

Act 9-Philemon

But Now

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In Volume VI of the Dispensational Study Bible the kingdom of heaven was preached as “at hand” in the four gospels. See Matthew 3:1-2, 4:17-23, 10:7, Mark 1:15 & Luke 21:31.

A Jew needed to believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God if they wanted to enter the kingdom. See John 8:24.

Israel’s chief priests said they had no king but Caesar, so the kingdom was taken from them and given to the little flock of Jewish believers who would bring forth the fruits of it.

Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

John 19:15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

That kingdom was offered to Israel in Acts 3:19-21, but it was rejected by Israel’s leaders and the later killed Stephen. See the chart on the front cover of Daniel’s 70 weeks.

The little flock believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God and they were given the kingdom. See Matthew 16:16.

The little flock were not trusting the gospel that Paul preached in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4. The believe the gospel of the kingdom. Matthew 4:17-23.

All scriptures are from the 1611 King James Bible.

Acts 9-28

Chapter Nine

A chosen vessel unto me

The events in this ninth chapter of the book of Acts are of the utmost significance to believers today because when Jesus Christ reached down and saved Saul of Tarsus, he began something new.

1st Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

When something new begins (grace), then something old has to be replaced (the law). Israel had become Loammi (not God's people-Hosea 1:9) when their leaders rejected the final offers of the kingdom found in Acts 3-7.

This culminated in their rejection of Stephen's preaching to the leaders of Israel, which was the one more year mentioned in the parable of the fig tree in Luke 13:6-9.

Stephen was killed 483 years after the commandment to rebuild and restore Jerusalem given in 450 BC. See Acts 6-8:4.

The next thing on Israel's prophetic time clock was the time of Jacob's trouble (the tribulation period), but that terrible time of wrath did not happen as it was preceded by the unprophesied dispensation of grace.

The seventieth week of Daniel was put on hold, as Israel stumbled and fell. They will remain Loammi (not my people), until the rapture happens, and the body of Christ is taken to be with the Lord. See Daniel 9:24-27.

Then the terrible 70th week of Daniel will begin, and Israel will be suffering the time of Jacob's trouble because of her own sin. This seventieth week will be the worst week that Israel will have ever experienced in all of her existence.

Saul of Tarsus gets saved

1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. See Acts 8:3, Galatians 1:13 & 1st Timothy 1:13.

If he found any of this way: Jews who believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. See Matthew 16:16, Acts 19:9 & 23.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him,

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

There shined round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth: Saul fell to the earth because of the glory of the light. Joshua 5:14, Acts 12:7, 22:7, 26:12-13, 1st Corinthians 15:8 & Revelation 21:23.

Saul, Saul: God said Saul’s name twice, just as he did with Moses in Exodus 3:4.

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said,

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Who art thou, Lord: Saul asked the name of the voice which spoke to him was just as Moses did in Mt. Horeb in Exodus 3:13.

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: The voice identified himself, as he did with Moses in Exodus 3:14.

It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks: To go against what was right. Saul did however respond to hearing Jesus' voice. He changed his whole life to serve God his way instead of religion's way.

6 And he trembling and astonished said,

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

And the Lord said unto him,

Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. *See Acts 9:15.*

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do: Saul does not hesitate, argue, or even question Jesus, because he is now his Lord. No longer does he serve the high priest in Jerusalem, nor the sect known as the Pharisees.

Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do: God did not tell Saul what to do with the rest of his life, he only gave him the next step to obey.

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Hearing a voice, but seeing no man: Saul heard and understood the words of Christ, but the men only heard a voice. They probably spoke Greek and didn't understand Hebrew. See Acts 22:6-9 and 26:13.

Acts 26:14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And he was three days without sight: Saul here, was a picture of Israel being blinded for a season. See also Acts 13:6-12 where a Jew (Bar Jesus) is also blinded for a season, as a type of the nation of Israel.

