoid pain and suffering at that time that Paul contradicts the command of God to be fruitful and multiply which would require marriage. The second point is that it is better to marry than continue with inappropriate relations. If they thus marry, then they need to be considerate of the sexual needs of the partner. Since many marriages were arranged by the family it became a problem when one of the couple would become a believer. It was under these circumstance that Paul allowed the unbelieving partner to leave if they did not want to live with the believer. But if the unbeliever was willing to stay in the marriage then the believing partner was a sanctifying influence on both the other partner and their children.

Live as You Are Called

¹⁷ But as God **has** distributed to every man, as the Lord **has** called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain [appoint] I in all churches. ¹⁸ Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. ²⁰ Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. ²¹ **Are you** called *being* a servant? care [don't worry about it] not for it: but if **you may** be made free, use *it* rather. ²² For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, *being* free, is Christ's servant. ²³ **You** are bought with a price; be not **you** the servants of men. ²⁴ Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide [remain] with God.

Commentary: It is helpful to remember that in Paul's letters, he was addressing cultural issues of his day and that His letters were not written specifically for us today. This section was addressing issues in a culture that was much more rigid than the more flexible society that we have today. But even though the cultures are different, there are spiritual principles that remain the same. Slavery was quite common in those days and was not to be desired, so Paul consoles the servant or slave by telling them that they are spiritually free in GOD, so while they were bound in servitude, they could serve GOD by being the best servant that they could be. Those people who were free should consider themselves servants of Christ and not abuse their freedom by indulgence but be humble. Most importantly were the people of the circumcision who were embarrassed by their circumcision in an uncircumcised world. We should not try to change so much as to accept where we are and make the best of it onto GOD. It is important to realize that time on this earth is but an instant compared to all of eternity, so we should make the best of our time in this life, while looking forward to the life to come.

The Unmarried and the Widowed

²⁵ Now concerning virgins [sexually pure males and females] I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that **has** obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. ²⁶ I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress [persecution against Christians], *I say*, that *it is* good for a man so to be. ²⁷ **Are you** bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed [divorced]. **Are you** loosed [divorced] from a wife? seek not a wife. ²⁸ But and if **you** marry, **you have** not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh [in reference to the persecution]: but I spare you. ²⁹ But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short: it remains, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; ³⁰ And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; ³¹ And they that use this world, as not abusing *it*: for the fashion of this world **passes** away. ³² But I would have you without carefulness [being free from anxiety]. He that is unmarried **cares** for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: ³³ But he that is married **cares** for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife. ³⁴ There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman **cares** for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married **cares** for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband. ³⁵ And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely [honorable], and that **you** may attend upon the Lord without distraction. ³⁶ But if any man think that he behaves himself uncomely [does not act improperly] toward his virgin, if she **passes** the flower of *her* age [prime of life], and need so require [to become], let him do what he will, he sins not: let them marry. ³⁷ Nevertheless he that **stands steadfast** in his heart, having no necessity, but **has** power over his own will, and **has** so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. ³⁸ So then he that **gives** *her* in marriage **does** well; but he that **gives** *her* not in marriage **does** better. ³⁹ The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband **lives**; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. ⁴⁰ But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

Commentary: *Paul is again addressing a situation that was present in His day that is not directly applicable to our day but there are principles that are helpful to us. The world in Paul's day was mostly pagan with hostility against believers. In addition to the pagans, the Jews were also hostile to the faith in Jesus. It was in this setting that Paul is giving counsel regarding marriage. Many Christians were martyred in this setting and thus would bring distress to people that were married. Paul was not recommending that people in more normal situations not marry for marriage is ordained by GOD. Nevertheless, the recommendation that people remain single can have its benefits today. In a world where singles are looked down on and marriage is held up on a pedestal, people can feel pressured to marry and then they may face many problems created by the marriage. Such problems can be overcome in Christ, but singles do not face these distractions to their faith. Singles can devote their lives to serving GOD in a manner that married couples may not be able to. Conversely there is a potential strength in marriage that singles do not have. It is wise therefore to ask GOD whether to marry or to remain single, and if one is gifted to be single then they should embrace it with dedication to GOD and not feel ashamed that they are single. Married couples should not regret their choice of marriage but through prayer and submission to GOD, use their union to His glory. Both estates can bring glory to GOD, so seek His will for your life.*

Food Offered to Idols

Chapter 8: ¹ Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up [makes one proud and arrogant], but charity [selfless love] edifieth [builds up spiritual character]. ² And if any man think that he **knows anything**, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know [as in comparison with GOD]. ³ But if any man love God, the same is known of him. ⁴ As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one. ⁵ For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) ⁶ But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him. ⁷ Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak [lacking knowledge] is defiled. ⁸ But meat [food] **commend**s us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. ⁹ But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. ¹⁰ For if any man see **you** which **has** knowledge sit at meat [meal] in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; ¹¹ And through **your** knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? ¹² But when **you** sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, **you** sin against Christ. ¹³ Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world **stands**, lest I make my brother to offend.

Commentary: *At first it seems like Paul is discussing a simple matter of eating or not eating but in fact he is dealing with a much greater issue that will be found in many issues that are raised in the Corinthian letters. This issue is liberty versus legalism. GOD has set certain bounds that we need to maintain but legalistic people like to add their pet bounds which is legalism. Legalism is manmade do's and don'ts. Liberty on the other hand is thought to be free from all restraints even if it offends others. In this case, there are believers that understand that food offered to idols is nothing, so they feel at liberty to partake. There are other believers who do not understand that idols are nothing and they apply a legalistic judgment to the eating of food offered to idols. The one with knowledge should not use their liberty (the truth will set you free) to offend a believer who is still bound by legalism. The believer that has liberty must not use that liberty to cause the believer bound by legalism to stumble and lose their faith. The more knowledgeable believer must be loving [being selfless] and sacrifice their liberty so as not be a stumbling block to the believer with less mature understanding. This is principle that will permeate many of Paul's teachings.*

Paul Surrenders His Rights

Chapter 9: ¹ Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not **you** my work in the Lord? ² If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are **you** in the Lord. ³ **My** answer to them that do examine me is this, ⁴ Have we not power to eat and to drink? ⁵ Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? ⁶ Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? ⁷ Who **goes** a warfare any time at his own charges [pay]? who **plants** a vineyard, and **eats** not of the fruit thereof? or who **feeds** a flock, and **eats** not of the milk of the flock? ⁸ Say I these things as a man? or says not the law the same also? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, **You** shalt not muzzle the

mouth of the ox that **treads** out the corn [grain]. **Does** God take care for oxen? ¹⁰ Or **said** he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that plows should plow in hope; and that he that threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal [material] things? ¹² If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer [held in silence] all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. ¹³ Do **you** not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? ¹⁴ Even so **has** the Lord ordained [appointed] that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. ¹⁵ But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. ¹⁶ For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; **yes**, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

Commentary: *Paul goes to great lengths to outline the rights of an apostle or any servant of GOD. The Word sets forth the principle that the one who ministers for the Lord should be supported by the ones they are ministering to. They should not be expected to labor for no return. They bless in spiritual matters and are supported in material things. The Levites in Israel ministered to the things of GOD and were supported by offerings to the temple. People who minister today should receive the same support from the congregations that they minister in. But Paul states that though he is entitled to such support, he refused it so that no one could claim that he was serving for material gain. Paul's reward was spiritual, which he mentions in the next section.*

¹⁷ For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation [oversight] *of the gospel* is committed unto me. ¹⁸ What is my reward then? **Truly** that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge [free], that I abuse not my power in the gospel. ¹⁹ For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. ²⁰ And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; ²¹ To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. ²² To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. ²³ And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*. ²⁴ Know **you** not that they which run in a race run all, but one **receives** the prize? So run, that **you** may obtain. ²⁵ And every man that **strives** for the mastery is temperate [self-controlled] in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. ²⁶ I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that **beats** the air [thrashing about aimlessly]: ²⁷ But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [rejected].

Commentary: *Paul's reward as well as our reward is that we get to spend eternity with our Lord. No earthly blessing can remotely compare with this blessing. We need to live our lives by moderation and self-control so that we are not indulging in things that jeopardize our eternal reward. In other words, we need to live simple and humble lives that reflect the character of Christ so that we will be fit citizens for GOD's glorious kingdom.*

Warning Against Idolatry

Chapter 10: ¹ Moreover, brethren, I would not that **you** should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ² And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³ And did all eat the same spiritual meat [food]; ⁴ And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. ⁵ But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. ⁷ Neither be **you** idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written {exodus 32:6}, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. ⁸ Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. ⁹ Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. ¹⁰ Neither murmur **you**, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. ¹¹ Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [examples]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. ¹² Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ There **has** no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above that **you** are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that **you** may be able to bear *it*. ¹⁴ Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak as to wise men; judge [discern] **you** what I say.

Commentary: *Paul is making the case that the Israelites experienced the presence and power of GOD, thus being 'baptized' by passing through the sea. Yet many of them fell in the wilderness because they did not honor GOD in their heart. Paul is warning us against idolatry, which is placing other things before GOD. We need to stay faithful to GOD and not become distracted by idols (worldly things).*

¹⁶ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? ¹⁷ For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. ¹⁸ Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? ¹⁹ What say I then? that the idol is **anything**, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is **anything**? ²⁰ But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that **you** should have fellowship with devils. ²¹ **You** cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: **you** cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. ²² Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

Commentary: *Paul is comparing the communion which is holy and consecrated to GOD with the sacrifices that pagans make to idols, which is really to evil devils. We want to stay in a holy place by honoring Jesus with partaking of the Lord's Supper, which are symbols of the body broken for our disobedience and the blood that was shed for our forgiveness. Making sacrifices to idols destroys the holiness of Christ and exalts Satan. Not a good move.*

Do All to the Glory of God

²³ All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. ²⁴ Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth* [the benefit of others]. ²⁵ Whatsoever is sold in the shambles [meat market], *that* eat, asking no question for conscience sake: ²⁶ For

the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. ²⁷ If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and **you** be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. ²⁸ But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed [disclosed the origin of the meat] it, and for conscience sake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: ²⁹ Conscience, I say, not your own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience? ³⁰ For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? ³¹ Whether therefore **you** eat, or drink, or whatsoever **you** do, do all to the glory of God. ³² Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: ³³ Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

Commentary: *Paul is using a different example to express the principle of yielding our liberty to not offend another person. In this case it is the host of a dinner. If the host says nothing about the source of the food then eat it with a clear conscience but if the host says it was offered to idols then do not eat it for the sake of the host. We will probably never run into this same situation, but the principle is the same. Do not jeopardize the faith of any person over something material when the spiritual stakes are so high.*

Head Coverings

Chapter 11: ¹ Be **you** followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ. ² Now I praise you, brethren, that **you** remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances [teachings], as I delivered *them* to you. ³ But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God. ⁴ Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, **dishonors** his head. ⁵ But every woman that **prays** or **prophesies** with *her* head uncovered **dishonors** her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. ⁶ For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. ⁷ For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. ⁸ For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. ⁹ Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. ¹⁰ For this cause ought the woman to have power [authority] on *her* head because of the angels. ¹¹ Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. ¹² For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the woman; but all things of God. ¹³ Judge [discern] in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? ¹⁵ But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering. ¹⁶ But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Commentary: *This is one portion of scripture that is often misunderstood in our modern context. We must remember that Paul was writing to people of his time and dealing with their customs and understanding. We cannot take literally what he was saying for it does not apply to us, but we can glean some spiritual principles from his comments. There were two main issues that Paul was expressing. The first had to do with modesty. In those days (and even today) women would fix their hair to be attractive to men, which was not a practice that was appreciated in Christian circles. Women were to be modesty and not be a temptation to men in their appearance. The second issue had to do with authority. Paul states in several places that in Christ, men and women are equal in their access to the things of GOD...*

...but they have different roles before GOD. Men are to be the head of the household thus the authority that GOD will deal with in the home and in the church. Christ is the authority over the man as the man is the authority over the woman. The man is to treat the woman as co-equal in the blessings and giftings of GOD and he is to love the woman as Christ loved the church—sacrificially. The woman is to respect and support the man as the head of the household. The man is not to be a tyrant or dictator but is to walk in the character of Christ to his family and to the other church members. The woman is to respect the role of the man and be humble and supportive of his role. One sign of her respect was to have her head covered. These were customs and issues relevant to the day that Paul was writing but the issues of modesty and respect for authority are relevant to our time. We must be careful that we do not take what was meant then to be legalistically applied to us today for these were not commands of GOD but customs and traditions relating to the culture of that day. We will revisit these principles in other letters that Paul wrote.

The Lord's Supper

¹⁷ Now in this that I declare *unto you* I praise *you* not, that **you** come together not for the better, but for the worse. ¹⁸ For first of all, when **you** come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. ¹⁹ For there must be also heresies [disagreements over opinions] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you [their goldy wisdom would be evident]. ²⁰ When **you** come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper. ²¹ For in eating **everyone takes** before *others* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. ²² What? have **you** not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise **you** the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not. ²³ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: ²⁴ And when he had given thanks, he **broke it**, and said, **Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.** ²⁵ After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped [eaten supper], saying, **This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.** ²⁶ For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, **you** do shew [proclaim] the Lord's death till he come. ²⁷ Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily [the communion is a holy sacrament], shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. ²⁹ For he that **eats** and **drinks** unworthily, **eats** and **drinks** damnation [judgment] to himself, not discerning [respecting] the Lord's body. ³⁰ For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [are dead]. ³¹ For if we would judge [examine] ourselves, we should not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are chastened [disciplined] of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. ³³ Wherefore, my brethren, when **you** come together to eat, tarry [wait] one for another. ³⁴ And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that **you** come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

Commentary: *The Corinthians were making a mess of the Lord's supper by selfishly eating and drinking without consideration of other believers. The communion is a holy event and should be executed with the utmost respect for Jesus. People who treat the communion with disrespect and are not clean spiritually will bring judgment on them, so it is wise for the church to organize their communion in a manner that honors the precious sacrifice of Jesus.*

Spiritual Gifts

Chapter 12: ¹ Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. ² **You** know that **you** were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as **you** were led. ³ Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost [Spirit]. ⁴ Now there are diversities [a variety] of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities [differing] of operations, but it is the same God which **works** all in all. ⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal [of the body of Christ]. ⁸ For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; ⁹ To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; ¹⁰ To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: ¹¹ But all these work [by] that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally [individually] as he will.

One Body with Many Members

¹² For as the body is one, and **has** many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink [partake of spiritual water] into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵ If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? ¹⁸ But now has God set the members every one of them in the body, as it **has** pleased him. ¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? ²⁰ But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. ²¹ And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of **you**: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²² **No**, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: ²³ And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness [beauty]. ²⁴ For our comely *parts* have no need: but God **has** tempered the body together, having given more abundant **honor** to that *part* which lacked: ²⁵ That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. ²⁶ And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be **honored**, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷ Now **you** are the body of Christ, and members in particular. ²⁸ And God **has** set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. ²⁹ *Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles? ³⁰ Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? ³¹ But covet [desire] earnestly the best gifts: and yet **show** I unto you a more excellent way.

Commentary: *Paul is describing the body of Christ by using the human body as an example. The human body has many members or parts, but when they work together, they make for a healthy body. The same is true for the local body of Christ. When all the members honor and support each other, though they may have different roles, functions, or gifts; then the local body is healthy. We need to avoid jealousies and envy over other members and instead learn to appreciate each other for the role and purpose that GOD has appoint to each member to fulfill His purpose and not to satisfy our preferences.*

The Way of Love

Chapter 13: ¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. ² And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [love], it **profits** me nothing. ⁴ Charity [love] **suffers** long [is patient], *and* is kind; charity [love] **envies** not; charity [love] **vaunts** [is not boastful] not itself, is not puffed up [is not arrogant], ⁵ **Does** not behave itself unseemly [is not rude], seeks not her own [is not selfish], is not easily provoked [is not easily offended], **thinks** no evil [rejects what is evil]; ⁶ **Rejoices** not in iniquity [committing sin], but **rejoices** in the truth [lives by the Word of GOD]; ⁷ **Bears** [protects, covered in GOD's grace] all things, **believes** [actively trusts GOD] all things, **hopes** [believes GOD's promises with great confidence, i.e. salvation] all things, **endures** [does not flee or retreat under pressure] all things. ⁸ Charity [love] never **fails** [becomes powerless]: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail [pass away, become useless]; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect is come [the second coming of Jesus], then that which is in part shall be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I **spoke** as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. ¹³ And now **abides** [continues] faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity [love].

Commentary: The love chapter is self-explanatory with the aids I inserted. The main point to remember is that God is love. He is not merely loving but He is the embodiment of love. GOD's love is total selflessness with no selfishness in it. We, humans, are selfish, so we need the help of GOD to be loving as is described in this chapter. Love is the primary fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23) so we need to be filled with GOD's Spirit to walk in this manner of love. Also, it might be helpful to relate way the King James Bible uses charity instead of love. There was a great deal of discussion over this matter and in the end most translators thought that charity was a better word since it implied good works based on love. GOD's selfless love should prompt us to do good works, so the distinction is moot.

Prophecy and Tongues

Chapter 14: ¹ Follow after charity [love], and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that **you** may prophesy [to speak forth the words of GOD whether to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, comfort others, or foretell the future]. ² For he that **speaks** in an *unknown* tongue **speaks** not unto men, but unto God: for no man understands *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaks mysteries [things that are unknown to others]. ³ But he that **prophesies speaks** unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort. ⁴ He that speaks in an *unknown* tongue **edifies** himself; but he that **prophesies edifies** the church. ⁵ I would that **you** all spoke with tongues, but rather that **you** prophesied: for greater [more beneficial] *is* he that **prophesies** than he that **speaks** with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. ⁶ Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? ⁷ And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? ⁸ For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

⁹ So likewise **you**, except **you** utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for **you** shall speak into the air. ¹⁰ There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification. ¹¹ Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that **speaks** a barbarian [strange speech, and he that **speaks** *shall be* a barbarian unto me. ¹² Even so you, forasmuch as **you** are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that **you** may excel to the edifying of the church. ¹³ Wherefore let him that **speaks** in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit **prays**, but my understanding is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. ¹⁶ Else when **you shall** bless with the spirit, how shall he that **occupies** the room of the unlearned say Amen at **your** giving of thanks, seeing he **understands** not what **you say**? ¹⁷ For **you truly give** thanks well, but the other is not edified. ¹⁸ I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than **you** all: ¹⁹ Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue. ²⁰ Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice [in ill will] be you children [innocent], but in understanding be men. ²¹ In the law it is written {Isaiah 28:11}, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, **said** the Lord. ²² Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serves* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. ²³ If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that **you** are mad? ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and there come in one that **believes** not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: ²⁵ And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Commentary: *Paul is writing about an issue that has been in dispute until this day. This dispute involves the nature of tongues and their role in the church. There is no dispute that the gift of tongues was operating on the day of Pentecost. The type of tongues experienced there is classified as xenoglossia, which is defined as: 'the ability to speak fluently a language one has never studied, had any exposure to, or "known" in any natural sense. Yet one can speak it as well as people who do know it as their mother tongue.'* We know this occurred on Pentecost due to the comments in Acts 2:6-8: And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? *The purpose for xenoglossia was to witness to the men from the foreign lands. There have been cases where people went to a foreign land and no interpreter was available so GOD gave the gift of xenoglossia so that the meeting could be held. It appears that this was the intentional use for the gift of tongues, which was to aid in evangelism. There is the term glossolalia, which is defined as: a speaker speaks in a language that has no correspondence to a known language and is often a succession of sounds like babbling. Whereas xenoglossia is an actual language but is unknown to the speaker. Glossolalia is associated with religious contexts and is usually associated with an ecstatic experience and is not only experienced in Christianity. In either case, Paul is recommending prophesy over tongues due to the benefits it has to edify the body of believers, while xenoglossia or glossolalia is primarily intended to influence unbelievers, as on the day of Pentecost, where 3000 were saved.*

Orderly Worship

²⁶ How is it then, brethren? when **you** come together, every one of you **has** a psalm, **has** a doctrine [a teaching], **has** a tongue, **has** a revelation, **has** an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. ²⁷ If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret. ²⁸ But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. ²⁹ Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the **others** judge. ³⁰ If **anything** be revealed to another that **sits** by, let the first hold his peace. ³¹ For **you** may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. ³² And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. ³³ For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. ³⁴ Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also **says** the law. ³⁵ And if they will learn **anything**, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. ³⁶ What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? ³⁷ If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. ³⁸ But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. ³⁹ Wherefore, brethren, covet [desire] to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. ⁴⁰ Let all things be done decently and in order.