Israel would soon be blinded in part for not accepting the Jesus Christ as the Son of God. See Romans 11:25.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision,

Ananias.

And he said,

Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him,

Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

There was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias: Ananias was a Jewish kingdom saint, as were the twelve apostles. He was saved under the gospel of the kingdom message. See Matthew 4:17-23.

Putting his hands on him, that he might receive his sight: Ananias was to lay hands-on Saul to receive power to heal him from his temporary blindness. Ananias was not sent to baptize Saul; he was just told to lay his hands upon Saul so that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord,

I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him,

Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles: Saul was uniquely chosen to be the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:25), while Israel would now be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein was no pleasure. See Hosea 8:8.

Was Israel now saved? No. So why is Saul being commissioned to go to the Gentiles when the old testament was very clear that Israel would first be saved before Israel could be a light unto the Gentiles? Isaiah 60:1-3.

God was interrupting his prophetic program to the nation of Israel, and now he was beginning his mystery program with the body of Christ, but he must first save the leader for this new program of grace.

The Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: Notice the order. The Gentiles are mentioned first because that is to be Paul's priority as the apostle of the Gentiles.

Who better to show God's grace to Israel and the world than Saul, who was the leader of the rebellion against God's kingdom church?

Paul was the chief of sinners because he persecuted the church in Jerusalem, not because he was immoral, he was blameless concerning the law.

1st Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said,

Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

And be filled with the Holy Ghost: Did God tell Ananias that Paul would be filled with the Holy Ghost, or that he would receive his sight from him. His sight.

Ananias was just doing what he had always been doing with new believers, but Paul was to be different, because he was not saved with the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom like all others had been previously.

Paul retells this story two more times in the book of Acts, once in chapter twenty-two, and another time in chapter twenty-six, and in two of his epistles.

He adds information one time, and then he leaves some out another time because he is emphasizing different aspects of his testimony at different times.

And arose, and was baptized: Did God tell Ananias to baptize Paul? No! Did Paul have his sins washed away as Ananias said they would be when Paul repeated this event in his own words found in Acts 22:16? No!

It doesn't matter what Ananias told Paul about what would happen in Acts 22, it only matters what God told Ananias. God never said that Paul's sins would be washed away when he baptized Paul, nor was he told to baptize Paul.

Ananias said and did what he had always said, and did in the past, because that is what he had always done. God was not going to tell Ananias any of the mystery program before he revealed it unto the apostle of the Gentiles.

Paul was to receive it first, and he was to be the dispenser of all of it, not Ananias. He was a kingdom saint operating under Israel's program.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God: Notice that while Ananias told Saul that he would be a witness to the Gentiles, we see him going to the Jews first in Damascus.

Who would the Jews at a synagogue want to hear from more than the very one who came to rid that area of the plague of this supposed new sect of Judaism? No one.

Notice the message that he was preaching to the Jews in their synagogue, it was that Jesus is the Son of God.

Paul would have to preach that to a Jew before he could explain to them about his death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Paul never preached the gospel of the kingdom. Notice what Paul preached on his first missionary journey:

Acts 13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of

sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said;

Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. 23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

Proving that this is very Christ: Saul had a great knowledge of the Jewish scriptures, and he put that knowledge immediately to work for the Lord in spite of those that wished to kill him.

Paul proved that Jesus was very Christ by using old testament scriptures to do it. That is the only way he could prove anything to a Jew.

Saul spends time in Arabia where he received the gospel that he preached by the revelation of Jesus Christ. This was before he went up to Jerusalem to meet the 12.

Galatians 1:11 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 ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited 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; 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.

And called me by his grace: No one was called by his grace as Saul was. He was the first to serve as a pattern to all who should believe hereafter. See 1st Timothy 1:15-16.

Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Paul didn't immediately confer with any man, but instead, went into Arabia to receive the gospel that he preached by the revelation of Jesus Christ himself, before returning to Damascus to preach in their synagogues.

It does not say he went to Damascus for three years, but that he returned from Arabia to Damascus, then after three years he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter for fifteen days.

Paul obviously did not tell Peter all the information that appears in his thirteen epistles, because he had not learned them all yet.

It is clear that he told Peter of his conversion, and his calling to preach among the Gentiles. It does not say that Saul told Peter the gospel that he preached. In fact, that is not mentioned until Acts 15 at the Jerusalem council.

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. See Acts 11.

But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles: The apostles trusted Barnabas' words, having seen all the miracles that they had seen, it did not seem improbable to them that God would save someone like Saul.

Nothing is said by Barnabas to the Apostles concerning Paul's future ministry to the Gentiles.

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

Saul makes haste out of Jerusalem

He was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem: Paul was visiting with Peter and another Apostle during his two week stay in Jerusalem, and he was busy daily preaching to the Grecian Jews.

The Grecians: These Grecian Jews led the charge against Stephen, who was also a Grecian. Paul would have many run-ins with the Jews of Greece in later chapters.

Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea: Saul was content to stay there, but God had much bigger plans than that for Saul, and when the Grecians came against Paul, he made haste and left.

God would now send Paul far hence to the Gentile world, where he could begin his new ministry as their apostle.

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

Saul makes haste and is brought out of Jerusalem with the help of the disciples who brought him down to Caesarea.

When Paul tells his testimony three different times in Acts, that is exactly what he is doing. He was sharing with three different audiences what happened on the road to Damascus.

Paul made haste in Acts 9 because the Grecians were about to slay him, and because God told him to get out of town because they would not receive his testimony.

Paul was in a trance on his first trip to Jerusalem, not during one of his later visits.

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Then had the churches rest: Once the apostle of the Gentiles got out of the land of Israel the churches had rest.

The government and religious crowd knew how powerful Saul's testimony was and they would not rest until he was arrested and killed, or he fled the country, which he did. He made haste and departed.

Here we learn that there had already been other kingdom churches established in Galilee, and Samaria besides the one at Jerusalem, and that they began to multiply after Saul had left the area.

These churches, however, were made up only of Jews, and Grecian converts to Judaism, who had gotten saved later.

Peter's miracles

32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

Lydda: A town near Joppa on the Mediterranean Sea.

Kept his bed eight years: Eight is the number of new beginnings in the bible.

Sick of the palsy: A debilitating disease.

34 And Peter said unto him,

Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed.

And he arose immediately. 35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

Saron: A smaller town next to Lydda.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

Almsdeeds: Good works.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

When they had washed: A ceremonial washing for Jews under the law, for when they came into contact with a dead body.

38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said,

Tabitha, arise.

And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and

widows, presented her alive. **42** And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. **43** And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

Many believed in the Lord: They believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Simon a tanner: A person who worked with dead animals and their pelts. He probably only died the animal skins once they had been killed and skinned, because touching dead animals would make a Jew unclean.

Chapter Ten Peter and Cornelius

1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, **2** A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

Caesarea: The Roman capital of the region on Israel's northeastern coast.

Cornelius, a centurion: A Gentile Roman soldier over 100 men. God was about to do a 180-degree change in the way he had been doing things for the past 2,500 years.

The way for a Gentile in the old testament to be saved was to believe on the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then they needed to be circumcised, and they were to keep the Covenant given to Israel at Sinai.

That, by definition, is what a proselyte is in the scriptures, as mentioned in Acts 2:10 (Jews and Proselytes).

A devout man: Cornelius was not a proselyte, because in spite of everything he was, and did, he was not circumcised.

Cornelius was exposed to the teachings of Moses and the Prophets, and because of that he sought to bless Israel, so that he would be blessed of God.

Which gave much alms to the people: This was in accordance what God told Abram that a Gentile needed to do in order to be blessed by God.

Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

And prayed to God alway: He would have prayed at the time devout Jews always prayed. The ninth hour. See Acts 3:1.