Commentary: There are several points that need to be explained in this section of Paul's teaching. It is helpful to understand that everything that the people are learning was new to the church and had to be taught in this context. We have the advantage of two thousand years of experience with these matters, so we have a different perspective. Order in the church is important and has a consistency in both the Old Testament temple service and in the heavenly service that we catch glimpses of in the Book of Revelation. This is why Paul insists that when people prophesy from the Lord that they have control over the message and can yield their speech without losing the message which may not be the case if the message was not of GOD's origin. I know from my personal experience if my thought is my own that it just flashes through my brain, but if GOD is trying to communicate with me, the thought will remain in my mind. Perhaps the most important point due to its misapplication was the reference to women being silent in the church. This is clearly a cultural application intended for the early church when women were not educated like men were. These women wanted to learn so they asked many questions during the service which was disruptive. Paul is counseling the women to get instruction at home from their husbands, so the service was not disrupted. Paul is not implying that women should not speak and minister in the church in our day where the situation is almost reversed, where women tend to more educated than men. We need to do all things out of respect for each other regardless of their gender, profession, or educational level. Each person is precious in the eyes of GOD and each person, including women, have 'talents' to aid in the work of the church.

The Resurrection of Christ

Chapter 15: ¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also **you** have received, and wherein **you** stand; ² By which also **you** are saved, if **you** keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless **you** have believed in vain. ³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴ And that he was buried, and

that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: ⁵ And that he was seen of Cephas [Peter], then of the twelve: ⁶ After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. ⁷ After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. ⁸ And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet [fit] to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain [without effect]; but I **labored** more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. ¹¹ Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so **you** believed.

The Resurrection of the Dead

¹² Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: ¹⁴ And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. ¹⁵ **Yes**, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. ¹⁶ For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: ¹⁷ And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; **you** are yet in your sins. ¹⁸ Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. ²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the **first fruits** of them that slept. ²¹ For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But every man in his own order: Christ the **first fruits**; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For he **has** put all things under his feet. But when he **said** all things are put under him, it is manifest [evident] that he is excepted [not included], which did put all things under him. ²⁸ And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. ²⁹ Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? ³⁰ And why stand we in jeopardy [danger] every hour? ³¹ I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. ³² If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what **advantage** [benefit] it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for **tomorrow** we die. ³³ Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. ³⁴ Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

Commentary: While many people focus on the birth of Jesus, it was actually His death and resurrection that were much more important. If Christ had not died on the cross, then our sins would not have been forgiven. If Christ had not risen from the grave, then we would have no hope for a future life after death. The ancient Hebrews knew that they would be resurrected on the last day as in Job and Martha. Their confidence was found in the scriptures that spoke of this future resurrection and Jesus was means by which the resurrection of the righteous was actualized. Paul goes on in the next section to explain more of this all-important issue.

The Resurrection Body

³⁵ But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? ³⁶ **You** fool, that which **you** sow is not quickened [brought to life], except it die: ³⁷ And that which **you sowed, You**

sowed not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: ³⁸ But God **gives** it a body as it **has** pleased him, and to every seed his own body. ³⁹ All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. ⁴⁰ There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star **differs** from another star in glory. ⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: ⁴³ It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Jesus] was made a quickening spirit. ⁴⁶ Howbeit [however] that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. ⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Mystery and Victory

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I shew [reveal to] you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is **your** sting? O grave, where is **your** victory? ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, which **gives** us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be **you steadfast, unmovable**, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as **you** know that your **labor** is not in vain in the Lord.

Commentary: *Paul is explaining the nature of the new body at the resurrection on the last day. Those believers who have fallen asleep are like the grain that is planted in the ground and dies to itself but rises a new plant. Our bodies that were corruptible will be raised incorruptible, and our bodies that were mortal will be raised immortal. It is important to note that humans do not become immortal until after the Lord comes. Many people believe that there is a soul that is immortal and goes to GOD when we die. But the Bible is verily clear in Genesis 2:7: And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. People are given the breath of life that animates the body and they become a living soul or being. They do get an immortal soul, which is sourced from pagan mythology. The breath that leaves the body goes back to GOD and then GOD creates a new body for each person and that person who is raised from the dead becomes a living immortal being. We are not immortal until that time, for Ezekiel 18:20a says: The soul who sins shall die. The soul or being of a person is not immortal and is subject to death.*

The Collection for the Saints

Chapter 16: ¹ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do **you**.² Upon the first *day* of the week [believers did not transact business or financial matters on the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week] let every one of you lay by him in store, as **God has** prospered him, that there be no gatherings [collections] when I come. ³ And when I come, whomsoever **you** shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality [gift] unto Jerusalem. ⁴ And if it be meet [necessary] that I go also, they shall go with me.

Plans for Travel

⁵ Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. ⁶ And it may be that I will abide, **yes**, and winter with you, that **you** may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. ⁷ For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry [stay] a while with you, if the Lord **permits**. ⁸ But I will tarry [remain] at Ephesus until Pentecost. ⁹ For a great door and effectual [an active one] is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries. ¹⁰ Now if **Timothy comes**, see that he may be with you without fear: for he **works** the work of the Lord, as I also *do*. ¹¹ Let no man therefore despise [put him down] him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

Final Instructions

¹² As touching *our* brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time. ¹³ Watch **you**, stand fast in the faith, quit [be brave] you like men, be strong. ¹⁴ Let all your things be done with charity [love]. ¹⁵ I beseech you, brethren, (**you** know the house of Stephanas, that it is the **first fruits** of Achaia [Greece], and *that* they have addicted [devoted] themselves to the ministry of the saints,) ¹⁶ That **you** submit yourselves unto such, and to **everyone** that **helps** with *us*, and **labors**. ¹⁷ I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. ¹⁸ For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge **you** them that are such.

Greetings

¹⁹ The churches of Asia salute [greet] you. Aquila and Priscilla salute [greet] you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. ²⁰ All the brethren greet you. Greet **you** one another with an holy kiss. ²¹ The salutation of *me* Paul with mine own hand. ²² If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema [accursed] Maranatha [come Lord]. ²³ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. ²⁴ My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen. [The first epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi by Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus and Timothy.](#)

The Second Letter to the Corinthians

Introduction

2 Corinthians was written circa AD 56, from Philippi by Paul as he was already in Macedonia. It appears that the people of Corinth took Paul's previous letter to heart thus repenting and making many changes. There was still some issues and Paul felt it necessary to address these issues and to defend his apostleship. Here are some main points in the letter:

- GOD comforts us
- Forgiveness for the sinner
- Our triumph in Christ
- Ministers of the New Covenant
- The Gospel is light
- The treasure we have in us
- The heavenly dwelling
- The importance of reconciliation
- We are the temple of GOD
- Paul's joy for the Corinthians
- Paul encourages generous giving
- Doing all to the glory of GOD
- Paul recommends Titus
- Instructions for the Lord's Supper
- The collection for Jerusalem
- Unity of the Body of Christ
- The benefits of cheerful giving
- Paul defends his ministry
- Paul condemns false apostles
- Paul mentions his sufferings
- Explanation of our resurrection
- Our victory in Christ
- Paul's thorn in the flesh
- Paul's concern for the Corinthians
- Final warnings

Paul's Greeting

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia [Greece]: ² Grace *be* to you and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

God of All Comfort

³ Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; ⁴ Who **comforts** us in all our tribulation [trials], that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. ⁵ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation [encouragement] also abounds by Christ. ⁶ And whether we be

afflicted, *it is* for your consolation [encouragement] and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation [encouragement] and salvation. ⁷ And our hope of you *is steadfast*, knowing, that as **you** are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall you be* also of the consolation [blessing]. ⁸ For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: ⁹ But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which **raises** the dead: ¹⁰ Who delivered [rescued] us from so great a death, and **does** deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us*; ¹¹ **you** also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift [of grace] *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

Paul's Change of Plans

¹² For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation [conduct] in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. ¹³ For we write none other things unto you, than what **you** read or acknowledge; and I trust **you** shall acknowledge even to the end; ¹⁴ As also **you** have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as **you** also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁵ And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that **you** might have a second benefit; ¹⁶ And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea. ¹⁷ When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness [levity]? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh [sin nature], that with me there should be **yes yes**, and **no no**? ¹⁸ But *as* God *is* true, our word toward you was not **yes** and **no**. ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not **yes** and **no**, but in him was **yes**. ²⁰ For all the promises of God in him *are yes*, and in him Amen [so be it], unto the glory of God by us. ²¹ Now he which **establishes** us with you in Christ, and **has** anointed us, *is* God; ²² Who has also sealed us, and given the earnest [down payment] of the Spirit in our hearts. ²³ Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. ²⁴ Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith **you** stand.

Chapter 2: ¹ But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. ² For if I make you sorry, who is he then that makes me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? ³ And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all. ⁴ For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that **you** should be grieved, but that **you** might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

Commentary: Paul was concerned regarding the condition of the Corinthian Church and thought about coming to them to straighten things out. Instead, he sent a letter with Titus. Paul was happy to hear that the Corinthians had taken to heart the things he mention in the first letter, so he purposed to write this letter to express his joy over their progress and to defend himself against accusers that questioned his apostolic calling. Paul reminded the Corinthians that as we submit to Christ, all His promises will be yes in our life.

Forgive the Sinner

⁵ But if any have caused grief, he has not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge [a burden on] you all. ⁶ Sufficient to such a man *is* this punishment, which *was inflicted* of many. ⁷ So that contrariwise **you ought** rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch [exceeding] sorrow. ⁸ Wherefore I beseech you that **you** would confirm *your* love toward him. ⁹ For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether **you** be obedient in all things. To whom **you** forgive **anything**, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave **anything**, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ; ¹¹ Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Commentary: *We do not know for certain if this was the man that had inappropriate relations with his father wife and it really does not matter for anyone who has sinned and negatively affected the community of believers must be welcomed back after their sincere repentance. It is a situation like the prodigal son who was welcomed back after he came to his senses. We can not permanently isolate such a person for it leaves them in Satan's hand, when they need to find protection within the body of believers. It is more important to show forth the love of GOD than His judgment of sinners.*

Triumph in Christ

¹² Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, ¹³ I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence [there] into Macedonia. ¹⁴ Now thanks *be* unto God, which always **causes** us to triumph in Christ, and **makes** manifest [evident] the **savor** [odor] of his knowledge by us in every place. ¹⁵ For we are unto God a sweet **savor** [fragment odor, like incense] of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: ¹⁶ To the one *we are* the **savor** of death unto death; and to the other the **savor** of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? ¹⁷ For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

Commentary: *Paul is using the imagery of a Roman victory procession where the prisoners were paraded before the people as a trophy of their victory. Here Paul is comparing believers to these prisoners or captives in Christ which contain a sweet odor for their obedience to Christ. They are figuratively the living sacrifice Paul mentions in Romans 12:1. Our obedience is a sweet odor to the obedient but a stench of death to the disobedient of the world. In any case, Christ is the victor, and we are his appreciative captives onto His righteousness.*

Ministers of the New Covenant

Chapter 3: ¹ Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you? ² **You** are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: ³ *Forasmuch as you are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. ⁴ And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: ⁵ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think **anything** as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God; ⁶ Who also has made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter **kills** [as in

legalism], but the spirit gives life [liberty in GOD]. ⁷ But if the ministration of death [the Ten Commandments], written *and engraved* in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not **steadfastly** behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away: ⁸ How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? ⁹ For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. ¹⁰ For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that **excelled**. ¹¹ For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious. ¹² Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: ¹³ And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not **steadfastly** look to the end of that which is abolished: ¹⁴ But their minds were blinded: for until this day remains the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ. ¹⁵ But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. ¹⁶ Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Commentary: Paul is comparing the glory that Moses brought through the giving of the Law with the glory of the liberty that is brought through Jesus. The Law was brought to people who were burdened with the sin nature, so for them to fulfill the law would like to play the piano with two broken hands. But when Jesus came, he healed our hands by taking away the power of the sin nature so that we could freely choose to obey GOD by the power of His spirit. It does not mean that we cannot sin but if we do sin, it is by choice, and not being compelled by our sin nature. This is the new covenant that GOD made with spiritual Israel so that as believers we could be free from the power of sin and free to embrace GOD's love onto obedience to His will.

The Light of the Gospel

Chapter 4: ¹ Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint [lose heart] not; ² But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ³ But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: ⁴ In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. ⁵ For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, **has** shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Commentary: Paul is making a very important point regarding light and darkness. People who do not know Jesus are living in a great darkness that is absent the light of GOD. It is like they have super powerful sunglasses that prevent them from seeing the light. But the kindness and love that we show them will bring light into their life and in many cases will open them up to greater light. We cannot just preach at people for due to their darkness it will come in one ear and go out the other. But when we can minister to them in some tangible way, then the light begins to pierce their darkness and their heart may open up to Jesus.

Treasure in Jars of Clay

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. ⁸ *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest [revealed] in our body. ¹¹ For we which live are **always** delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest [evident] in our mortal flesh. ¹² So then death **works** in us, but life in you. ¹³ We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written {Psalm 116:10}, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; ¹⁴ Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you. ¹⁵ For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound [over flow] to the glory of God. ¹⁶ For which cause we faint [become weary] not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, **works** for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Commentary: *The greatest treasure that a person can possess is the life of GOD within them. Without this life within us, we are eternally dead, but with this life within us we can look forward to heavenly blessings. The cost of this heavenly gift is the death of our self. We must die to self so that Jesus can live through us. In other words, people need to see the life of Jesus in us and not just recognize us by our personality. We must exude the love, care, and compassion that Jesus shared to the people around Him. The greatest compliment that one can give the believer is that they see Jesus in them.*

Our Heavenly Dwelling

Chapter 5: ¹ For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle [our body] were dissolved, we have a building [a new body] of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house [body] which is from heaven: ³ If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked [without the righteousness of Christ]. ⁴ For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. ⁵ Now he that **has** wrought [worked] us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also has given unto us the earnest [down payment] of the Spirit. ⁶ Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, **while** we are at home in the body [earthly body], we are absent from the Lord: ⁷ (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) ⁸ We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body [earthly body], and to be present with the Lord. ⁹ Wherefore we **labor**, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he **has** done, whether *it be* good or bad.

Commentary: *Paul is touching on a very important point that has been subject of some controversy over the years. There is no controversy that one day we will have a heavenly body. Paul alludes to this fact in several places. What is at controversy is the timing...*

...of such an occurrence. Paul makes a simple statement that to be in our earthly body, we are absent from the Lord. No flesh could see GOD and live, so it is a necessity that we have heavenly bodies. So, to be present with the Lord means that we no longer have earthly bodies. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:52, that it will happen at the last trump when Jesus returns. This means that when we die, we do not immediately go into the presence of the Lord, but that we sleep for what will seem like an instant and then we will be with the Lord at His return. We should not be disappointed that we will not immediately be with God for that brief time that we sleep, will be just blip on the time scale of eternity.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

¹¹ Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest [known] unto God; and I trust also are made manifest [known] in your consciences. ¹² For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that **you** may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. ¹³ For whether we be beside ourselves [insane], *it is* to God: or whether we be sober [of sound mind], *it is* for your cause. ¹⁴ For the love of Christ **constrains** [holds together] us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead [associated with Christ's death]: ¹⁵ And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. ¹⁶ Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: **yes**, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. ¹⁷ Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. ¹⁸ And all things *are* of God, who **has** reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ To wit [even as], that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and **has** committed unto us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [encourage] *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be **you** reconciled to God. ²¹ For he has made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Commentary: *Paul is explaining the most important task of humanity and that is to support the reconciliation or the making of peace with GOD. Humanity is lost in their sins without GOD, so we must be like Paul, preaching the Gospel so that there can be reconciliation. Without Christ, a person is lost in their sin with no hope of redemption. But when a person comes to Christ and repents of their sin, then the old person, with the sin nature is replaced by a new nature that seeks to obey GOD rather than disobey Him as before. This person is becoming a new creation or new species of human who has the divine spirit of GOD in them as Jesus promised. Our being born-again makes all the difference in the world on how we live our life and the rejoicing that we can have with the new relationship with GOD.*

Chapter 6: ¹We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech [encourage] *you* also that **you** receive not the grace of God in vain. ² (For he **said** {Isaiah49:8}, I have heard **you** in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured [helped] **you**: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.) ³ Giving no offence in **anything**, that the ministry be not blamed: ⁴ But in all *things* approving

ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,⁵ In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in **labors**, in watchings, in fastings;⁶ By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost [Spirit], by love unfeigned [sincere, genuine],⁷ By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the **armor** of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,⁸ By **honor** and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and *yet* true;⁹ As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;¹⁰ As sorrowful, yet **always** rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.¹¹ O **you** Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.¹² **You** are not straitened [put in a tight space] in us, but ye are straitened [put in a tight space] in your own bowels [hearts].¹³ Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto *my* children,) be **you** also enlarged [grow your heart larger in GOD's grace].

Commentary: Paul is explaining the difficulties that ministers of the Gospel faced both in physical distresses and mental challenges. One was always experiencing conflicting emotions of support and rejection, good times and bad times, being praised and being criticized, etc. Paul was wanting them to know the effort it took to help them mature, so that they would grow spiritually to point that they could help others to mature.