3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him,

Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said,

What is it, Lord?

And he said unto him,

Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: **6** He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

Here we have a unique story of an angel of God appearing to a Gentile, instead of a Jew. God usually spoke to Israel through angels, and now a Gentile was hearing from one.

The ninth hour: The hour of prayer. This was at three in the afternoon as the Jews kept time with the day beginning at 6 AM. See Acts 3:1.

An angel of God: Not the angel of the Lord. This angel was not allowed to preach the gospel to Cornelius, but he could tell him where to find someone who would.

Thy prayers and thy alms are come up for a memorial before God: Cornelius had fulfilled the requirements of Genesis 12:1-3 by his blessing Israel, and fearing their God.

Simon, whose surname is Peter: Peter was also the son of Jonas (Jonah). His father was named after the famous prophet who also had a vision concerning Gentiles while he was in Joppa.

The sea side: The sea is often used symbolically to describe the Gentile nations in scripture. Revelations 13:1. Peter was staying in Joppa/Jaffa at the home of a man that killed animals (a Tanner).

Anyone who would touch a dead animal or person would be unclean until the evening and until they washed and changed their clothes according to the law of Moses, and yet Peter is there.

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; **8** And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

Remember this is a Gentile that God has spoken to through an angel, and he is told to go to a Jew where he will hear the words of eternal life.

Remember salvation was of the Jews (John 4:22) and for a Gentile to be right with God (saved) prior to that particular time he had to be a proselyte which meant he needed to be circumcised, Cornelius was not. See Acts 11:3.

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: **10** And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, **11** And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: **12** Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. **13** And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. **14** But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. **15** And the voice spake unto him again the

second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

The sixth hour: This is six hours after sunrise which was noon time.

He fell into a trance: God tells Peter to kill and eat from this sheet in a vision and Peter says what he has said before to the Lord, "not so, Lord."

Common or unclean: Common meant what Gentiles ate. Unclean meant it was not a part of God's peculiar diet for Israel, but God says, he has now cleansed the unclean, and made it okay for him. See Leviticus 5:2 & 11:4-47.

This was done thrice: Three times this was done to Peter, who also denied Jesus three times, to make a point to Peter that it was not just a passing daydream, but it was truly God speaking to him.

In 1st Samuel 3 Samuel hears the Lord calling him three times, but he doesn't understand that it was God speaking to him until later.

Peter would not understand this vision until later when he went to Caesarea to get the rest of the story. This vision is a lot bigger than just what foods you could or could not eat anymore, it was about reaching out to the Gentiles.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, 18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him,

Behold, three men seek thee. 20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Peter doubted what the vision meant, but God was about to open the door for Gentiles to be saved apart from circumcision.

Peter didn't know all that was about to happen once he arrived in Caesarea, but he obeyed what he was told to do. Before Peter left the Spirit told him to doubt nothing.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said,

Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

22 And they said,

Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

One that feareth God, and of a good report among all the nation of the Jews: He was a Gentile that blessed Israel. See Genesis 12:1-3. Which was why God was able to bless this Gentile.

Peter (a Jew) is told by these men that he was to come to Cornelius (a Gentile), not the other way around, that was in itself something new.

To hear words of him: Peter still didn't know what God wanted him to tell Cornelius until Cornelius tells Peter everything the angel told him.

24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 26 But Peter took him up, saying,

Stand up; I myself also am a man.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. 28 And he said unto them,

Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

And fell down at his feet and worshipped him: We see here just how little Cornelius knew about the God of Israel, as he fell down at Peter's feet and worshipped him.

To keep company with: Peter reminds Cornelius that he knows that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company with someone who is a Gentile.

It now became clear to Peter that God was shewing him that he should not call Gentiles common or unclean, because things were changing in God's dealings with Gentiles.

The Jew was commanded in the law of Moses to be hospitable to the strangers (Gentiles) that came in unto them, but they were not allowed to go in unto their homes.

A Jew was circumcised and had strict dietary laws given to them from God, and the Gentiles did not honor them in their preparation of food, and they also ate foods which were unclean to Jews which in turn would make them unclean.

There was a wall of separation set up between Jews and Gentiles ever since God separated them as a nation, from among the nations, during their departure from Egypt with their receiving of the law, and later circumcision.

The Gentiles had been given up to walk in the uncleanness of their flesh. See Romans 1:20.

Notice when Peter goes with these Gentiles, he takes six Jewish brethren as eyewitnesses, because this would definitely get back to the Jews in Jerusalem, and they would not be happy with Peter.

29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

Without gainsaying: Without delay or disobedience.

For what intent ye have sent for me: Peter did not as of yet know that Gentiles would be reached with the gospel. When Jesus ministered to two Gentiles earlier, they had to come to him, he did not go to them.

30 And Cornelius said,

Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. See Genesis 12:1-3 & Acts 10:3.

A man stood before me in bright clothing: Before this man was described as an angel (messenger) of God. See Matthew 17:5, Mark 9:3, Acts 10:3 and Revelation 22:16.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. 33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: See Deuteronomy 10:7.

We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God: The apostles to Israel were commanded in Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 24:47 & Acts 1:2.

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. See Acts 13:26.

36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all) 37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name

whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Notice the timeline that began after the baptism which John preached. According to this scripture, and the one in Acts 19 the baptism of John was not the same as what Paul did later on.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

Here we have the first Gentile that comes to God by faith without being circumcised, just like how the Gentiles will come to Christ in the millennial kingdom. This makes them a sort of first fruits of kingdom saints among the Gentiles.

Cornelius and his household however do not hear the message of trusting in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection alone for their salvation because that message has not been given to the apostle of the Gentiles as of yet.

The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word: The Holy Ghost also fell on those who believed the word of God on Pentecost. See Acts 2:1-4.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Acts 2:1-4.

They of the circumcision which believed: The six Jewish men that Peter brought with him as witnesses.

On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost: The circumcision (Jews) were astonished because Jesus promised this gift to fellow Jews after his ascension. This Gentile had not been circumcised. See Luke 24:49.

They heard them speak with tongues: The Jew required a sign. Tongues were for a sign to Jews. See 1st Corinthians 1:22 & 14:22.

Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

He commanded them to be baptized: Baptism was a part of Peter and elevens commission, and tongues were spoken as a sign to the Jews present. See Mark 16:15-18.

We today are baptized by the Holy Ghost into Christ's body, not with the Holy Ghost. There is a big difference, and it is brought out in Ephesians chapter four.

Chapter Eleven

They which were scattered abroad

1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3 Saying,

Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: **6** Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. **7** And I heard a voice saying unto me,

Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said,

Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven,

What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. **11** And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. **12** And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: **13** And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; **14** Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. **16** Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said,

John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. *See Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33 & Acts 1:5.*

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? **18** When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying,

Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Remember that this group was made up of other apostles as well, who were not too thrilled with Peter, and who were ready for a little church discipline until Peter told them the rest of the story.

Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life: A Gentile could have had God grant them repentance unto life under the law, but they would have had to have been circumcised and kept the law (thus becoming Jews by being a proselyte).

19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

They which were scattered abroad: *See Acts 8:1.*

The persecution that arose about Stephen: Here we see a group of Jewish believers that back in Acts chapter eight had been dispersed due to persecution.

Preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only: They were telling other Jews that Jesus was the Son of God.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Preaching the Lord Jesus: These Jews were Grecians, just like the Grecian widows in Acts six were also Jews. They were what was commonly referred to as Hellenized Jews.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

They sent forth Barnabas: The church in Jerusalem sent forth Barnabas to seek Saul. Barnabas was the very person who introduced the apostles to Saul in the first place in Acts 9:26-27.

Why was Saul sought out by Barnabas?