The Temple of the Living God

¹⁴ Be **you** not unequally yoked [joined] together with unbelievers: for what fellowship **has** righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion [association] **has** light with darkness?¹⁵ And what concord [agreement] **has** Christ with Belial [a name for Satan]? or what part **has** he that believes with an infidel [a wicked person]?¹⁶ And what agreement **has** the temple of God with idols? for **you** are the temple of the living God; as God **has** said {Leviticus 26:12}, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.¹⁷ {Isaiah 52:11} Wherefore come out from among them, and be **you** separate, **says** the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,¹⁸ {Isaiah 43:6; Jeremiah 3:19} And will be a Father unto you, and **you** shall be my sons and daughters, **says** the Lord Almighty.

Commentary: Paul is making a very important point regarding our associations with unbelievers. We are not to enter into significant agreements or contracts with unbelievers because the value systems are not the same and it will cause problems. This does not mean that we have no association with unbelievers for how we can be a witness if we do not associate with them, but we should not enter into intimate or binding relationships with unbelievers. We are to remain pure and holy before GOD, so we don't want to compromise our faith for the sake of inappropriate relationships.

Paul's Joy

Chapter 7: ¹ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. ² Open *your hearts* to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. ³ I do not say *this* to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. ⁴ Great *is* my boldness of speech

toward you, great *is* my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. ⁵ For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears. ⁶ Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷ and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more. ⁸ For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. ⁹ Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. ¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹ For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what* clearing *of yourselves*, *what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what* vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. ¹² Therefore, although I wrote to you, *I did not do it* for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you. ¹³ Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. ¹⁴ For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. ¹⁵ And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. ¹⁶ Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

Commentary: Paul is expressing a concern that all who minister to others share: and that is having to correct the attitude or behavior of other believers. Paul was sad that his directness might have hurt some people, but in the end, he was glad that his correction was received and acted upon. There is no greater joy to those who spiritually lead others than to see their efforts produce positive spiritual results as it did in this case with Paul.

Encouragement to Give Generously

Chapter 8: ¹ Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit [know] of the grace of God bestowed [given] on the churches of Macedonia; ² How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality [generosity]. ³ For to *their* power [ability], I bear record, yes, and beyond *their* power [ability] *they were* willing of themselves; ⁴ Praying us with much intreaty [persuasion] that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints [providing money for the poor saints in Jerusalem]. ⁵ And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. ⁶ Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace [purpose] also. ⁷ Therefore, as **you** abound in every *thing*, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all diligence, and *in* your love to us, *see* that **you** abound in this grace [purpose] also. ⁸ I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove [make evident] the sincerity of your love. ⁹ For **you** know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that **you** through his poverty might be rich. ¹⁰ And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. ¹¹ Now therefore perform the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which **you** have. ¹² For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man **has**, *and* not according to that he has not. ¹³ For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and **you** burdened: ¹⁴ But by an equality, *that* now at

this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want: that there may be equality: ¹⁵ As it is written {Exodus 16:18}, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack.

Commentary: *Paul is using a lot of words to give what is a simple exhortation or encouragement to the Corinthians. The basis for our life in Christ is love and that love being selfless in nature. The Macedonians who had their own struggles gave generously (selflessly) for the saints in Jerusalem and Paul is wanting the Corinthians to do the same. The reason being not so much the actual money given but the maturity of heart that would be evident in their generous gift. In other words, they could show their love for GOD in their generosity to others who were in need and that by giving love, love will be returned.*

Commendation of Titus

¹⁶ But thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. ¹⁷ For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward [diligent], of his own accord he went unto you. ¹⁸ And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches; ¹⁹ And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration of* [showing] your ready mind: ²⁰ Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: ²¹ Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. ²² And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you. ²³ Whether *any do enquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellowhelper [co-worker] concerning you: or our brethren *be enquired of*, *they are* the messengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Christ. ²⁴ Wherefore **show you** to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

The Collection for Christians in Jerusalem

Chapter 9: ¹ For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous [unnecessary] for me to write to you: ² For I know the forwardness [eagerness] of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia [Greece] was ready a year ago; and your zeal has provoked [excited] very many. ³ Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, **you** may be ready: ⁴ Lest haply [perhaps] if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, **you**) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting. ⁵ Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty [praise], whereof **you** had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty [blessing], and not as of covetousness [wanting to withhold funds].

The Cheerful Giver

⁶ But this *I say*, He which **sows** sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which **sows** bountifully shall reap also bountifully. ⁷ Every man according as he **purposes** in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God **loves** a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency [no want of necessities] in all *things*, may abound to every good work: ⁹ (As it is written, He **has** dispersed abroad; he **has** given to the poor: his righteousness **remains forever**. ¹⁰ Now he that **ministers** seed to the sower both **ministers** bread for *your* food, and multiply

your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)¹¹ Being enriched in **everything** to all bountifulness, which **causes** through us thanksgiving to God.¹² For the administration of this service not only **supplies** the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;¹³ **While** by the experiment [approval] of this ministration they [the saints in Jerusalem] glorify God for your professed subjection [obedience] unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution [generous gift] unto them, and unto all *men*;¹⁴ And by their prayer for you, which long [desire in love] after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.¹⁵ Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Commentary: *Paul highlights an important principle regarding giving, which is to the degree that you give is the degree in which you will receive the blessings of GOD. Giving to the work of GOD or to help other people, is an important aspect of worship. So, we need to be cheerful and not begrudging in our giving. The begrudging giver will miss their reward which is the approval of GOD and the appreciation of the people being ministered to. It is so rewarding to know that we are giving back to GOD a portion of the blessings that He has given us, thus in giving, our hearts are matched with GOD's heart in selfless love.*

Paul Defends His Ministry

Chapter 10:¹ Now I Paul myself beseech [pleading with] you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence [when I am with you] *am* base [humble] among you, but being absent [not with you] *am* bold toward you:² But I beseech [beg] *you*, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.³ For though we walk in the flesh [our human body], we do not war after the flesh [our humanness]:⁴ (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal [of human nature], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds [fortresses of the enemy];)⁵ Casting down imaginations [reasoning], and every high thing that exalts [seeks to replace] itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity [controlling] every thought to the obedience of Christ;⁶ And having in a readiness to revenge [vindicate by proving that GOD is right] all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled [complete].

Commentary: *Paul starts the defense of His ministry by stating the nature of our spiritual warfare. Paul is facing resistance and attack from the enemy in the form of other people. But we are not warring against people, for we 'war' against the spiritual forces influencing the other people. So, we attack their 'strongholds' by sharing the truth in love. Our presentation of the truth, as found in the Bible, will refute their ungodly reasonings by which they seek to replace the knowledge of GOD. We are prepared for this battle by taking our thoughts captive which is the transforming of our worldly minds into the mind of Christ, Romans 12:2. And we vindicate GOD when we are obedient to GOD, thus defeating the lie that Satan is spreading regarding GOD that He is unfair and unjust. Our acts of obedience prove Satan wrong and that GOD is just, fair and loving, which Satan is not.*

⁷ Do **you** look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's.⁸ For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord **has** given us for edification [building you up], and not for your destruction [tearing you down], I should not be ashamed:⁹ That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.¹⁰ For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.¹¹ Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters

when we are absent [not with you], such *will we be* also in deed when we are present [with you]. ¹² For we dare not make ourselves of the number [a special class], or compare ourselves with some that commend [boast about] themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. ¹³ But we will not boast of things without *our* measure [standard], but according to the measure [standard] of the rule [measuring rod] which God has distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. ¹⁴ For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure* [going beyond the authority given by GOD], as though we reached [came not] not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ: ¹⁵ Not boasting of things without *our* measure [according to our standard], *that is*, of other men's **labors**; but having hope, when your faith is increased [you grow spiritually], that we shall be enlarged [esteemed] by you according to our rule [measuring rod] abundantly, ¹⁶ To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. ¹⁷ But he that glories, let him glory in the Lord [not glorying in themselves]. ¹⁸ For not he that **commends** himself is approved, but whom the Lord **commends**.

Commentary: *Paul is setting the record straight regarding his ministry. Paul is not seeking the approval from people as some ministers are doing. Paul seeks his approval from GOD since GOD only is the fair and righteous judge. Paul only seeks to carry out the mission and responsibility that he was given and let others do their work. Unfortunately, other people are trying to tear down Paul's work, so he feels it necessary that he defend himself against their efforts. And Paul seeks not only GOD's approval, but he would appreciate a recognition from the Corinthians of the work he has done to help them grow spiritually. While we praise GOD for all our blessings, it is helpful to acknowledge the efforts of those who serve in GOD's name of the good work that they do, not to exalt them, but to encourage them against the attacks they receive for doing GOD's work.*

Paul and the False Apostles

Chapter 11: ¹ Would to God **you** could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me. ² For I am jealous [parental pride] over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. ³ But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. ⁴ For if he that **comes preaches** another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if you* receive another spirit, which **you** have not received, or another gospel, which **you** have not accepted, **you** might well bear with *him*. ⁵ For I suppose I was not a whit [no way] behind [inferior to] the very chiefest apostles. ⁶ But though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been **thoroughly** made manifest [evident] among you in all things. ⁷ Have I committed an offence in abasing [humbling] myself that **you** might be exalted built up], because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? ⁸ I robbed [took away resources from] other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you service. ⁹ And when I was present with you, and wanted [was in need], I was chargeable [not a financial burden] to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome [financial drain] unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*. ¹⁰ As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting [speaking about this] in the regions of Achaia [Greece]. ¹¹ Wherefore? I love you not? God knows [that I do]. ¹² But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion [opportunity] from them which desire occasion [opportunity]; that wherein they glory [boast], they may be found even as we. ¹³ For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the

apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Commentary: *Paul is making a very important point regarding false prophets and teachers. Genuine ministers of the Gospel are willing to sacrifice financial gain in order to spread the Gospel without being a financial burden to the people they serve. But false teachers and prophets will seek to take financial resources from the people so that they can live more lavishly. A red flag for any ministry is the way they live. If they are living in lavish homes and drive fancy cars, then they are not following the pattern set forth by Jesus, who lived very simply. In other words, if these ministers are living a lavish lifestyle then their focus is not really about the Gospel but is instead focused on their own prosperity and not on the welfare of others. Is it wrong for ministers to be supported from their work? And the answer is no, for Paul sets forth the provision that a workman is worth of his hire. But when the compensation is extreme, then a problem exists. Is wrong to ask for donations to cover the cost of materials for spreading the Gospel. No, it isn't if the donation is for actual expenses and not for enriching the teacher. The Gospel is to be spread freely and is not to be a means of enriching people. Our rewards are to be heavenly and not so much earthly. Can GOD bless his people with material wealth? Yes, He can but not so that the wealth becomes a means of indulgence but rather the wealth is meant to be a tool for spreading the Gospel. Beware therefore how people who promote the Gospel use the funds that they are given for it will reveal the real motive of their ministry.*

Paul's Sufferings as an Apostle

¹⁶ I say again, Let no man think me a fool [one who acts rashly]; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast [speak of] myself a little. ¹⁷ That which I speak, I speak *it* not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly [in appearance as folly], in this confidence [type] of boasting [speaking]. ¹⁸ Seeing that many glory [bring attention to] after the flesh, I will glory [bring attention to] also. ¹⁹ For **you** suffer [endure] fools gladly, seeing **you yourselves** are wise [Paul is saying this sarcastically]. ²⁰ For **you** suffer [endure, permit], if a man **brings** you into bondage, if a man devour [consumes your resource] *you*, if a man take [takes advantage] *of you*, if a man exalt [promotes] himself [and not Jesus], if a man smite [hits] you on the face [again, Paul is speaking sarcastically]. ²¹ I speak as concerning reproach [dishonor], as though we had been weak. Howbeit **wheresoever** any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also [Paul is using their false boastings against the false apostles]. ²² Are they Hebrews? so *am* I. Are they Israelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I. ²³ Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in **labors** more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths **often**. ²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. ²⁵ Thrice [three times] was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice [three times] I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep [the sea]; ²⁶ *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. ²⁸ Beside those things that are without, that which **comes** upon me daily, the care of all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak [powerless], and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not [in anger]? ³⁰ If I must needs glory [boasting], I will glory [boast] of the things which concern mine infirmities. ³¹ The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, **knows** that I

lie not. ³² In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: ³³ And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

Commentary: *Paul is giving us, in a sarcastic manner, another important red flag against false teachers and prophets. True ministers of the Gospel will allow themselves to suffer many things so that the Gospel will be forwarded into the world (just think of missionaries that forsake the comforts of home to travel to foreign lands and face many challenges, sometimes they sacrifice their own lives). But the false ones will look after their welfare and will not risk the type of suffering that Paul has described. The false ones will come with fancy words and a great show of religion but in their hearts, they will not allow themselves to suffer. So, Paul rather than simply justifying his ministry is giving us another test by which false ministries can be judged.*

Paul's Visions and His Thorn

Chapter 12: ¹ It is not expedient [profitable, useful] for me doubtless [in truth] to glory [boast]. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. ² I knew a man in Christ above [before] fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God **knows**;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. ³ And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God **knows**;) ⁴ How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. ⁵ Of such an one will I glory [boast]: yet of myself I will not glory [boast], but in mine infirmities [trials]. ⁶ For though I would desire to glory [boast], I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but *now* I forbear [abstain], lest any man should think of me above that which he **sees** me *to be*, or *that* he hears of me. ⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet [attack] me, lest I should be exalted above measure. ⁸ For this thing I besought [begged] the Lord thrice [three times], that it might depart from me. ⁹ And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory [boast] in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong [in Christ].

Commentary: *Paul received instructions from the Lord in visions and by revelation, which would entitle him to the praise of other people as being more spiritual. But Paul did not seek the praise of other people and chose to be humble by the trials that GOD allowed him to experience. It is through these trials, when we are weak and powerless that we experience the power of GOD in our life. This is why Paul would boast in his infirmities or trials so that GOD would get the glory for seeing him through them.*

Concern for the Corinthian Church

¹¹ I am become a fool in glorying; **you** have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. ¹² Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. ¹³ For what is it

wherein **you** were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong [Paul is being sarcastic again]. ¹⁴ Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. ¹⁵ And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. ¹⁶ But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile [craftiness, Paul is being sarcastic]. ¹⁷ Did I make a gain [take advantage] of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? ¹⁸ I desired Titus, and with *him* I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps? ¹⁹ Again, think **you** that we excuse [defend] ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. ²⁰ For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as **you** would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings [haughtiness], tumults: ²¹ *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail [mourn] many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

Commentary: *Paul is concerned for the immaturity of the Corinthians. First, they believe the attacks against Paul by false teachers and apostles who seek to diminish the work of GOD. They use Paul's refraining from financial support of the Corinthians as an evidence that Paul is not a real apostle, causing Paul to have to defend himself to them. Then these same people attack Paul as taking advantage of the Corinthians when he seeks an offering for the poor in Jerusalem. Paul cannot win either way, except in the eyes of GOD. Then Paul is concerned about the immature behavior that he fears he will encounter when he visits them. Paul does not want to have to take corrective action, but he will if necessary. The list of negative behaviors is not a list that should be found in a community of believers, for these behaviors are not consistent with the character of Christ.*

Final Warnings

Chapter 13: ¹ This *is* the third *time* I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. ² I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all **others**, that, if I come again, I will not spare: ³ Since **you** seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. ⁴ For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he **lives** by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you. ⁵ Examine yourselves, whether **you** be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know **you** not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except **you** be reprobates [unfit for GOD]? ⁶ But I trust that **you** shall know that we are not reprobates. ⁷ Now I pray to God that **you** do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that **you** should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. ⁸ For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. ⁹ For we are glad, when we are weak, and **you** are strong; and this also we wish, *even* your perfection [spiritual maturity]. ¹⁰ Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord **has** given me to edification, and not to destruction.

Commentary: *Paul repeats his willingness to come and correct what is wrong with the Corinthian church if it is necessary. But Paul pleads with them to examine themselves as believers in Christ and recognize the power they have been given by GOD to live a holy life. He pleads with them to recognize the holy life that he lives as evidence of his commission from Jesus and that he is not reprobate as his attackers claim. We all need to examine ourselves to see if our life shows the same characteristics that Jesus showed when He was on the earth. Unchristian like attitudes and behaviors are not fitting for the believer and Paul will use his apostolic authority to correct them if they will not correct themselves. Paul does not correct people for no reason, it is because of his deep concern for their eternal destiny that he will correct them. In other words, it is the deep (selfless) love of Paul that motivates his concern for them.*

Final Greetings

¹¹ Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect [spiritually mature], be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. ¹² Greet one another with an holy kiss. ¹³ All the saints salute [greet] you. ¹⁴ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen. [The second epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.](#)

The Letter to the Galatians

Introduction

There is some disagreement regarding the place and time of the letter to the Galatians. Some believe in placing it about AD 49-50 and probably written from Antioch after Paul returned from His first missionary journey into Asia Minor (what is known as Turkey today). Other scholars believe it was written after the council in Jerusalem (placing it circa AD 55) thus being written from a variety of other locations. I tend to lean to the earlier date and place as a more logical timeframe for the issue and discussion of Gentile observance of the Mosaic Law. Such a discussion would have a major impact on the ability to evangelize the Gentile people. Fortunately, the council of Jerusalem decided to not burden the Gentile with the Mosaic Law which made Paul's future missionary efforts much more successful. Some Jews however persisted in the effort to Judaize the Gentiles by imposing the Mosaic Law on the Gentiles including circumcision. Paul fought these efforts very vehemently in His letter to the Galatians. Here are some main points in the letter:

- There is only one Gospel
- Paul received the Gospel from GOD
- Paul defends his ministry to the Gentiles at Jerusalem
- Paul calls out Peter for a double standard
- We are justified by faith
- We are not justified by works
- The righteous live by faith
- Our faith is by the promise of GOD
- We are heirs with Jesus
- Paul's concern for the Galatians losing their liberty
- Learning from Hagar and Sarah regarding the promise
- Our freedom in Christ
- Walking in the Spirit
- The deeds of the flesh
- The fruit of the Spirit
- Bearing one another burdens
- Final warnings

Greetings

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) ² And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: ³ Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: ⁵ To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

No Other Gospel

⁶ I marvel that **you** are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: ⁷ Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach

any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. ¹⁰ For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Commentary: *Paul is giving a strong warning to not accept any deviation from the plain Gospel that He preached which is solidly backed by the word of GOD. Satan is constantly trying to pervert the plain Gospel, so we must be on alert to his attacks. These attacks always come against the liberty of GOD's grace by trying to put people back under the burden of working for their salvation by some form of works. GOD's grace is free and is a gift, by which we show appreciation for this gift by voluntarily obeying the will of GOD as an evidence of the salvation already granted and not as means to earn salvation.*

Paul Called by God

¹¹ But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. ¹² For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³ For **you** have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted [tried to destroy] it: ¹⁴ And profited [advanced] in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, ¹⁶ To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen [ungodly]; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: ¹⁷ Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. ¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. ²⁰ Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. ²¹ Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; ²² And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ: ²³ But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which once he destroyed. ²⁴ And they glorified [praised] God in me.

Commentary: *Paul is fortifying his defense of the Gospel by stating the source of his message. It was important to Paul to show that GOD revealed this message to him and that it was not fabricated by other people. The Holy Spirit's role is to lead us into all truth, John 16:13. But even revelation from the Spirit must conform to the Scriptures and be confirmed by other believers, which Paul did, so the message that he preached was validated by the Word of GOD and by the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. People can get into great trouble when they receive 'revelations' that are not consistent with GOD's word and the counsel of spiritual leaders. Paul would face much of this problem of 'special revelations' in his ministry and so will we.*

Paul Accepted by the Apostles

Chapter 2: ¹ Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also. ² And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. ³ But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: ⁴ And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have

in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: ⁵ To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. ⁶ But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it **makes** no matter to me: God **accepts** [show favoritism] no man's person:) for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference [consultation] added nothing to me: ⁷ But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter; ⁸ (For he that wrought [worked] effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) ⁹ And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. ¹⁰ Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward [agreeable] to do.

Commentary: Paul is using his reception in Jerusalem by the apostles to support his ministry to the Gentiles in the fashion in which he was ministering. This support was a confirmation that Paul was right in what he was doing and would work to silence his critics.

Paul Opposes Peter

¹¹ But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. ¹² For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. ¹³ And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. ¹⁴ But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If you, being a Jew, **live** after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why **compel you** the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Commentary: Paul was criticizing Peter for being a hypocrite, for Peter acted one way when around the Gentiles and another around the Jews. We are all one in Christ and should not show forth such distinctions.

Justified by Faith

¹⁵ We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, ¹⁶ Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh [person] be justified. ¹⁷ But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. ¹⁸ For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. ¹⁹ For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. ²⁰ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ **lives** in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Commentary: Paul is stating the fundamental principle of the Gospel in that we are saved through our faith in the sacrifice of Christ and not by any human effort such as attempting to keep the Law by human means as a means of salvation.

By Faith, or by Works of the Law?

Chapter 3: ¹ O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched [deceived] you, that **you** should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ **has** been evidently [clearly] set forth, crucified among you? ² This only would I learn of you, Received **you** the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³ Are **you** so foolish? having begun in the Spirit [enabled by GOD's grace], are **you** now made perfect by the flesh [by human effort apart from grace]? ⁴ Have you suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain. ⁵ He therefore that **ministered** to you the Spirit, and **worked** miracles among you, *does he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ⁶ Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted [credited] to him for righteousness. ⁷ Know **you** therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. ⁸ And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen [ungodly] through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In **you** shall all nations be blessed. ⁹ So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Commentary: *It is very important that we understand what Paul is saying about Abraham for it goes to the very core of our salvation by faith. Abraham was not a Jew in that he had not received the Mosaic Law, yet GOD justified Abraham because Abraham believed and obeyed GOD. First by leaving his countrymen to go to Canaan and then by his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, the son of promise, as GOD commanded him to do. Abraham did not actually sacrifice Isaac for GOD provided a ram for the sacrifice, but Abraham was willing to obey GOD to the extreme and this was the basis of his justification before GOD. It was not the acts of Abraham that justified him, but it was the belief and trust in GOD that justified him before GOD. Abraham was not a perfect person for the account of Abraham showed some of his flaws. And we have flaws ourselves. But it was the belief and trust in GOD that justified him before GOD and not his behavior. This is a great hope to us in that it is not in following the precepts of the Mosaic Law that justifies us, but it is our belief and trust in GOD, through Christ, that justifies us before GOD.*

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith

¹⁰ For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that **continues** not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. ¹¹ But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith. ¹² And the law is not of faith: but, The man that **does** them shall live in them. ¹³ Christ **has** redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangs on a tree [cross]: ¹⁴ That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Commentary: *The Law was meant for the lawbreakers so they would know how much of a lawbreaker they really were. Without the Law, people had no idea of what sin was and their need for a savior to save them from their sin. Once a person has repented and surrendered their life to GOD, then they are given the Holy Spirit to provide a new nature, which hates sin and wants to walk in the righteousness of Christ. When one is walking in the righteousness of Christ, being by the Holy Spirit, then one automatically fulfills the Law.*

The Law and the Promise

¹⁵ Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant [a legal agreement which cannot be altered], yet *if it be* confirmed, no man **disannuls**, or **adds** thereto. ¹⁶ Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He **said** not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Christ. ¹⁷ And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect [the Law cannot void the promise made to Abraham]. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise. ¹⁹ Wherefore [how] then **serves** the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. ²⁰ Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one, but God is one. ²¹ *Is* the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, **truly** righteousness should have been by the law. ²² But the scripture **has** concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. ²⁴ Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. ²⁶ For **you** are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for **you** are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if **you be** Christ's, then are **you** Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Commentary: Paul once again emphasizes that the keeping of the Law does not produce righteousness for no one can keep all the Law in their own strength, for even if we break one law, it is as if we broke them all, James 2:10. The Law was intended to be that 'school master' that brings us to Christ, so that we would accept the promise made to Abraham. That promise was that GOD would make Abraham's descendants, both physical and spiritual, righteous by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus. It is GOD that makes us righteous and it is not anything we can on our own. We are children of the promise of salvation. Once having accepted that salvation, then the Holy Spirit helps us to walk in the righteousness of Christ which is walking in selfless love that does not desire to commit sin.

Sons and Heirs

Chapter 4: ¹ Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, **differs** nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; ² But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. ³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: ⁴ But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. ⁶ And because **you** are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. ⁷ Wherefore **you are** no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Commentary: Paul makes the point that a child is like a servant in that they are under the authority of others until they become of age. We all were under the authority of the law until we came of age by accepting Christ. Once we accepted Christ, we become adopted sons and daughters of GOD and were no longer under the bondage of the law which led to condemnation but instead we were granted grace that we would walk in the righteousness of Jesus and be heirs of the heavenly blessings.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

⁸ Howbeit then, when **you** knew not God, **you** did service unto them which by nature are no gods. ⁹ But now, after that **you** have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn **you** again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto **you** desire again to be in bondage? ¹⁰ **You** observe days, and months, and times, and years. ¹¹ I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed [worked] upon you **labor** in vain. ¹² Brethren, I beseech [beg] you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as **you are**: **you** have not injured [wronged] me at all. ¹³ **You** know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. ¹⁴ And my temptation [trial] which was in my flesh **you** despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Where is then the blessedness **you** spake of? for I bear you record, that, if *it had been* possible, **you** would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me [Paul's infirmity was his poor eyesight, possibly caused by his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus]. ¹⁶ Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? ¹⁷ They zealously affect [seek after] you, *but* not well; **yes**, they would exclude [separate] you, that **you** might affect [seek after] them. ¹⁸ But *it is* good to be zealously affected [sought after] always in *a good thing*, and not only when I am present with you. ¹⁹ My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, ²⁰ I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice [tone]; for I stand in doubt of you.

Commentary: Paul is concerned for the spiritual welfare of the Galatians. The enemy is always attacking people who have the truth and have been set free by the power of Christ. The enemy seeks to steal that liberty and place people back under his control. So, what is this liberty that Satan seeks to steal? The liberty of Christ is the power to choose to walk in righteousness rather than sin. Some would teach in error that this 'liberty is the freedom to sin since we are under grace. But that makes no sense since sin produces death and GOD is about life not death. The liberty in Christ is the ability, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to not sin by instead choosing righteousness over sin, obedience rather than disobedience, selfless love over selfish desires. Paul will go on to describe more of the power of this liberty in the next chapter, but we must remember that the liberty to walk in righteousness is the precious gift that Jesus died to bring us, so we ought not to squander it by listening to people who are seeking to destroy our faith and the liberty in Christ that this faith brings to us.

Example of Hagar and Sarah

²¹ Tell me, **you** that desire to be under the law, do **you** not hear the law? ²² For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. ²³ But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise [the miraculous birth of Isaac]. ²⁴ Which things are an allegory [an example for comparison]: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which genders [is born] to bondage, which is Hagar. ²⁵ For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children [the Jews were under the Law]. ²⁶ But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all [GOD's throne by which He gives us grace]. ²⁷ For it is written {Isaiah 54:1}, Rejoice, **you** barren that **bears** not; break forth and cry, **you** that travail [the pains of child birth] not: for the desolate **has** many more children than she which **has** an husband [we are all part of the great family of GOD which includes people from all over the earth]. ²⁸ Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise [of the Savior]. ²⁹ But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now. ³⁰ Nevertheless what says the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. ³¹ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Christ Has Set Us Free

Chapter 5: ¹ Stand fast [persist] therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. ² Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if **you** be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. ³ For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. ⁴ Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; **you** are fallen from grace. ⁵ For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. ⁶ For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails [power to affect] **anything**, nor uncircumcision; but faith which **works** by love. ⁷ **You** did run well; who did hinder you that **you** should not obey the truth? ⁸ This persuasion [deception] **comes** not of him that **calls** you. ⁹ A little leaven [yeast representing sin and deception] leavens the whole lump. ¹⁰ I have confidence in you through the Lord, that **you** will be none otherwise minded [deceived]: but he that **troubles** you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. ¹¹ And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence [stumbling block] of the cross ceased. ¹² I would they [the ones who preach circumcision] were even cut off [not merely circumcised but emasculated] which trouble you.

Commentary: Paul is being rather forceful with his condemnation of the Judaizes who were promoting circumcision, which represent the keeping of the Law for salvation, rather than accepting the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross only for salvation. Paul makes an extreme statement in condemnation of the proponents of circumcision that they that go all the way and emasculate themselves. Paul did not really mean this, but it shows the level of frustration he has with anyone who seeks to steal the faith of believers in the liberty of Jesus.

Keep in Step with the Spirit

¹³ For, brethren, **you** have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh [to sin], but by [selfless] love serve one another. ¹⁴ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; **You** shalt love your neighbour as **yourself**. ¹⁵ But if **you** bite and devour one another [vehemently argue over doctrine], take heed that **you** be not consumed [destroyed] one of another. ¹⁶ *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and **you** shall not [by no means] fulfil the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh [sinful desires] lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that **you** cannot do the things that **you** would. ¹⁸ But if **you** be led of the Spirit, **you** are not under the law.

Commentary: There are two strong forces that influence every person. The first is the sin nature that we are born with. The sin nature compels us to sin, thus breaking the moral Law of GOD, which condemns us to death. Without the salvation by Christ, we all are condemned due to the work of the flesh. But with the salvation of Christ, we are given the Spirit of GOD which works to keep us from sinning by the power of love, where we purposely choose not to sin but to glorify GOD by our obedience. In other words, the power of the Spirit overpowers the sin nature to make it of no effect. This is why Paul can state that if we walk in the Spirit, we will not remotely want to sin. Jesus did not want to sin because it would affect His relationship with the Father. The Spirit creates the same mindset in us as we surrender our lives to GOD so that we will not even remotely want to sin and negatively affect our relationship with GOD.

The Deeds of the Flesh

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness [unbridled lust],²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance [contentions], emulations [extreme jealousy], wrath, strife, seditions [being divisive], heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, **reveling** [carousing], and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Commentary: None of these deeds should be present in a born-again believer for these things will exempt people from the kingdom of GOD. This is why GOD circumcises our heart (Colossians 2:11) to eliminate the power of the sin nature so that we can walk in the fruit of the Spirit which is righteousness. Those people who say it is alright to sin in this manner because we are under grace, do not understand the moral standard of GOD which prohibits such deeds and does not promote them in any way. It is the role of the Spirit to mature each believer to the point that they totally reject any thought of committing any of these acts.

The Fruit of the Spirit

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance [self-control]: against such there is no law. ²⁴ And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Bear One Another's Burdens

Chapter 6: ¹ Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault [sin], **you** which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering **yourself**, lest **you** also be tempted. ² Bear [to take on as one's own] **you** one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. ³ For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he **deceives** himself. ⁴ But let every man prove [examine to see if genuine] his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone [and with GOD], and not in another. ⁵ For every man shall bear [endure and not escape from] his own burden [cares]. ⁶ Let him that is taught in the word communicate [become a partner] unto him that **teaches** in all good things. ⁷ Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man **sows** [says and does], that shall he also reap [will come back on him]. ⁸ For he that **sows** to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption [destruction]; but he that **sows** to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. ⁹ And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint [give up] not. ¹⁰ As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Commentary: Paul previously listed the differences between the deeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. In this section, Paul is listing a number of actions that result from walking in the fruit of the Spirit. The deeds of the flesh produce selfishness which will reap destruction, but the acts of selfless love that result from the fruit of the Spirit will produce everlasting life. The fruit of the Spirit directs our focus and efforts away from ourselves and to the needs of others. It is in this manner that we share the love of Christ with the other members of the body of Christ and to the world in general.

Final Warning and Benediction

¹¹ **You** see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. ¹² As many as desire to make a fair **show** in the flesh, they constrain [compel] you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ [they hold on to their traditions rather than accept the cross]. ¹³ For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory [have praise] in your flesh [you submitted to their traditions]. ¹⁴ But God forbid that I should glory [have praise], save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. ¹⁵ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision [of the flesh] **avails** [makes a difference] **anything**, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature [it is the circumcision of the heart that matters, Colossians 2:11]. ¹⁶ And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God [those who overcome the world]. ¹⁷ From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus [the stripes from the whippings that Paul has taken for the sake of the Gospel]. ¹⁸ Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

The Letter to the Ephesians

Introduction

Paul had spent years ministering in Ephesus during his missionary journeys. The Ephesians were near and dear to Paul, so as Paul was imprisoned in Rome, nearing the end of his ministry, he wanted to express in eloquent terms the foundations of the faith and then express the manner of life that should be exhibited by following these foundations. Scholars believe that this letter was written around AD 60-61. The letter to the Ephesians is thought to be Paul's best expression of our faith in Christ. Here are some main points in the letter:

- Spiritual blessings in Christ
- Paul's thanksgiving and prayer for the Ephesians
- Salvation by grace and not works
- Unity in Christ
- The mystery of the Gospel
- Paul's prayer for spiritual strength
- Oneness of the Body of Christ
- Walking in the new life
- How to walk in love
- Husband and wife relationships
- Child and parent relationships
- Servant to master relationships
- The amour of GOD

Greeting

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: ⁴ According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵ Having predestinated [pre-planned] us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved. ⁷ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; ⁸ Wherein he has abounded [overflowed] toward us in all wisdom and prudence [understanding]; ⁹ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself: ¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: ¹¹ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated [pre-planned] according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will: ¹² That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. ¹³ In whom **you** also *trusted*, after that **you** heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after

that **you** believed, **you** were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ Which is the earnest [down payment] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Commentary: *There are two important concepts that Paul presents that have often been misunderstood and they need clarification. The first is that sin caught GOD off guard. The truth is that GOD knew that humanity would sin before He even created them, so He had a plan of salvation already in place to save humanity from their sin. Jesus was to be that sacrifice for sin that would free humanity, as John states in Revelation 13:8b: the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The second point has to do with the doctrine of predestination, which implies that GOD handpicked the people who would be saved and the people who would not be saved. Such a doctrine denies the great love that GOD has for all people, 2 Peter 3:9, emphasis added: The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. GOD does not want anyone to perish but all people would be with Him for all eternity. What GOD predestined or pre-planned was the criterion by which people would be saved—John 3:3: Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The criterion is that we must be born again of the spirit of GOD to see and enter His holy Kingdom. All who are willing to be born again will be in the Book of Life, and all who refuse to be born again will not be in the Book of Life. It is the people determining their eternal fate rather than GOD arbitrary picking who will be saved and who will not be saved. For those who choose to surrender their life to GOD in the born again process will receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit as a token of their future inheritance in the Kingdom. The Holy Spirit will lead the believer to holiness and power to overcome sin and the world. This is a true blessing.*

Thanksgiving and Prayer

¹⁵ Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, ¹⁶ Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; ¹⁷ That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: ¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that **you** may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, ²⁰ Which he wrought [brought to pass] in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ²² And has put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, ²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that **fills** all in all.

Chapter 2: ¹ And you **has** *he quickened* [made alive], who were dead in trespasses [deviating from the truth] and sins; ² Wherein in time past **you** walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now **works** in the children of disobedience: ³ Among whom also we all had our conversation [behavior] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, **has** quickened

[brought us back from death] us together with Christ, (by grace **you** are saved;) ⁶ And **has** raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: ⁷ That in the ages to come he might **show** the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace are **you** saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God **has** before ordained [pre-planned] that we should walk in them.

Commentary: *Every false religion is based on people working their way to some form of eternal bliss. But only the Bible states the truth that no one can work their way into heaven for even one sin will exempt people from heaven and people have many more than one sin. The only cure for sin is the sacrifice of Jesus for only his sacrificial blood can cleanse us from our sin. Salvation therefore is a gift from GOD and not anything we can earn. We either accept the gift and release our sins or we refuse the gift to hold on to our sins and face eternal destruction. The choice is very plain, trust in Christ and live forever or reject Christ and perish forever.*

One in Christ

¹¹ Wherefore remember, that **you** *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; ¹² That at that time **you** were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus **you** who sometimes were far off are made nigh [near] by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he is our peace, who **has** made both one, and **has** broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; ¹⁵ Having abolished in his flesh the enmity [hostility], *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances [doctrine]; for to make in himself of twain [two] one new man, *so* making peace; ¹⁶ And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity [hostility] thereby: ¹⁷ And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh [near]. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. ¹⁹ Now therefore **you** are no more strangers and foreigners, but **fellow citizens** with the saints, and of the household of God; ²⁰ And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; ²¹ In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: ²² In whom **you** also are builded together for an habitation of God

Commentary: *At one time there were two types of people: the Hebrew people who were given the Law and the Gentiles who were without the Law. There was hostility between the two because the Gentiles negatively influenced the Hebrews to forsake the Law and to worship false gods. Now that the Gentiles have been given grace through Christ, both groups have the ability to fulfill the Law through the power of the Holy Spirit. There is no longer a hostility between Hebrews and Gentiles for those who are in Christ, for they both are under Grace. And since they both have been reconciled to GOD through Christ, they are now of one family, being built into a figurative 'temple' in which GOD can dwell through His Spirit. We no longer have to go to a building made by man to experience GOD for the Spirit of GOD dwells in us, making the collective body of Christ His holy spiritual temple.*

The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed

Chapter 3: ¹ For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, ² If **you** have heard of the dispensation [responsibility] of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: ³ How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery [secrets]; (as I wrote afore in few words, ⁴ Whereby, when you read, **you** may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) ⁵ Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; ⁶ That the Gentiles should be **fellow heirs**, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: ⁷ Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. ⁸ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; ⁹ And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: ¹⁰ To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, ¹¹ According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: ¹² In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. ¹³ Wherefore I desire that **you** faint [lose heart] not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Commentary: *As Paul mentioned previously, GOD had the plan of salvation firmly established in His mind before the creation. GOD's ultimate means of salvation was somewhat of a mystery although there were hints of it in the prophecies. GOD first worked on individuals, as in the case of Abraham, and later GOD used a nation, the people of Israel, to show to the rest of world the grace of GOD. But in these last days GOD has moved beyond one nation to a world-wide ministry that incorporates millions of Gentiles into the family of GOD. And this was GOD's plan all along to save as many people as He could, thus the mystery is revealed.*

Prayer for Spiritual Strength

¹⁴ For this cause I bow my knees [pray] unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that **you**, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ May be able to comprehend [realize] with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; ¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge [understanding], that **you** might be filled with all the fulness of God. ²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that **works** in us, ²¹ Unto him *be* glory [praise] in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Commentary: *The most important element of the Christ's life is a heart that is filled with GOD's love. GOD's love is entirely selfless in nature, while the unregenerated heart of people is full of selfishness. It is important therefore that we forsake our selfishness by embracing the selfless love of GOD. In other words, when we are selfish, we are weak spiritually, but when we are selfless, then we walk in the full power of GOD.*

Unity in the Body of Christ

Chapter 4: ¹ I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech [encourage] you that **you** walk worthy of the vocation [calling] wherewith **you** are called, ² With all lowliness [humility] and meekness [gentleness], with longsuffering [patience], forbearing [supporting] one another in love; ³ Endeavoring [working hard] to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as **you** are called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all. ⁷ But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Commentary: Paul is stressing the importance of unity. Unity is not where everyone thinks the same way for that is conformity. Unity is having a consensus on the major themes of salvation and holiness, while allowing for differing opinions regarding non-salvation issues, such as the color of the church's carpet. Unity is being in one mind regarding the mission of Christ, while agreeing to disagree on less important matters.