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

Barnabas went to Tarsus in neighboring Turkey (Asia Minor) to get Saul to tell him the news that many Jewish believers were now scattered amongst the Gentiles.

He would have told him of the events concerning Peter reaching out to the Gentile named Cornelius and his household, which would have interested Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles.

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch: Antioch would become a very strategic city as far as the gospel is concerned, for it is here where believers were first called Christians.

27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world:

which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Every man according to his ability, determined to send relief: This was for a struggling community of believers that had been under the kingdom program which was now not going to be ushered in until the dispensation of grace runs its course.

Chapter Twelve

An Apostle is killed and not replaced

1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

Herod: This is Herod Agrippa, or Herod the fourth. He was Edomite puppet of Rome ruling Israel because they broke their promise they made with God at Sinai. See Leviticus 26:25.

The king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church: His purpose was to cut off the church's leadership in hopes that the believers would disband.

This was the Jewish kingdom church, and it was growing at an alarming rate and was a threat to Herod, because they preached that Jesus was their King.

And he killed James the brother of John: With the death of James, one of the twelve apostles, we have a major dilemma for Israel's kingdom program.

One of its twelve apostles are dead, so there is no way that Matthew 19:28 can now be fulfilled in their lifetime, because one of the promised twelve judges that were to sit on twelve thrones to judge Israel was now dead.

Paul did not take James' or Judas' place. Two whole chapters were devoted to Stephen, who was not an apostle, while James who was an apostle gets only these two verses spoken about his death, because of what Stephen's death signified.

James' death would help the remaining apostles to better understand what God was doing concern the apostle Paul's ministry to the Gentiles.

And to help them see how that God was setting aside the nation of Israel for the time being in order to usher in the dispensation of grace.

Herod saw that by killing an apostle the Jews would be pleased with him, so he thought then that by killing their ringleader that would make him even more popular.

The early chapters of the book of Acts is about the diminishing of the nation of Israel, and the later chapters are about the apostle of the Gentiles going to the Gentiles in spite of Israel.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) 4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

Four quaternions of soldiers: Sixteen men.

He saw that it pleased the Jews: The Jews were often King Herod's enemy, but now they would help him in a common cause to get rid of this sect that proclaimed Jesus as their King instead of Herod or Caesar.

Then were the days of unleavened bread: The days of unleavened bread happen right after passover, these were Jewish holidays, which coincided with a pagan holiday to honor Ishtar, or Easter and the Spring Equinox. Acts chapter five.

Intending after Easter to bring him forth: Easter did not begin as a holiday of the early church to celebrate the resurrection of their Saviour; it had long been a pagan holiday.

How did this pagan Edomite king celebrate Easter? By killing an apostle. How many times have you seen the words unleavened bread used in the book of Acts so far? Two.

These are days (feasts) on Israel's religious calendars that help bible students figure out when different events in the book took place.

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. 7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying,

Arise up quickly.

And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him,

Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals.

And so he did. And he saith unto him,

Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. 10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said,

Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of

Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

And when Peter was come to himself: He came to his senses.

12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

Prayer was made without ceasing by the church unto God for him: Peter may have thought that he was next to die after James had been killed, as he was bound up in prison.

Jesus had previously prophesied that Peter would suffer martyrdom for his faith in Christ back in John 21:18, but kingdom prayers were made by these kingdom saints and God heard their prayers and answered them.

The angel of the Lord came upon him: Prayers were made, and angels are often involved in answering prayer. See Daniel 10:12.

A light shined in the prison: Often times in scriptures the presence of a shining light precedes a message or angelic appearance. See Acts 7:30.

After Acts 28 God no longer operated the same way he did before with Israel and the little flock as Israel had fallen, and the body of Christ was now God's focus in the dispensation of grace.

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. 15 And they said unto her,

Thou art mad.

But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they,

It is his angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. 17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said,

Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren.

And he departed, and went into another place.