The Five-Fold Ministry

⁸ Wherefore he **said** {Psalm 68:18}, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. ⁹ (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹² For the perfecting [maturing] of the saints, for the work of the ministry [leading others to Christ], for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ: ¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith [singleness of purpose/mission], and of the knowledge [correct understanding] of the Son of God, unto a perfect [spiritually mature] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ [becoming just like Jesus]: ¹⁴ That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight [deceitfulness] of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive [lead people astray]; ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: ¹⁶ From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint [bond of fellowship] supplies, according to the effectual working [laboring for Jesus] in the measure of every part, **makes** increase of the body unto the edifying [building up] of itself in love.

Commentary: The primary purpose of the church is to build up the believers so that they can carry on the Great Commission of reaching the world with the Gospel. GOD has gifted the church with ministry leaders such as apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors and evangelists. These ministry leaders work with the body to produce spiritual maturity within the church. Such maturity will prevent the believers from being deceived by the enemy forces and will allow ministry to the body that will help it grow in love. The evidence of love between the members is a sign to the world that these believers are disciples of Christ, John 13:35.

The New Life

¹⁷ This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that **you** henceforth [no longer] walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, ¹⁸ Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of

God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: ¹⁹ Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness [unbridled lust], to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ But **you** have not so learned Christ; ²¹ If so be that **you** have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² That **you** put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; ²³ And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; ²⁴ And that **you** put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. ²⁵ Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his **neighbor**: for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be **you** angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: ²⁷ Neither give place to the devil. ²⁸ Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him **labor**, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs. ²⁹ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying [building up people], that it may minister grace [the power of the Spirit] unto the hearers. ³⁰ And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby **you** are sealed unto the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice [desire to hurt others]: ³² And be **you** kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake **has** forgiven you.

Commentary: Paul in several places will outline the aspects of the new life in Christ. This is one such passage that warrants our constant study so that we can perfect the manner of life that Christ expects of us. Paul goes in the next chapters to give practical examples of how to live out this new life.

Walk in Love

Chapter 5: ¹ Be **you** therefore followers of God, as dear children; ² **And** walk in love, as Christ also **has** loved us, and **has** given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a **sweet smelling** savour. ³ But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as **becomes** saints; ⁴ Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. ⁵ For this **you** know, that no whoremonger [fornicator] , nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶ Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things **comes** the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. ⁷ Be not **you** therefore partakers [joined together] with them. ⁸ For you were sometimes darkness, but now *are you* light in the Lord: walk as children of light: ⁹ (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) ¹⁰ Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. ¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*. ¹² For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. ¹³ But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever **does** make manifest is light. ¹⁴ Wherefore he **said** [a reference to Isaiah 60:11 and Daniel 12:2], Awake **you** that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give **you** light. ¹⁵ See then that **you** walk circumspectly [with forethought], not as fools, but as wise, ¹⁶ Redeeming [making wise use of] the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Wherefore be **you** not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*. ¹⁸ And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess [an unrighteous life]; but be filled with the Spirit; ¹⁹ Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; ²⁰ Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear [reverence] of God.

Wives and Husbands

²² Wives submit [respect and honor] yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the **savior** of the body. ²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject [voluntarily yielded] unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in **everything**. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶ That he might sanctify [make holy and pure] and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So ought men to love [with great fondness] their wives as their own bodies. He that **loves** his wife **loves** himself. ²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but **nourishes** and **cherishes** it, even as the Lord the church: ³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. ³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh [Genesis 2:24]. ³² This is a great mystery [we do not fully understand how this works]: but I speak concerning Christ :and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

Commentary: *Within the Godhead, (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), there is such unity and love for each other that the possibility of dispute or disrespect does not exist. This is the picture that Paul paints between the husband and wife, that there is such love and mutual respect for each other that dispute or mistreatment is impossible. It is the same way between Christ and His church. We are to have such a love and respect for Christ that there would be no disputes or ill will between the members of the church. While we as humans might regard such unity as impossible, this unity is nevertheless a reality in the Kingdom of GOD. And if we want to be citizen of this Kingdom then we need to learn how to walk in such unity starting with married couples and then expanding it to include the whole church.*

Children and Parents

Chapter 6: ¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ² **Honor** your father and mother {Exodus 20:12}; (which is the first commandment with promise;); ³ That it may be well with **you**, and **you may** live long on the earth. ⁴ And, **you** fathers, provoke not your children to wrath [anger at you]: but bring them up in the nurture [education in the things of GOD] and admonition [instructions] of the Lord.

Bondservants and Masters

⁵ Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling [having a respect for authority], in singleness [sincerity] of your heart, as unto Christ; ⁶ Not with eyeservice [only when the master is looking], as menpleasers [to win over with flattery]; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; ⁷ With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: ⁸ Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free. ⁹ And, **you** masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing [holding back] threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Commentary: *In our culture this admonition would apply to employees and employers. While employees have the option to quit, the slave or servant did not have this option. In both cases, the subordinate and superior are both under GOD's supervision and need to be mindful of their actions towards each other.*

The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole **armor** of God, that **you** may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. ¹³ Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that **you** may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth [having a belt around our waist that represents the truth found in GOD's Word], and having on the breastplate of righteousness [in our heart wanting to walk in the righteousness of Christ]; ¹⁵ And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace [being willing to share the word of GOD]; ¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith **you** shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [we do not listen to lies of Satan]. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation [our minds transformed into the mind of Christ], and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: ¹⁸ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance [endurance] and supplication [prayers] for all saints; ¹⁹ And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ For which I am an ambassador in bonds [Paul is in prison]: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Commentary: *The main point of our spiritual warfare is that the enemy is not people for the real enemies are the dark spiritual forces under the command of Satan. Satan's main weapon is deception of which the armor of GOD will protect us. People who do not know the Lord are susceptible to his lies and we need to intercede in prayer for their behalf. Intercession is a key weapon in our warfare against the spirit of antichrist which opposes the work of Christ, 1 John 4:3.*

Final Greetings

²¹ But that **you** also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: ²² Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that **you** might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts. ²³ Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. *To the Ephesians written from Rome, by Tychicus.*

The Letter to the Philippians

Introduction

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians from his prison in Rome about AD 61-62. The letter to the Philippians was the last of the prison letters to have been written and was delivered by Epaphroditus. The other three letters were delivered by Tychicus, for they were all going to the same general location in Asia Minor. But the letter to the Philippians was going to Philippi, which was in Macedonia, thus Epaphroditus carried the letter and he was from Philippi. The tone of this letter was positive because Paul was encouraged by their spiritual growth and by the material support and encouragement that they provide him. The predominate theme of this letter is joy, one of the fruits of the Spirit, and is essential in the life of the believer. People respond to people expressing joy rather than people with a dour expression. And due to the wonderful and magnificent grace we have been given, there is much to be joyful about. Here are some main points in the letter:

- Paul's thanksgiving and prayer for the Philippians
- Advancing the Gospel
- Our life in Christ
- Jesus set the example on how we should live
- Paul's appreciation of the service of Timothy and Epaphroditus
- Righteousness Through Faith in Christ
- Pressing on to the goal
- Encouraging words to the Philippians
- GOD's provision
-

Greeting

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops [elders] and deacons: ² Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, ⁵ For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; ⁶ Being confident of this very thing, that he which **has** begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ: ⁷ Even as it is meet [proper] for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds [Paul was in prison], and in the **defense** and confirmation of the gospel, **you** all are partakers of my grace. ⁸ For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels [in the depth of heart] of Jesus Christ. ⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment; ¹⁰ That **you** may approve things that are excellent; that **you** may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; ¹¹ Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

The Advance of the Gospel

¹² But I would **you** should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out [occurred] rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; ¹³ So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the

palace, and in all other *places* [Paul was able to witness in the courts of Caesar, the ruler of the Roman Empire]; ¹⁴ And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing [becoming bold] confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. ¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife [to spite Paul]; and some also of good will: ¹⁶ The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction [to make me feel bad] to my bonds: ¹⁷ But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the **defense** of the gospel.

To Live Is Christ

¹⁸ What then? Notwithstanding [nevertheless], every way, whether in **pretense**, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, **yes**, and will rejoice. ¹⁹ For I know that this shall turn to my salvation [spiritual blessing] through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰ According to my earnest expectation [desire] and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified [become greatly evident] in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death. ²¹ For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. ²² But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my **labor**: yet what I shall choose I wot [know] not. ²³ For I am in a strait betwixt [having a difficult time choosing between] two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: ²⁴ Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you. ²⁵ And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; ²⁶ That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. ²⁷ Only let your conversation be as it **becomes** the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that **you** stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; ²⁸ And in nothing terrified by your adversaries [being afraid of them]: which is to them an evident token of perdition [their mistreatment of you is a sign of their condemnation], but to you of salvation, and that of God [our confident hope in GOD is a sign of our salvation]. ²⁹ For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; ³⁰ Having the same conflict which **you** saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

Commentary: *There are three points that Paul is emphasizing in this passage. The first is our manner of life as a believer. We need to understand that when we accept Christ as our Lord and savior, we lose the right to our old life. In other words, when we seek eternal salvation, the cost is our old life—its desires, wants, and ambitions. Our new life is led in total submission to the will of the Father which is to transform us into the image of Jesus. We cannot be like Jesus if we are holding on to the old life, so we must die to our self and live in the righteousness of Christ. The second point is relating to what happens after we die. Paul's stated dilemma of wanting to die and be with Christ or to live for the sake of others is often misunderstood and is used to support the position that when we die, we go straight to heaven. But such a position conflicts with the rest of Scripture. Paul, being a good Hebrew, understood that when we die, we rest in the grave until Jesus comes to resurrect us on the last day. Every Jewish person knew this, even Martha knew this when talking to Jesus after the death of Lazarus, John 11:24. So Paul would not be stating something that would conflict with what He knew to be true. What Paul was really saying was that it would be a blessing to rest from the suffering that he was experiencing in his mission. It would be blessing to close his eyes in death and in the next instant of resurrection see his Lord. The sleep would seem to be but an instant as it is with us when we sleep at night. But Paul understood that it was more beneficial for him to live so that he could minister unto others. The third...*

point is that Paul understood the need to suffer for Christ. Paul had a hope that he might be released from the prison but even he knew that the probable outcome was going to be His death (Paul was released from his initial charge but was arrested again under the persecution of Nero). Had another Caesar than Nero been on the throne he might have escaped but with Nero there was a very slim chance of that happening, so Paul was preparing for His eventual death. Paul was encouraging the Philippians to not despair of suffering or persecution for if we are dedicated believers, we will face some form of persecution. It could be rejection or ridicule from family and friends; it could be the loss of a job or other financial hardship; or it could be some form of physical harm. It does not matter what form the persecution takes, it is there to strengthen us in our faith by experiencing a portion of the suffering that Jesus experienced while He was with us. Paul speaks more of this suffering and our role in it in the next chapter, but for now it is important for us to not weaken and place our soul in eternal jeopardy by forsaking suffering for His sake.

Christ's Example of Humility

Chapter 2: ¹ If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels [compassion] and mercies, ² Fulfil **you** my joy, that **you** be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory [pride]; but in lowliness of mind [humility] let each esteem **others** better [more important] than themselves. ⁴ Look not every man on his own things [interests], but every man also on the things [interests] of others. ⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery [did not retain or hang onto His position] to be equal with God: ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸ And being found in fashion [became completely human] as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Wherefore God also **has** highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth [in the grave]; ¹¹ And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Commentary: Paul starts out this section by describing the Christ like character that we are to develop where we become selfless in our relations with other people. GOD's love is totally selfless so we must act in the same manner by placing the needs of others before our needs. Then Paul expounds on the mind of Christ which is the means by which we become selfless. First, we are willing to let go of our right to our life, which means giving up everything of this world so that we may inherit the full blessings of the world to come. We do this by being a selfless servant that is willing to completely obey the will of the Father. We walk in obedience to GOD regardless of the cost to us, even if it costs us everything, even our life. If we are willing to be disciples to this degree than we will be exalted with Christ when He returns to set up His kingdom. Paul states it this way in 2 Timothy 2:11, 12: This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure [willing to suffer], We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

Lights in the World

¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as **you** have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear [reverence] and trembling [eager desire to fully obey GOD]. ¹³ For it is God which **works** in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without **murmuring** and **disputing**: ¹⁵ That **you** may be blameless [free from fault] and harmless [innocent], the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom **you** shine as lights in the world; ¹⁶ Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither **labored** in vain. ¹⁷ **Yes**, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸ For the same cause also do **you** joy, and rejoice with me.

Commentary: The light that we shine is our obedient life to the will of GOD. When we act in a selfless manner, then people can see the love of GOD shining from us, but when we act in a selfish manner, then all that people can see is darkness for selfishness cancels out the light. And how do we know how to act? We study the Word of GOD and the Word instructs us on how to act. This is what Paul means when he says to work out our salvation in fear and trembling.

Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹ But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. ²⁰ For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. ²¹ For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's [see the commentary above]. ²² But **you** know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he **has** served with me in the gospel. ²³ Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. ²⁴ But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly [Paul is still hoping to be released from prison, which was from his first imprisonment]. ²⁵ Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in **labor**, and **fellow soldier**, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants [necessities]. ²⁶ For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that **you** had heard that he had been sick. ²⁷ For indeed he was sick nigh [near] unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when **you** see him again, **you** may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. ²⁹ Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: ³⁰ Because for the work of Christ he was nigh [near] unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

Righteousness Through Faith in Christ

Chapter 3: ¹ Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe. ² Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision [Judaizers]. ³ For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh [the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit and not of the flesh by man]. ⁴ Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man **thinks** that he **has** whereof he might trust [have confidence] in the flesh, I more: ⁵ Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷ But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸ **Yes** doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count

them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,⁹ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: ¹⁰ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable [be conformed, in likeness] unto his death;¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Commentary: Paul is once again stating that anything that we can accomplish in our own effort is meaningless to the Kingdom of GOD, for all our righteous acts that we perform without Christ are as filthy rags to GOD, Isaiah 64:6. What matters are the acts that we do under the power of the Holy Spirit which is in conformity to the character of Christ. Paul considers all his worldly accomplishments as trash in comparison to the glory of walking in the righteousness of Jesus.

Straining Toward the Goal

¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect [complete in obedience and spiritual maturity]: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend [seize onto] that for which also I am apprehended [seized onto] of Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended [totally accomplished]: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [growing in spiritual maturity], be thus minded: and if in **anything you** be otherwise minded [think differently], God shall reveal even this unto you. ¹⁶ Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained [by the degree you have grown spiritually], let us walk by the same rule [measuring standard], let us mind [have the same understanding] the same thing. ¹⁷ Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark [fix your eyes on] them which walk so as **you** have us for an **example**. ¹⁸ (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame, who mind [pay attention to] earthly things.) ²⁰ For our conversation [authority] is in heaven; from whence [where] also we look for the **Savior**, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Commentary: Paul is likening our faith walk to a footrace [like a great marathon race] where we are all striving to finish the race. In order to run fast and sure, we need to forget the things of the past where we had stumbled and fallen short and fix our eyes on Jesus who is coaching us to the finish line. We can also use people like Paul or contemporary mature saints of GOD as assistant coaches who will be an example for us to follow as they are being conformed into the image of Jesus. This is not a race that we want to fail to finish, for it will cost us our eternal life, so it is imperative for us to rely on all of heaven's resources to help us cross the finish line.

Chapter 4: ¹ Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

Exhortation, Encouragement, and Prayer

² I beseech Euodia, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind [understanding] in the Lord. ³ And I intreat [request that] **you** also, true yokefellow [partner], help those women which **labored** with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my **fellow laborers**, whose names *are* in the book of life. ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord **always**: *and* again I say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your moderation [gentleness] be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand. ⁶ Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in **everything** by prayer and supplication [making needs voiced to GOD who already knows our needs] with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which **passes** all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. ⁹ Those things, which **you** have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Commentary: *Paul is giving us simple instructions for Christian living. We need to always be in a state of rejoicing for the great things that GOD has done and is doing in our lives. We become much more attractive to other people if we have a joyful heart instead of a sour look on our face. And what causes that sour look? Being anxious and fretful over the cares of this earth. We need to trust GOD that He will provide our needs as we pray onto Him. Another thing that will make us more attraction to other people is our gentleness in Christ. People are repelled by arrogance and self-righteousness. We should show forth the gentleness of Christ as we interact with other people rather than repel them with harsh words and behavior. Such gentleness is a result of our peace with GOD and our peace from GOD as in the fruit of the Spirit. Finally, we need to guard our heart and mind from ungodly thoughts and media. We need to focus on things that represent the holiness and purity of GOD rather than the profane things of this world which are not holy and are not pure. Christ is coming for a people that are holy, without spot or blemish, Ephesians 5:27.*

God's Provision

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me **has** flourished again; wherein **you** were also careful [full of care for me], but **you** lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. ¹² I know both how to be abased [be in a humble position], and I know how to abound [to be richly affluent]: **everywhere** and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. ¹⁴ Notwithstanding **you** have well done, that **you** did communicate [share in] with my affliction [troubles]. ¹⁵ Now **you** Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated [participated] with me as concerning giving and receiving, but **you** only. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica **you** sent once and again unto my necessity. ¹⁷ Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound [be credited] to your account. ¹⁸ But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you [an offering of support], an **odor** of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, **well pleasing** to God. ¹⁹ But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Commentary: *Paul shares one of the important aspects of being a follower of Christ and that is contentment. The people of the world are never content for they are always seeking more for their life, for they believe that this world is all that there is. But as a follower of Christ we know that this world is just a temporary place and that the real things are yet to come. We can therefore be content with what we have and what we experience on this temporary journey. There will be times when we will experience need and GOD allows it for two reasons: one, that we do not become attached to the things of this world, and two, that we can allow others to be blessed by giving to us. Paul is allowing the Philippians to be blessed by providing for his need. There will be times that we will see abundance in our life and GOD allows that for two reasons: first to test us to see if we will value the worldly things greater than Him, and two, so that we can be a blessings by giving out of our abundance to bless others. So, whatever state we find ourselves in, we can praise GOD for He is preparing us for the real world that is to come.*

Final Greetings

²¹ Salute [greet] every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. ²² All the saints salute [greet] you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household [Paul was able to reach into the household of the emperor with the Gospel]. ²³ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen. [To the Philippians written from Rome, by Epaphroditus.](#)

The Letter to the Colossians

Introduction

Paul wrote this letter during his imprisonment in Rome circa AD 60-61. Paul had never been to Colossae, a city in eastern Asia Minor (modern Turkey) but had heard of false teachings regarding the deity of Christ. Paul then proceeds in this letter to explain the supremacy of Christ in all things—Creator and ruler of the universe. The correct view of the ministry of Jesus was important for it is the foundation of our salvation. Here are some main points in the letter:

- Paul's thanksgiving and prayer for the Colossians
- The Preeminence of Christ
- Paul's Ministry to the Church
- Christ makes us alive spiritually
- The issue of judging one another
- Put on the New Self
- Principles for Christian Households
- Final instructions

Greeting

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ² To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³ We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which **you** have to all the saints, ⁵ For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof **you** heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; ⁶ Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and **brings** forth fruit, as it **does** also in you, since the day **you** heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: ⁷ As **you** also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; ⁸ Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. ⁹ For this cause [reason] we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that **you** might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ That **you** might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering [endurance] with joyfulness; ¹² Giving thanks unto the Father, which **has** made us meet [fit and proper] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: ¹³ Who **has** delivered us from the power of darkness, and **has** translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

The Preeminence of Christ

¹⁵ Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: ¹⁶ For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and by him all things consist [being put together]. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church:

who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence [being the first in all things]. ¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness [completeness] dwell; ²⁰ And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile [restore] all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. ²¹ And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled [brought peace] ²² In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: ²³ If **you** continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which **you** have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Commentary: *It is important to understand what is meant by Jesus being the first born or in some cases referred to as the only begotten son of GOD. Jesus was never born for He was co-existent in the Godhead. He always was and always will be. The reference to first born has to do with His incarnation in the flesh for His earthly mission. It was in the sense of His transformation from spirit to flesh that is referred to as first born or begotten. Jesus came to identify personally with humans and in this sense, He is the priority or preeminence of all beings in the flesh. It becomes confusing when we read of the Father/Son relationship between Jesus and GOD, so some people draw the conclusion that Jesus was born in this manner. But GOD is only using the Father/Son relationship to give us a way to represent this special divine relationship. Though Jesus was co-equal with GOD, He chose to make Himself subject to the will of the Father as an example for us to follow as we subject our lives to the will of the Father. Such submission is natural in a loving relationship where each party submit themselves in love to the other party.*

Paul's Ministry to the Church

²⁴ Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: ²⁵ Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation [oversight] of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; ²⁶ *Even* the mystery [the hidden purpose] which **has** been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: ²⁷ To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: ²⁸ Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect [complete] in Christ Jesus: ²⁹ Whereunto I also **labor**, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily.

Chapter 2: ¹ For I would that **you know** what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; ² That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; ³ In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ And this I say, lest any man should beguile [deceive] you with enticing words. ⁵ For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the **steadfastness** of your faith in Christ.

Alive in Christ

⁶ As **you** have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk **you** in him: ⁷ Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as **you** have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. ⁸ Beware lest

any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments [elements] of the world, and not after Christ. ⁹ For in him **dwells** all the fulness of the Godhead bodily [the full power of the divine nature of GOD was in the physical body of Jesus]. ¹⁰ And **you** are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: ¹¹ In whom also **you** are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: ¹² Buried with him in baptism, wherein also **you** are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who **has** raised him from the dead. ¹³ And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **has** he quickened [brought alive] together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses [sins]; ¹⁴ Blotting out the handwriting [record] of ordinances [judgments for our sins] that was against us, which was contrary [condemning] to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; ¹⁵ *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a **show** of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Commentary: *This passage of Paul is especially important to our walk as a Christian. We are taught in err that we remain sinners after being converted in Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth. The proper definition of a sinner is a person that has the sin nature and is compelled to sin due to having a sin nature. The proper definition of a true believer is one that has the sin nature removed by the circumcision of the heart so that the Holy Spirit has a clean heart to dwell in. It makes no sense for GOD to deliver us from our sins and still leave the sin nature in us. GOD does what we could never do by our own power and that is to overcome the sin nature, so GOD removes it for us. We become a new creation in Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:17, where the old nature becomes powerless and we are given a new nature that wants to obey GOD. If we believe that we still have the sin nature then we will continue to sin, but if we believe that the sin nature has been rendered powerless, then we can walk in victory over sin in our life. This does not mean that we will be perfect in righteousness for we are still being sanctified, but it does mean that we will not commit gross sin constantly. We might slip up now and then, but we have 1 John 1:9 to fall back on. Also, we must correct the mistaken idea that GOD placed His moral Law (the Ten commandments) on the cross, so we are free from the Law. What GOD placed on the cross was the recorded record of our sins thus symbolizing our total forgiveness. The moral Law is still in effect, but the Law of Moses given to the Israelites has been made obsolete with the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.*

Let No One Disqualify You

¹⁶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: ¹⁷ Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ. ¹⁸ Let no man beguile [deceive] you of your reward in a voluntary humility [excessive fasting to provoke visions] and worshipping of angels [which is forbidden], intruding into those things which he has not seen [false visions], vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ And not holding the Head [not honoring Jesus], from which all the body by joints and bands [that which binds together] having nourishment ministered, and knit together, **increases** with the increase of God. ²⁰ Wherefore if **you** be dead with Christ from the rudiments [elements] of the world, why, as though living in the world, are **you** subject to ordinances [legalistic rules], ²¹ (Touch not; taste not; handle not; ²² Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? ²³ Which things have indeed a shew [illusion] of wisdom in will [voluntary] worship [in man-made religion], and [false] humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any **honor** [of any value] to the satisfying [indulgence] of the flesh [sinful desires].

Commentary: *There are several points that need clarification from this passage. The first being the issue of judging regarding the Jewish feast days. While the requirements of the Mosaic law was no longer in effect due to the sacrifice of Jesus, there were still Jews and some Gentiles that practiced these feasts. We are not to judge or condemn people for doing what they think is right. We are to accept people where they are at in these non-salvation issues by loving them and not judging them. Secondly, there is the mistaken idea that Paul is referring to the seventh-day Sabbath when he mentions sabbaths. There were two types of sabbaths—the seventh-day Sabbath established at creation and the feast sabbaths that were a part of the Mosaic Law. Since the Mosaic Law was made obsolete by the sacrifice of Jesus, Paul is referring to the feast sabbaths and not to the everlasting seventh-day Sabbath which is still in effect and will be experienced on the new earth for all of eternity, Isaiah 66:22, 23. The final point is that of rejecting fanatical or esoteric practices that are not ordained by GOD but are of man-made religious practices. Such practices may make someone appear as spiritual, but they are in reality not being truly spiritual as in one's relationship to GOD. In other words, they are doing these things for their own vanity and are not concerned with truly honoring GOD. We are encouraged instead to practice the less glamorous spiritual disciplines such as study of and meditation on the word of GOD; prayer and supplication before GOD, and the genuine humbling of one's self by denying the desires of the flesh. These things will promote true spiritual maturity in the believer and will be pleasing to GOD.*

Put On the New Self

Chapter 3: ¹ If **you** then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ **sits** on the right hand of God. ² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For **you** are dead [to your old life], and your [new] life is hid [concealed/protected] with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall **you** also appear with him in glory. ⁵ Mortify [put to death] therefore your members [the old parts of you] which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness [impurities], inordinate affection [passions], evil concupiscence [desires], and covetousness [greed], which is idolatry [the desire for and worship of things that are not of GOD]: ⁶ For which things' sake the wrath of God **comes** on the children of disobedience: ⁷ In the which **you** also walked some time, when **you** lived in them. ⁸ But now **you** also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. ⁹ Lie not one to another, seeing that **you** have put off the old man with his deeds; ¹⁰ And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: ¹¹ Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian [a very barbaric people], bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all. ¹² Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels [from the heart] of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness [gentleness], longsuffering [patience]; ¹³ Forbearing [supporting] one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do you*. ¹⁴ And above all these things *put on* charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also **you** are called in one body; and be **you** thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatsoever **you** do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Commentary: It is impossible to do as Paul suggests in this passage if we still had the sin nature in us. Paul is repeatedly telling us that the old man—the sin nature—is dead and we have a new nature that allows us to walk in this manner. This is why it is so important for us to realize that the old sinful nature is dead so that we do not go on sinning. Will we be perfect at it? No, we will stumble at times, but we have the grace of GOD, 1 John 1:9, to pick us up and assist us continually on the path to glory. We will constantly struggle on this path if we are carrying the corpse of the old man with us. We need to leave him behind and walk in the new man that seeks to glorify GOD and not ourselves.

Rules for Christian Households

¹⁸ Wives, submit [honor and respect] yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love [in a totally selfless manner] *your* wives, and be not bitter against them. ²⁰ Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged. ²² Servants [employees], obey in all things *your* masters [employers] according to the flesh; not with eyeservice [just doing the minimum], as menpleasers [not by flattery]; but in singleness [sincerity] of heart, fearing God: ²³ And whatsoever **you** do, do *it* heartily [with all you have], as to the Lord, and not unto men; ²⁴ Knowing that of the Lord **you** shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for **you** serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵ But he that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he **has** done: and there is no respect of persons.

Chapter 4: ¹ Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that **you** also have a Master in heaven.

Further Instructions

² Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; ³ Withal [at the same time] praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds [prison]: ⁴ That I may make it manifest [clear], as I ought to speak. ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward them that are without [non-believers], redeeming [make good use of] the time. ⁶ Let your speech be **always** with grace, seasoned with salt [wisdom and gentleness], that **you** may know how **you** ought to answer every man.

Final Greetings

⁷ All my state [condition] shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: ⁸ Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate [condition], and comfort your hearts; ⁹ With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here. ¹⁰ Aristarchus my **fellow prisoner salutes** [greet] you, and Mark, sister's son [cousin] to Barnabas, (touching whom **you** received commandments [instructions]: if he come unto you, receive [welcome] him;) ¹¹ And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my **fellow workers** unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, **salutes** [greet] you, always **laboring** fervently for you in prayers, that **you** may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him record, that he **has** a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. ¹⁵ Salute [greet] the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. ¹⁶ And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that **you** likewise read the epistle from

Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou **has** received in the Lord, that **you** fulfil it. ¹⁸ The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.
[Written from Rome to Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.](#)

The First Letter to the Thessalonians

Introduction

Paul wrote this letter shortly after leaving Thessalonica during his second missionary journey, the time frame being circa AD 51 and was written from another stop on the journey, possibly Athens. Paul became worried about the spiritual state of the new converts, so he sent Timothy to check on them. Timothy had a good report regarding their spiritual state, so Paul wrote to encourage them. It seems like this church had great concern for the end of the world, so Paul gives us a clear picture of the return of Christ for His church. It is good to be interested in the return of Christ because it should affect how we live our lives in the meantime. Here are some main points in the letter:

- The faith of the Thessalonians
- How Paul's Ministry to them
- Paul's desire to see them again
- Timothy's good report
- Living a life pleasing to GOD
- The coming of the Lord
- The Day of the Lord
- Final instructions

Greeting

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians *which is* in God the Father and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Thessalonians' Faith and Example

² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; ³ Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and **labor** of love, and patience [steadfastness] of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; ⁴ Knowing, brethren beloved, your election [chosen] of God. ⁵ For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as **you** know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. ⁶ And **you** became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction [distress], with joy of the Holy Ghost: ⁷ So that **you** were **examples** to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia [Greece]. ⁸ For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia [Greece], but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak **anything**. ⁹ For they themselves **show** of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how **you** turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; ¹⁰ And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Paul's Ministry to the Thessalonians

Chapter 2: ¹ For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance [coming to] in unto you, that it was not in vain: ² But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated [mistreated], as **you** know, at Philippi [Paul and Silas were jailed and scourged], we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. ³ For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile [deception]: ⁴ But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which tries [tests] our hearts. ⁵ For neither at any time used we

flattering words, as **you** know, nor a cloke [pretext] of covetousness [greed]; God *is* witness: ⁶ Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor *yet* of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. ⁷ But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse **cherishes** her children: ⁸ So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because **you** were dear unto us. ⁹ For **you** remember, brethren, our **labor** and travail: for **laboring** night and day, because we would not be chargeable [be a burden] unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ **You** *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: ¹¹ As **you** know how we exhorted [encouraged] and comforted and charged [taught] every one of you, as a father *does* his children, ¹² That **you** would walk worthy of God, who **has** called you unto his kingdom and glory. ¹³ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when **you** received the word of God which **you** heard of us, **you** received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually **works** also in you that believe. ¹⁴ For **you**, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for **you** also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews: ¹⁵ Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: ¹⁶ Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins **always**: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Paul's Longing to See Them Again

¹⁷ But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, **endeavored** the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. ¹⁸ Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us. ¹⁹ For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even **you** in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? ²⁰ For **you** are our glory and joy.

Chapter 3: ¹ Wherefore when we could no longer forbear [bear it], we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; ² And sent Timothy, our brother, and minister of God, and our **fellow laborer** in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: ³ That no man should be moved [be shaken or falter] by these afflictions [trials]: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. ⁴ For **truly**, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation [trials]; even as it came to pass, and **you** know. ⁵ For this cause, when I could no longer forbear [bear it], I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our **labor** be in vain.

Timothy's Encouraging Report

⁶ But now when Timothy came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that **you** have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you: ⁷ Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: ⁸ For now we live [experience true life], if **you** stand fast in the Lord. ⁹ For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; ¹⁰ Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith? ¹¹ Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. ¹² And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you: ¹³ To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

A Life Pleasing to God

Chapter 4: ¹ Furthermore then we beseech [urge] you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as **you** have received of us how **you** ought to walk and to please God, *so you* would abound [overflow] more and more. ² For **you** know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification [being made holy and pure], that **you** should abstain [not be involved in] from fornication: ⁴ That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification [holiness] and **honor**; ⁵ Not in the lust of concupiscence [desire for what is forbidden], even as the Gentiles which know not God: ⁶ That no *man* go beyond [overstep proper limits] and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. ⁷ For God **has** not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. ⁸ He therefore that **despises**, **despises** not man, but God, who **has** also given unto us his holy Spirit. ⁹ But as touching brotherly love **you** need not that I write unto you: for **you** yourselves are taught of God to love one another. ¹⁰ And indeed **you** do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that **you** increase more and more; ¹¹ And that **you** study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; ¹² That **you** may walk honestly toward them that are without [non-believers], and *that you* may have lack of nothing.

Commentary: *Paul is explaining the two-step process by which we are being prepared to be citizens of GOD's holy kingdom. The first step is repentance, where we come to Jesus as our Savior and Lord (which means a total surrender of our life). The next step is to learn how to live our life in the manner that Jesus lived His life. We need to refrain from any activity that is not permitted by GOD, and then learn to love people as Jesus loved people. This means that we will not be mad or rude to people but instead we will show kindness and patience with people as GOD is kind and patient with us. Sanctification is a process and is not done overnight, but if we are willing, GOD will perfect our hearts into the heart and mind of Christ.*

The Coming of the Lord

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [dead and in the grave], that **you** sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [come before] them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Commentary: *There is a general misconception in the Christian community regarding what happens to a person when they die. Many Christians hold to the belief that the soul of people goes to heaven when they die. Such a position is not supported by a complete study of Scripture. The first point is that people do not possess an immortal soul, so it is impossible for the soul to go to heaven. The concept of an immortal soul comes from pagan sources and found its way into the church during the dark ages. Man is a living soul but does not possess a soul. This is why Ezekiel states the soul (person) who sins will die (that is complete death of body...*

...and mind), Ezekiel 18:4, 20: This is why Jesus states in John 14:1-3, that He is preparing a place for us and will return to take us home. If we are already in heaven, then He would not need to come and get us for we would already be there. This is why in verse 14, that Jesus will bring the believers when He returns to heaven after judging the ungodly. It is clear from this passage that the believers rest in the grave, as the Hebrews believed, and will be made alive again at the resurrection of the righteous. Paul is very adamant in making this point so that believers will not be deceived by false doctrine but will be able to learn the truth in GOD's Word.

Chapter 5: ¹ But of the times and the seasons, brethren, **you** have no need that I write unto you. ² For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so **comes** as a thief in the night. ³ For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction **comes** upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ But **you**, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ **You** are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep be [unaware], as *do* others; but let us watch [pay attention] and be sober [not given to extremes]. ⁷ For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. ⁸ But let us, who are of the day, be sober [be wise in attitude], putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God **has** not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. ¹¹ Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify [build up] one another, even as also **you** do.