It is his angel: While Peter had an angel as an apostle of the circumcision, you do not today. You have the Holy Spirit living inside you and you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Israel under the law did not have eternal security under the law, they had to endure unto the end, which is one of the reasons they had angels aiding them. See Matthew 18:10.

You are not Israel under the law, you are the body of Christ under grace. See Romans 6:13-14 & Ephesians 4:30.

Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren: This James was not the same James that had been killed by Herod at the beginning of the chapter.

It was the Lord's half-brother, (See Matthew 10:3) who became Peter's pastor, and the Pastor of the Church in Jerusalem.

It is easy to see that the believers in Jesus were still in hiding because of all the persecution, but the twelve apostles to the Jews remained because they knew they were to continue to reach out to the circumcision.

This was also the time that Paul came to bring relief to the believers in Jerusalem and it explains why he did not meet with the apostles this time because they were all in hiding.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. 19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode. 20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. 21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22 And the people gave a shout, saying,

It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. 24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

The angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: This is not happening today because this happened when Israel was still being viewed by God as his special nation evening during their diminishing that took place in the book of Acts.

Barnabas and Saul were taking a love offering to Jerusalem to help the saints that were suffering from the great dearth that was mentioned at the end of chapter eleven which had affected the whole earth.

Remember that for the believers in Jerusalem the dearth would be even greater because they had already sold all that they had and coupled with the fact that they were now being persecuted because of their faith there.

If they were open with their faith they would be disowned from their family, fired from their job, and if they happened to be self-employed, no Jew would buy anything from them.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

They had fulfilled their ministry: Saul and Barnabas were delivering money collected for the saints in Jerusalem.

John, whose surname was Mark: This is the author of the gospel of Mark. He would soon depart from Paul and Barnabas. See Acts 13. John Mark was Barnabas' nephew.

Chapter Thirteen

Paul's separation to reach the Gentiles

Peter, along with the other eleven Apostles, were called as apostles to the circumcision (Jews), and not to the uncircumcised (Gentiles). That responsibility was given to Paul as the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Galatians 2:7 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 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.

This ministry to the Circumcision did not cease for the twelve after the cross, it remained their calling until their deaths. Paul was specifically called out by God to be a light unto the Gentiles.

While he is the apostle of the Gentiles, he also took the gospel to the Jews first in every city in his Acts ministry. After his Acts ministry Paul no longer went to the Jew first on his last apostolic journey.

Paul's first apostolic trip

1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said,

Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Remember Saul's conversion, and what was said about him, he was called to bare God's name before the Gentiles. Paul is now getting farther away from the Jewish homeland.

Israel is left in the hands of the twelve apostles to the circumcision and Paul is about to reach his first Gentile converts, but not before reaching the Jews in the city of Antioch of Pisidia.

The church that was at Antioch: The church in Antioch was made up mostly of Kingdom saints with the exception of Saul of Tarsus.

Now God would call the apostle of the Gentiles to be separated from this church to begin his ministry among the Gentiles.

Manaen: He was brought up with Herod. They grew up around each other and knew each other well.

Herod the tetrarch: Ruler of one quarter of the region. He ruled the Galilee. See Luke 3:1.

Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them: To be separated from something means that they were also separated unto something new and different.

Neither Jerusalem, nor Antioch called Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto they were called, the Holy Ghost did, and they had to be separated from the work going on there in Antioch.

The word Apostle means, a sent one. They were called when the Holy Ghost spoke to the church in Antioch. This does not happen today. Today the Bible says if a man desires the office of a Bishop, he desireth a good thing. See 1st Timothy 3:1.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

They being sent forth by the Holy Ghost: The Holy Ghost called them and sent them.

This is not a pattern for us today. Nobody besides Paul (the apostle of the Gentiles) has heard the Holy Ghost in the dispensation of grace telling them to do anything.

They preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: We see Paul here going into a Jewish synagogue first before going to the Gentiles to preach. This would be his pattern for the whole of the book of Acts.