Commentary: *While we do not know the day or the hour of Christ's return, and we should not listen to people who claim to know for they do not know, but we can sense the time or season of His coming. Therefore, we must stay attentive to our task to become like Jesus while the Lord tarries. We must not fall back into worldly lifestyles for then we will miss His coming, for He will only take those who are ready at His coming, see Matthew 7:21-23.*

Final Instructions and Benediction

¹² And we beseech [encourage] you, brethren, to know them which **labor** among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; ¹³ And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴ Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*. ¹⁵ See that none render [return] evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*. ¹⁶ Rejoice evermore. ¹⁷ Pray without ceasing. ¹⁸ In **everything** give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. ¹⁹ Quench [put out] not the Spirit. ²⁰ Despise not prophesyings. ²¹ Prove [test] all things; hold fast that which is good. ²² Abstain [stay away] from all appearance [kind] of evil. ²³ And the very God of peace sanctify [purify] you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit [breath of life] and soul [personality, spiritual character] and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Faithful *is* he that calls you, who also will do *it*. ²⁵ Brethren, pray for us. ²⁶ Greet all the brethren

with an holy kiss. ²⁷ I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. ²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen. [The first epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.](#)

Commentary: *Paul gives many instructions in this passage. Some of the more important instructions are as follows:*

- *Obey and support the leaders who oversee your spiritual wellbeing, for they are called of GOD to help you.*
 - *Be peaceful and supportive of all people.*
 - *Pray always for everything.*
 - *Be thankful for everything.*
 - *Do not do things (sin) that grieves the Holy Spirit.*
 - *Test everything that is told us by examining the Scriptures.*
 - *Stay away from anything that could appear as evil and ruin our testimony.*
 - *Allow GOD to work in us so that we may be totally prepared for the return of Christ.*
-

The Second Letter to the Thessalonians

Introduction

Paul wrote this letter shortly after writing the first letter to the Thessalonians. Apparently, the problem with false teachers was still prevalent and Paul wanted to assure them of the truth. The main concern was that false teachers were saying that the Lord had already come, so Paul reassured them that the man of sin had to first be revealed. This letter was penned either in Corinth or Athens depending on the length of time between the letters. Also of note was the situation where the false teachers were forging letters from Paul, so Paul made sure that they could recognize his handwriting. Here are some main points in the letter:

- The testing of the Thessalonians
- The coming judgment
- The revealing of the man of lawlessness
- Standing firm in the faith
- Living a life pleasing to GOD
- The coming of the Lord
- The Day of the Lord
- Final instructions

Greeting

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: ² Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

³ We are bound [obligated] to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet [proper], because that your faith **grows** exceedingly, and the charity [love] of every one of you all toward each other abounds [over flows]; ⁴ So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that **you** endure:

The Judgment at Christ's Coming

⁵ *Which is* a manifest token [evidence] of the righteous judgment of God, that **you** may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which **you** also suffer: ⁶ Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense [return] tribulation [distress] to them that trouble you; ⁷ And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, ⁸ In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹ Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; ¹⁰ When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. ¹¹ Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and

the work of faith with power: ¹² That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and **you** in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Commentary: *A common question is, why do we, as believers have to suffer? The first reason being that it is human nature to want life to be easy and void of suffering. GOD created us that way for life in the Garden of Eden was easy. But rebellion against GOD causes life to be hard due to selfishness in the heart of mankind. The trials and tribulations that we suffer, cause us to face the reality of the spiritual battle that we face so we will not be lulled into complacency by an easy and affluent life. Another reason is that our faith is being tested and matured by the spiritual trials that we face. If we had no struggles then we would become spiritually fat and lazy, which would not bode well for our eternal future. And lastly, we can glory in the victories that our loving Father works on our behalf. In other words, we get to see the miraculous hand of GOD in action in our lives as He sees us through each trial.*

The Man of Lawlessness

Chapter 2: ¹ Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, ² That **you** be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us [forged letters], as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there **comes** a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; ⁴ Who **opposes** and **exalts** himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God **sits** in the temple of God, **showing** himself that he is God. ⁵ Remember **you** not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? ⁶ And now **you** know what **withholds** that he might be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of iniquity **does** already work: only he who now lets [restrains] *will let* [restrain], until he be taken out of the way. ⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹ *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Commentary: *This is an especially important passage to understand due the false teachings that abound regarding the end times. One such teaching is that the antichrist will appear in the future to usher in a seven-year period called the great tribulation. This teaching is not biblically accurate for the Bible clearly teaches that the antichrist spirit is already ready here, 1 John 4:2, 3: By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. And again in 2 John 1:7: For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. So, if there were antichrists in the time of John in the first century, then how can the revealing of the antichrist be in the future when it is already present. History also refutes the claim that there is a future antichrist figure...*

...We know that during the final years of the Western Roman Empire, that the emperor Constantine made Christianity the state religion which started a great compromise in the church as pagan influences corrupted the purity of the Gospel. By the time that AD 538 rolled around, a great false religious system was in place that would cast humanity into the Dark Ages. The leader of this false religious system was antichrist in nature and vestiges of this false system remains with us today. So, by Paul's reasoning we know that about 500 years after this writing that there was a great falling away from the purity of the Gospel and that that this falling away was the result of this false antichrist system, which was revealed after the restrainer, the Roman Empire, was fallen. So, by the Bible and by history, we have exposed the future antichrist doctrine as false and misleading. It is important to understand this because this false religious system is still influencing believers today and we need to be aware of this influence so we will not be deceived.

Stand Firm

¹³ But we are bound to give thanks **always** to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God **has** from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification [being made holy] of the Spirit and belief of the truth: ¹⁴ Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [the body of doctrines and teachings] which **you** have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. ¹⁶ Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which **has** loved us, and **has** given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, ¹⁷ Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Pray for Us

Chapter 3: ¹ Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course [accomplish its goal], and be glorified, even as *it is* with you: ² And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith. ³ But the Lord is faithful, who shall **establish** you, and keep *you* from evil. ⁴ And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that **you** both do and will do the things which we command you. ⁵ And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

Warning Against Idleness

⁶ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that **you** withdraw yourselves from every brother that **walks** disorderly, and not after the tradition [doctrine] which he received of us. ⁷ For yourselves know how **you** ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; ⁸ Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought [nothing]; but wrought [worked] with **labor** and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable [be in debt] to any of you: ⁹ Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an **example** unto you to follow us. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. ¹¹ For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. ¹² Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. ¹³ But **you**, brethren, be not weary in well doing. ¹⁴ And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

Commentary: *There are two common negative responses to the Lord not coming when we expect him. The first is to be discouraged and we stop watching for His coming and the second is that we pause our life thinking that He is coming. The latter situation was what Paul was describing in this letter. People stopped doing what they normally would do since the coming of Christ was imminent. This led to people being idle and becoming busybodies for they had nothing to do. Unfortunately, this problem has repeated itself throughout church history. Since we do not know when Christ is specifically coming, we must continue to live our lives as normally as we can, which means planning for the future as if His coming is delayed but living each day as if He will come tomorrow. It is in this manner that we can lead a balanced and productive life.*

Benediction

¹⁶ Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord *be* with you all. ¹⁷ The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token [distinguishing mark] in every epistle: so I write. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen. [The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.](#)

The First Letter to Timothy

Introduction

While there was some debate over the authorship of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, the Pastoral Letters, most scholars agree that Paul wrote these letters. The dating is a bit more problematic. When the book of Acts concluded, Paul was in a prison in Rome. Some scholars believed 67 or AD 68, depending on the source. Other scholars believe that Paul was released and found innocent of the charges based in Jerusalem and He went on a fourth Missionary journey that included stops in Spain. Paul was later arrested during the persecution of Nero and then beheaded. Based on the second theory, the writing of 1 Timothy and Titus was probably around AD 62 leaving the writing of 2 Timothy right before his execution. 1 Timothy is known for its instructions on church leadership. The place of the writing of 1 Timothy is uncertain but some scholars it was in Macedonia on Paul's fourth missionary journey and quite possible from Laodicea. Here are some main points in the letter:

- Warning about false teachers
- Salvation through Christ
- The importance of prayer
- Reverent conduct
- Qualification for elders
- Qualifications for deacons
- The Mystery of godliness
- Some will depart from the faith
- Being a good servant of Jesus
- Instructions for the Church
- The nature of false teachers
- The joy of being content
- Fighting the good fight

Greeting

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope; ² Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Warning Against False Teachers

³ As I besought [requested] **you** to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that **you** mightest charge [instruct] some that they teach no other doctrine, ⁴ Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*. ⁵ Now the end of the commandment is charity [love] out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned: ⁶ From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling [empty talk]; ⁷ Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm [assert]. ⁸ But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully; ⁹ Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ For whoremongers [inappropriate sexual activity by males] , for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers [kidnappers, especially for the slave trade], for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing

that is contrary to sound doctrine;¹¹ According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

Commentary: *We need to be careful as believers that we do not allow ourselves to be sidetracked by false doctrines and suspicious theories, which are not supported by Scripture. We need instead to stay rooted in solid doctrine that is explicitly supported by scripture. False teachers misuse the Scriptures to come up with pet doctrines that they can use to draw people to themselves, since they have special knowledge, which will lead them away from the solid doctrines that have been approved for centuries. Such misleading doctrines are the silent rapture theory, the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, and the necessity of observing the Jewish feasts. These are just a small sample of these misleading doctrines which have been proven to not hold up to strict Scriptural examination, yet they are taught as popular truth. Other such misleading doctrines are the hyper-grace doctrine that says you can sin and that it is OK with GOD for He has forgiven you in advance. The truth is that GOD hates sin and would never condone sin in any fashion. Others would say we have to obey the ordinances of the Mosaic law, but Paul refutes this doctrine by pointing out that the law is for the ungodly to show them their sin so that they can come to Jesus. The law is fulfilled in the believer through the aid of the Holy Spirit when they love GOD with all their being and they love other people as themselves. We need to resist these popular teachings when they are not rooted in solid biblical examination, for the Scriptures are not there to tickle our ears with new doctrines but they are there to help us grow spiritually mature into the image of Jesus the Christ.*

Christ Jesus Came to Save Sinners

¹² And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who **has** enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; ¹³ Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴ And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. ¹⁶ Howbeit [nevertheless] for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might **show** forth all longsuffering, for a pattern [example] to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. ¹⁷ Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* **honor** and glory for ever and ever. Amen. ¹⁸ This charge [instruction] I commit unto **you**, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on **you**, that **you** by them **might** war a good warfare; ¹⁹ Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: ²⁰ Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan [a form of excommunication from the community of believers in the hope that they will repent and be restored], that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Pray for All People

Chapter 2: ¹ I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications [requests to meet needs], prayers [direct communication to GOD], intercessions [standing in the place of another person who cannot pray for themselves], *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; ² For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. ³ For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; ⁴ Who will have all men to be saved [GOD desires that all people be saved

not just selected ones], and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; ⁶ Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. ⁷ Whereunto [for this reason] I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity [truth]. ⁸ I will therefore that men pray **everywhere**, lifting up holy hands [a sign of surrender to GOD and in praise of GOD], without wrath and doubting.

Instructions for Women

⁹ In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness [reverence and respect] and sobriety [seriousness of mind, not being frivolous]; not with **braided** hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array [clothing]; ¹⁰ But (which **becomes** women professing godliness) with good works. ¹¹ Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection [respect]. ¹² But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was first formed, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. ¹⁵ Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety [soundness of mind].

Commentary: *This passage by Paul is a minefield of misunderstanding that deserves a better understanding of his intent. First, we must deal with Paul's attitude with women. Some people think that Paul was against women, but that position would contradict Paul statement regarding the equality of males and females regarding spiritual matters: Galatians 3:28. What Paul is establishing is the role that men and women assume in the community of believers. Men were created for certain roles such as breadwinning, protection, leaders in religious and civil matters. GOD created women to be a helpmate or supporter of the role of the man. Childbearing and the raising of children were of special importance. And in the culture of Paul's days those roles were very pronounced and clearly established. So, what Paul is addressing are the customs and norms of that day and not directly addressing the norms and customs of our day. In other words, the norms may change but the principles stand the test of time. The second point is to address how these principles are established and that requires a brief study in theology. There are two different ways to study Scripture, the first being eisegesis, which is the act of reading into a text the meaning that one desires. In other words, a person has a certain theory so they go through the Bible picking out all the texts that may support their position. Exegesis, on the other hands is examining the text and drawing meaning from what the text actually says and not what we want it to say. A broader field of study is hermeneutics which is a very disciplined study of Scripture using the context of the text, exploring the original language to determine meaning, and then factoring the culture and customs of the people addressed in the text. This is how the words of Paul must be determined. Paul was addressing the people of the culture of his day and not necessarily addressing how things should be done today when we are in a completely different culture. For example, women of that day were not schooled in the Scriptures so Paul sets forth a principle that the women who are not as schooled as men should not teach or disciple men which required in that day a closer relationship between student and teacher. Today women are schooled in the Scriptures and we face an entirely different situation. The principles that Paul sets forth are modesty, in dress and attitude. Believers are to more concerned with the inner character rather...*

than focusing on mere outward appearance. We also need to support that roles that GOD has established for each gender as it relates to maintaining harmony within the church. Men have traditionally been established as leaders in the church because GOD created them to do this function, as women have been specially created to bear and raise children. This is not to say that GOD, if He chooses, can make exceptions to this principle. We always need to be sensitive to GOD's leading as it relates to His will and choice of leaders. We must not listen to the culture of our day and expect culture to be more important than GOD. Neither should we read a text and automatically apply it to the church today. We need to apply proper hermeneutics to discern GOD's will in the matter. One final comment regarding Paul's comment of childbearing. This statement by Paul is often misunderstood. The best understanding that I have seen is that the statement primarily was applied to Eve who first experience the curse of pain in childbearing. It is understandable that she would be fearful of what was happening. But GOD wanted to assure her that she would be sustained through the experience or in a sense delivered from the curse. There was always a fear and concern during childbirth regarding the health of the mother. And while not every woman survived childbirth in those days, she could still have the comfort of GOD being with her during this very special time. In other words, childbirth is not a means of salvation, but a woman can be delivered through the experience, and it was especially helpful to women of faith.

Qualifications for Elders

Chapter 3: ¹ This *is* a true saying, If a man **desires** the office of a bishop [elder], he desires a good work. ² A bishop [elder] then must be blameless [without reproach], the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober [of sound mind], of good behavior [modest], given to hospitality, apt to teach; ³ Not given to wine, no striker [contentious], not greedy of filthy lucre [greedy for money]; but patient, not a brawler [fighter], not covetous [greedy]; ⁴ One that **rules** well his own house, having his children in subjection [obedience] with all gravity [reverent, respectful]; ⁵ (For if a man **knows** not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) ⁶ Not a novice [a new convert], lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil [make the same mistake that Lucifer made]. ⁷ Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without [non-believers]; lest he fall into reproach [scandal] and the snare of the devil.

Qualifications for Deacons

⁸ Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave [honorable], not doubletongued [not being deceptive with ones speech], not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre [greedy for money]; ⁹ Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience [not given to heresy or false teachings]. ¹⁰ And let these also first be proved [tested]; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless [without fault]. ¹¹ Even so *must their* wives *be* grave [reverent and respectful], not slanderers, sober [of a sound mind], faithful in all things. ¹² Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. ¹³ For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase [keep safe] to themselves a good degree [wholesome influence], and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The Mystery of Godliness

¹⁴ These things write I unto **you**, hoping to come unto **you** shortly: ¹⁵ But if I tarry long, that **you may** know how **you ought** to behave **yourself** in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. ¹⁶ And without controversy great is the mystery [the hidden will of GOD] of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Commentary: *We need to be reminded that the plan of salvation was not something that GOD made up as events unfolded but was devised before the world was created. GOD knew that humanity would fall if exposed to Satan, so GOD and Jesus agreed to the plan of salvation which would require Jesus to leave heaven, take on the form of a human being, so that He could intimately identify with His creation. And then to suffer and die as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The totality of this plan was not revealed until the coming of Jesus and even then, the realization of the Gospel being sent to the Gentiles was then just being understood. The Jews thought that only they would be saved, but GOD had a bigger plan that incorporated the salvation of people from all tribes, nations and tongues. This was a much better plan than just one people being saved.*

Some Will Depart from the Faith

Chapter 4: ¹ Now the Spirit **speaks** expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; ² **Speaking** lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron [branded by the marks of sin]. ³ Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats [foods], which God **has** created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: ⁵ For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Commentary: *Here is another often misunderstood passage that people tend to use to make superficial renderings of the word of GOD. It is important therefore to study these verses in greater detail. Verse 1 and 2 refer to people developing legalistic practices and commands that are not supported by the Bible. There is the command to not marry, which does not square with GOD's command to be fruitful and multiply, Genesis 1:28. It is true that Paul recommended singleness but that was due to the oppression of believers in that day. The reason that these false teachers make up rules is so that they can have control over people. GOD gives people free choice, dictators do not. Then there is the mention of food in verses 3-5. While the King James uses the word meats, the Greek actually refers to non-meat foods. Meat foods require a different Greek word. Such an understanding is consistent with...*

...GOD's original instruction to eat plants. GOD did not create us to eat meat for GOD values the lives of all His creatures. But GOD did allow flesh meat to be eaten after the flood due to the scarcity of food. This is why the clean animals came in seven pairs while the unclean animals came in one pair. The eating of meat, as in mammals, was rare for the common people in those days for it was generally saved for special occasions and celebrations. We do know that in the time of Jesus that people ate fish for it was a plentiful resource, but the main diet consisted of grains, fruit and some dairy products. Why is this subject important? For two reasons, the first being health. GOD instructed His people to eat only clean animals which He delineated in Leviticus 11:1-23. The reason being that other kinds of creatures were scavengers and eat polluted or dead things. It has been researched that indigenous people who eat little meat have lower cases of heart disease and cancer, but when they become more affluent and eat more meat, then the cases of heart disease and cancer increase. The second reason is more spiritual. We gain a greater appreciation for people as we mature spiritually and realize that people are created in the image of GOD and are therefore precious to GOD. While the animals are not created in GOD's image, they are nevertheless valuable to Him. This is why there was no killing for meat in the Garden. It was only after the fall man that GOD gave the consent to eat flesh food, but only clean flesh food. It is as we grow spiritually and gain a greater appreciation of GOD's creation that the desire for flesh food decreases as we value the sanctity of all life.

A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

⁶ If **you** put the brethren in remembrance of these things, **you** shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto **you have** attained. ⁷ But refuse [reject] profane [unsanctified] and old wives' fables, and exercise [train] **yourself** *rather* unto godliness. ⁸ For bodily exercise **profits** little [if it causes one to ignore the spiritual]: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. ⁹ This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. ¹⁰ For therefore we both **labor** and suffer reproach [ridicule], because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. ¹¹ These things command and teach. ¹² Let no man despise **your** youth; but be **you** an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity [love], in spirit, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Till I come, give attendance [apply yourself] to reading, to exhortation [encouragement], to doctrine. ¹⁴ Neglect not the gift that is in **you**, which was given **you** by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery [leaders]. ¹⁵ Meditate upon these things; give **yourself** wholly to them; that **your** profiting [progress] may appear to all. ¹⁶ Take heed unto **yourself**, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this **you shall** both save **yourself**, and them that hear **you**.

Instructions for the Church

Chapter 5: ¹ Rebuke [speak harshly] not an elder, but intreat [encourage] *him* as a father; *and* the younger men as brethren; ² The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity. ³ **Honor** [value as an asset to the church] widows that are widows indeed [with no family support]. ⁴ But if any

widow have children or nephews [grandchildren], let them learn first to shew piety [reverence] at home, and to requite [show honor by supporting] their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. ⁵ Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, **trusting** in God, and continues in supplications and prayers night and day [this is why she is an asset to the church, as well as caring for others in need]. ⁶ But she that **lives** in pleasure is dead while she **lives**. ⁷ And these things give in charge [to proclaim], that they may be blameless [without fault]. ⁸ But if any provide not for his own, and **especially** for those of his own house, he **has** denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel [an unbeliever]. ⁹ Let not a widow be taken into the number [to have office in the church for care of other women and orphans] under threescore years old [60 years old], having been the wife of one man, ¹⁰ Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet [showing hospitality], if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. ¹¹ But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ [desiring marital relations], they will marry; ¹² Having damnation [facing judgment for not fulfilling their commitment to Christ], because they have cast off their first faith. ¹³ And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. ¹⁴ I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. ¹⁵ For some are already turned aside after Satan [pursued worldly pleasures and not spiritual maturity]. ¹⁶ If any man or woman that **believe** have widows, let them relieve [support] them, and let not the church be charged [burdened]; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed [that the church can give support to those widows that really need support].

¹⁷ Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double **honor** [referring to monetary compensation], especially they who **labor** in the word and doctrine. ¹⁸ For the scripture **says, You shall** not muzzle the ox that **treads** out the corn [grain]. And, The **laborer is** worthy of his reward. ¹⁹ Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. ²⁰ Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. ²¹ I charge **you** before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that **you** observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality [don't have a double standard for people you favor]. ²² Lay hands suddenly on no man [do not restore a sinning member before they have truly repented from their sin and they are restored to the body of believers] , neither be partaker of other men's sins [be careful that you do not approve of others when they are not pure and blameless]: keep **yourself** pure [by avoiding association with them]. ²³ Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and **your** often infirmities [a suggestion not a command]. ²⁴ Some men's sins are open beforehand [plainly evident before others], going before to judgment [GOD sees the sins]; and some *men* they follow after [not readily seen but will be exposed later]. ²⁵ Likewise also the good works *of some* are manifest beforehand [clearly seen]; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid [not immediately seen but will be exposed later].

Chapter 6: ¹ Let as many servants as are under the yoke [service to] count their own masters worthy of all **honor**, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed. ² And they that have believing masters, let them not despise [think little of] *them*, because they are brethren; but rather do *them* service [honor and obey], because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

False Teachers and True Contentment

³ If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; ⁴ He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting [having a morbid fondness] about questions and strifes of words [arguing about meaningless matters], whereof **comes** envy, strife, railings [slanders], evil surmisings [thinking something is true without proof], ⁵ Perverse disputings [useless thoughts] of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth,

supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. ⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. ⁹ But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition [ruin]. ¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted [desire] after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

¹¹ But **you**, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. ¹² Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto **you are** also called, and **have** professed a good profession [spoke well of faith] before many witnesses. ¹³ I give **you** charge [permission to pronounce] in the sight of God, who **quickens** [makes alive] all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; ¹⁴ That **you** keep *this* commandment [instruction] without spot, unrebukeable [having no evil to be spoken of], until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: ¹⁵ Which in his times he shall **show**, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; ¹⁶ Who only **has** immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man **has** seen, nor can see: to whom *be* **honor** and power everlasting. Amen. ¹⁷ Charge [instruct] them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded [arrogant] , nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who **gives** us richly all things to enjoy; ¹⁸ That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate [willing to give to others]; ¹⁹ Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. ²⁰ O Timothy, keep that which is committed to **your** trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science [knowledge] falsely so called: ²¹ Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with **you**. Amen. [The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana.](#)

The Second Letter to Timothy

Introduction

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy right before his death about AD 67. Paul was in prison and knew his execution was soon coming so he wanted to offer Timothy words of encouragement. Timothy had been supportive of Paul on his later missionary journeys. Perhaps the best encouragement was Paul's statement that he, Paul, had fought the good fight right up to the end. This must have been encouraging to Timothy who would face imprisonment for his faith as well. Here are some main points in the letter:

- Guarding our faith
- Being a soldier for Christ
- Being a worker approved by GOD
- Lack of Godliness in the last days
- Scripture is inspired by GOD
- Preach the Word of GOD
- Final instructions

Greeting

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, ² To Timothy, *my* dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You

³ I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of **you** in my prayers night and day; ⁴ Greatly desiring to see **you**, being mindful of **your** tears, that I may be filled with joy; ⁵ When I call to remembrance the unfeigned [sincere] faith that is in **you**, which dwelt first in **your** grandmother Lois, and **your** mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in **you** also. ⁶ Wherefore I put **you** in remembrance that **you** stir up [increase] the gift of God, which is in **you** by the putting on of my hands. ⁷ For God **has** not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. ⁸ Be not **you** therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be **you** partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; ⁹ Who **has** saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, ¹⁰ But is now made manifest [evident] by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who **has** abolished death, and **has** brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: ¹¹ Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. ¹² For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. ¹³ Hold fast the form of sound words, which **you have** heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ That good thing which was committed unto **you** keep by the Holy Ghost [Spirit] which **dwells** in us. ¹⁵ This **you know**, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶ The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he **often** refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: ¹⁷ But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found *me*. ¹⁸ The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, **you know** very well.

A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus

Chapter 2: ¹ You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things that **you** have heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit **you** to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. ³ **You** therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier. ⁵ And if a man also strive for masteries [contends for a prize], *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. ⁶ The husbandman [farmer] that **labors** must be first partaker of the fruits. ⁷ Consider what I say; and the Lord give **you** understanding in all things. ⁸ Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: ⁹ Wherein I suffer trouble [locked in prison], as an evil doer, *even* unto bonds [chains]; but the word of God is not bound. ¹⁰ Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹ *It is* a faithful saying: For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*: ¹² If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*: if we deny *him*, he also will deny us: ¹³ If we believe not, *yet* he **abides** faithful: he cannot deny himself.

Commentary: *Many people view Christianity as a passive religion where you go to church and do the best that you can. But Paul in his letter to Timothy expresses the faith as a battle of which it is. We need to be good soldiers of Christ contending for the faith, for we are in a spiritual battle between Satan and Christ. Satan would like nothing more than for a believer to be passive and thus not joined in the battle. We need to realize that every progress we make in the faith will be sorely contested by our enemy as to discourage us from further spiritual growth. But we as contestants of the great race of life, must fix our eyes on the great prize of being with Jesus throughout all eternity, so we will battle, labor, and train for the life that is to come. Let us not be discouraged in battle and withdraw from the race, for the consequences will not be pleasant for those who fall back, but the prize or reward to the faithful who preserve through the battles will an eternity with Christ, who will pour out countless heavenly blessings.*

A Worker Approved by God

¹⁴ Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging [instructing] *them* before the Lord that they strive [be contentious] not about words to no profit [usefulness for spiritual maturity], *but* to the subverting [harm] of the hearers. ¹⁵ Study to **show** thyself approved unto God, a workman that **need** not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [properly handling] the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. ¹⁷ And their word will eat as **does** a canker [gangrene]: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; ¹⁸ Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and **overthrowing** the faith of some. ¹⁹ Nevertheless the foundation of God **stands** sure, having this seal [authentication], The Lord **knows** them that are his. And, Let **everyone** that **names** the name of Christ depart from iniquity [the breaking of GOD's Law]. ²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to **honor**, and some to **dishonor**. ²¹ If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto **honor**, sanctified [made holy] , and meet [proper] for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work. ²² Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity [love], peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ²³ But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender [give birth to] strifes. ²⁴ And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient,

²⁵ In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves [those in opposition to the Gospel]; if God peradventure [possibly] will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; ²⁶ And *that* they may recover themselves [be rescued] out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Commentary: *Arguing over Scripture and religious concepts has brought great division within the church. People want to appear as special, so they create pet doctrines and teachings that lend themselves to dispute. We should instead seek the pure truth of the Word of GOD and not go beyond this boundary, for division will be the result. There is a core set of doctrines and proven truths that all believers should hold in common, mostly related to salvation issues. Anything beyond this set of core belief is open to exploration by the individual but should not be promoted to the body in general. In other words, it is alright for individual believer to seek understanding outside the core beliefs, but it should not be forced on others who may become confused and stumble in their faith. We do not want to be responsible for the loss of faith in others, so we are wise to promote what we know to be true.*

Godlessness in the Last Days

Chapter 3: ¹ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent [without self-control], fierce [savage], despisers of those that are good, ⁴ Traitors, heady [reckless] , highminded [arrogant], lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ⁶ For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive [seek to manipulate] silly women [or men] laden [overwhelmed] with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷ Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres [magicians of Pharaoh] withstood [resisted] Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate [unfit] concerning the faith. ⁹ But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all *men*, as theirs also was.

Commentary: *Paul is correct in his assessment of the character of the last days people for their rejection of the Word of GOD will cause them to become hard in their heart, thus open to all manner of sin. Sin will produce these negative character traits so we, as believers, want to avoid all aspects of sin in our lives.*

All Scripture Is Breathed Out by God

¹⁰ But **you have** fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity [love], patience, ¹¹ Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. ¹² **Yes**, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. ¹³ But evil men and seducers shall wax [grow] worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. ¹⁴ But continue **you** in the things which **you have** learned and **have** been assured of, knowing of whom **you have** learned *them*; ¹⁵ And that from a child **you have** known the holy scriptures, which are able to make **you** wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable [useful] for doctrine [teaching], for reproof

[testing for righteousness by Christ], for correction [restoring people to the right path], for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect [spiritually complete], **thoroughly** furnished unto all good works.

Commentary: *It is important that we understand the source of Scripture for Scripture is the absolute standard by which all truth is judged. Scripture can be this standard because it is inspired by GOD and has been proven to be accurate by archeological finds, historical records, verified by ancient texts, and proven to be accurate for the changing of lives unto righteousness. The Bible is an amazing compilation of various writings but all of the different writings by different authors maintain a continuity of theme that reveals the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ from Genesis through to Revelation. The critics claim that it is a book of myths, but nary a soul has been changed by reading any other ancient text outside the Bible. So, Paul's claim to Timothy regarding the importance of Scripture is sustained.*

Preach the Word

Chapter 4: ¹ I charge [instruct] **you** therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ² Preach the word; be instant [be ready] be in season [when opportunity presents itself], out of season [when there is not an obvious opportunity]; reprove [bring conviction for wrong doing], rebuke [to scold in a righteous manner], exhort [encourage and comfort others] with all longsuffering [a patient attitude] and doctrine [Bible based teachings]. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴ And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. ⁵ But watch **you** in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof [making clear to everyone] of **your** ministry. ⁶ For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Commentary: *The preaching of the word is not just for pastors and professional clergy, but all believers are called to share their faith as best they can. For some people, the Gospel will be simple and for others the message may be more eloquent, but in all cases each believer is to share their knowledge of salvation to everyone that they can for the Lord is soon to return.*

Personal Instructions

⁹ Do your diligence [try as best that you can] to come shortly unto me: ¹⁰ For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with you: for he is profitable [useful] to me for the ministry. ¹² And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. ¹³ The **cloak** that I left at Troas with Carpus, when **you come**, bring *with you*, and the books, *but* especially the parchments. ¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: ¹⁵ Of whom be **you beware** also; for he has greatly withstood our words [resisted our teachings]. ¹⁶ At my first answer [defense in court] no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. ¹⁷ Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching

might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion [a figure of speech meaning to be delivered from the grip of death, meaning he would be resurrected]. ¹⁸ And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Commentary: *It is interesting to hear of Paul's request for Mark to come to him because Mark was useful in His ministry. This is the same Mark that deserted Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas had very heated words over taking Mark on the next journey which Paul objected to. Paul and Barnabas split from each other over this issue. Now Paul is finding the very Mark that deserted him useful to him. It shows that we must be patient and forgiving to people for they will all grow differently and at a different pace. We should not get angry at people because they are not where we think they should be but instead we need to show love and encouragement to them so they can grow and mature, thus coming into the mission that GOD has planned for them.*

Final Greetings

¹⁹ Salute [greet] Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus abode [stayed] at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. ²¹ Do **your** diligence to come before winter. Embolus **greet**s **you**, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. ²² The Lord Jesus Christ *be* with **your** spirit. Grace *be* with you. Amen. *The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop [Elder] of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.*

The Letter to Titus

Introduction

Paul is identified as the author of this letter which was written about AD 63 after Paul was released from his first imprisonment. The place of origin was Nicopolis, a city in Western Greece. Paul had a close relationship with Titus for they had labored together on their missionary journeys. Now Paul was instructing Titus to firm up the ministry on Crete by selecting elders to ensure that sound doctrine would prevail in the lives of the believers. This letter is important in that it stresses the human incarnation of Christ which is essential for the Gospel message. Here are some main points in the letter:

- Qualification for Elders
- Teaching sound doctrine
- Be ready to do good works
- Final instructions

Greeting

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect [chosen ones], and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; ² In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; ³ But **has** in due times manifested [revealed] his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment [mandate] of God our Saviour; ⁴ To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Qualifications for Elders

⁵ For this cause left I **you** in Crete, that **you should** set in order the things that are wanting [lacking], and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed **you**: ⁶ If any be blameless [without accusation], the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. ⁷ For a bishop [elder] must be blameless, as the steward of God; not **self-willed** [but GOD willed], not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre [greed for money]; ⁸ But a lover of hospitality [generous to guests], a lover of good men [appreciating the goodness of people], sober [of a sound mind], just [upright], holy [undefiled by sin], temperate [having self-control]; ⁹ Holding fast the faithful word as he **has** been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort [encourage] and to convince [convert] the gainsayers [the ungodly]. ¹⁰ For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision [Jews]: ¹¹ Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake [greed for money]. ¹² One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans *are* **always** liars, evil beasts, slow bellies [lazy gluttons]. ¹³ This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; ¹⁴ Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. ¹⁵ Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. ¹⁶ They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Commentary: Paul is leaving Titus to finish the work in Crete which sounds like quite the challenge due to the rough nature of the people. Nevertheless, Titus was to find commendable men to lead the church in the various cities. These are the same criteria that Paul mentioned to Timothy and they stand for today. GOD always seeks humble and holy people to lead His church.

Teach Sound Doctrine

Chapter 2: ¹ But speak **you** the things which become sound doctrine: ² That the aged men be sober [sound minded], grave [reverent], temperate [self-controlled], sound in faith, in charity [love], in patience. ³ The aged women likewise, that *they be* in **behavior** as **becomes** holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; ⁴ That they may teach the young women to be sober [not frivolous or silly], to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ *To be* discreet [curbing their impulses], chaste [pure], keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. ⁶ Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded [curbing their passions]. ⁷ In all things **showing yourself** a pattern of good works: in doctrine **showing** uncorruptness [integrity], gravity [reverence], sincerity, ⁸ Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part [opposing you] may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. ⁹ *Exhort* [instruct] servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all *things*; not answering again [talking back to them irreverently]; ¹⁰ Not purloining [stealing], but **showing** all good fidelity [faithfulness]; that they may adorn [show honor to] the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. ¹¹ For the grace of God that **brings** salvation **has** appeared to all men, ¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; ¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity [sin], and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. ¹⁵ These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise **you**.

Commentary: Paul is once again, in his letters, outlining the character traits of true believers against the character of those people who resist the Gospel. The true believer must stand as a standard against ungodliness so that people can know that there is a different way in life. If the true believer behaves as the world, then the way of salvation is obscured to the unbeliever. This is why it is important to preach the pure word of the Gospel rather than being involved in doctrinal disputes that really do not matter but can breed division in the body of Christ that thwarts the progress of the spreading of the Gospel to the people who need it most.

Be Ready for Every Good Work

Chapter 3: ¹ Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, ² To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers [contentious], *but* gentle, shewing all meekness [humility] unto all men. ³ For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. ⁴ But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, ⁵ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of

regeneration [new birth, being born again], and renewing [being changed for the better] of [by] the Holy Ghost [Spirit]; ⁶ Which he shed [poured out] on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; ⁷ That being justified [having right standing before GOD] by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ⁸ *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that **you** affirm [hold to be true] constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. ⁹ But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. ¹⁰ A man that is an **heretic** [divisive person] after the first and second admonition reject [avoid]; ¹¹ Knowing that he that is such is subverted [corrupted], and **sins**, being condemned of himself [brings judgment on himself].

Commentary: It is not enough to mentally agree with the Gospel, but one must live out the tenets of the Gospel in their life so that unbelievers can see the results of conversion in action. If we hid the truth in ourselves then they cannot see it. But if we walk in the love of Christ, then our behavior speaks volumes of the love of Christ, which can be a better witness than many words spoken without supportive action or good works.

Final Instructions and Greetings

¹² When I shall send Artemas unto **you**, or Tychicus, be diligent [make haste] to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. ¹³ Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently [quickly], that nothing be wanting [lacking] unto them. ¹⁴ And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. ¹⁵ All that are with me salute [greet] **you**. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen. *It was written to Titus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretans, from Nicopolis of Macedonia [Greece].*

The Letter to Philemon

Introduction

Paul is identified as the author of this letter which was written about AD 60 or 61 when Paul was experiencing his first imprisonment in Rome. Paul had a personal relationship with Philemon as Paul led him to the Lord. But a problem arose when Onesimus, a slave of Philemon escaped and went to Rome, where Onesimus encountered Paul. Paul brought Onesimus into the Gospel and he became a valuable worker for Paul. But Paul knew that he had a responsibility to deal with the breach in his relationship with Philemon that Onesimus had caused by his escape. Paul therefore pleads with Philemon to accept Onesimus back as a brother in Christ and to forgive his escape. It is believed that Paul then wanted Philemon to send Onesimus back to Paul to aid in his imprisonment. This may seem like such a small matter to be included in the Bible, but it shows the intimate relationship that GOD has with His people that even small situations matter to Him. Here are some main points in the letter:

- The faith of Philemon
- Paul's plea for Onesimus

Greeting

Chapter 1: ¹ Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and **fellow laborer**, ² And to *our* beloved Apphia, and Archippus our **fellow soldier**, and to the church in **your** house: ³ Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴ I thank my God, making mention of **you** always in my prayers, ⁵ Hearing of **your** love and faith, which **you have** toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; ⁶ That the communication of **your** faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. ⁷ For we have great joy and consolation in **your** love, because the bowels [hearts] of the saints are refreshed by **you**, brother.

Paul's Plea for Onesimus

⁸ Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin [command] **you** that which is convenient, ⁹ Yet for love's sake I rather beseech [request of] **you**, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ I beseech **you** for my son [in the Lord] Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds [while in prison]: ¹¹ Which in time past was to **you** unprofitable [due to his desire for freedom], but now profitable [useful] to **you** and to me: ¹² Whom I have sent again [returned]: **you** therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels [a merciful heart]: ¹³ Whom I would have retained with me, that in **your** stead [place] he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: ¹⁴ But without **your** mind [permission] would I do nothing; that **your** benefit should not be as it were of necessity [my need], but willingly [your voluntary gesture of grace]. ¹⁵ For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that **you should** receive him forever [in a Christian sense]; ¹⁶ Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, **especially** to me, but how much more unto **you**, both in the flesh [in a natural sense], and in the Lord [in a spiritual sense]? ¹⁷ If **you** count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. ¹⁸ If he has wronged **you**, or **owes you** ought [something], put that on mine account; ¹⁹ I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay *it*: albeit I do not say to **you** how **you** owe unto me even your own self besides. ²⁰ **Yes**, brother, let me have joy of **you** in the Lord: refresh my bowels [heart] in the Lord. ²¹

Having confidence in **your** obedience I wrote unto **you**, knowing that **you** wilt [would] also do more than I say. ²² But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

Final Greetings

²³ There salute [greet] **you** Epaphras, my **fellow prisoner** in Christ Jesus; ²⁴ Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my **fellow laborers**. ²⁵ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen. [Written from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus a servant.](#)

Commentary: *An important take away from this letter is the manner in which Paul addressed Philemon. Paul could have ordered Philemon in this matter by both his apostolic position and from the fact that Paul led Him to the Lord. But this is not how GOD works, for GOD does not force us to obey him, but seeks that we obey Him out of love and respect. This was the manner that Paul approached this delicate situation and was assured that Philemon would respond properly to such a humble plea. We would do well to treat others in this same manner.*