After Israel was blinded in part by God for their rejection of Christ that pattern switched from to the Jew first, to every creature without exception.

The Jew lost his advantage when blindness in part was set in. See Romans 11:25. There is now no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile, we are all one in Christ.

This was not known, however, until midway through the book of Acts when it was revealed unto the apostle Paul and somehow it has been forgotten today.

They had also John to their minister: This was Barnabas's nephew John Mark, also called Marcus. See Philemon 1:2 4 & Colossians 4:10 & 1st Peter 5:13.

The blinding of a Jew

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

A certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Barjesus means, son of salvation. He was a Jewish false prophet (a sorcerer). He serves as a perfect picture of Israel's spiritual condition at that time.

He was a Jew that did not want the Gentile Sergius Paulus to hear the gospel. Just like how the religious Jews would try to prevent Paul from preaching to the Gentiles.

Sergius Paulus: A Gentile who was called a prudent man, meaning he was a sensible man.

Saul, (who is also called Paul)

9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

Saul, (who is also called Paul): This is the first time Saul's Roman Gentile name is used which is Paul.

Filled with the Holy Ghost: Paul knew what God was going to do because he was filled with the Holy Ghost. Paul was able to accomplish miracles in front of the Jews as they required a sign as to God working through him.

Thou child of the devil: Jesus calls religious Pharisees the children of their father the devil. See John 8:44.

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.

And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Thou shalt be blind, not seeing the son for a season: Israel today is like Barjesus/Elymas, blind spiritually speaking and in need of someone to lead them in the things of God.

Their blindness is mentioned in Romans 11:25 thankfully, is only for a season. Judah's last king was also blinded for his disobedience. See 2nd Kings 25:6-7.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed: Sergius Paulus was Paul's first Gentile convert. How sad that it was that a Jew was mixed up in sorcery, and he was hindering this Gentile from being saved.

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

Now when Paul and his company: Paul is now used first, and the team is called his company to denote he would be the leader of this new ministry.

Everything was fine when John Mark was helping Paul on the eastside of the Island where they ministered in Synagogues to Jews.

When John Mark (a kingdom saint) saw what happened on the westside of the Island in saving a Gentile ruler, and how God blinded a Jew, it was too much at that time for Jewish John Mark.

This departure of John Mark had so upset Paul that when John Mark had proven himself to many at a later date, Paul still thought it not wise to take him with them on that journey, so Paul and Barnabas parted way.

Antioch in Pisidia

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying,

Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said,

Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

Went into the synagogue on the sabbath day: Paul went to the Jew first everywhere he went until after his first release in Rome after Acts chapter 28.

They went into synagogues because they wanted to win Jews to Christ. They went in synagogues on the sabbath day because that is when Jews went to their synagogues.

We, as the body of Christ today, are not under Israel's command to keep the sabbath. We are not Israel.

Men of Israel, and ye that feared God: The Jews were the men of Israel and the ones that feared God were the Gentiles that were in attendance in the synagogue.

Whether they were proselytes or not, we cannot know for certain, because scripture remains silent on this issue.

17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said,

I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: 24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said,

Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.

26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

Children of the stock of Abraham: The Jews.

And whosoever among you that feareth God: Those Gentiles that believed on Jesus.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. 28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet

desired they Pilate that he should be slain. **29** And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. **30** But God raised him from the dead: **31** And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. **32** And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, **33** God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. See *Psalm 2:7 & 1st Corinthians 15:1-8*.

The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again: Christ's resurrection was not a mystery in the old testament scripture. Paul was speaking to Jews proving to them that Jesus was the one spoken about in Psalm 2:7.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise,

I will give you the sure mercies of David. See *Isaiah 55:3*.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm,

Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. See *Psalm 16:10*.

36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: **37** But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. **38** Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: **39** And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

By him all that believe are justified from all things: By faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection a person could be justified from all things. See *1st Corinthians 15:1-4*.

From which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses: Keeping the law could not justify a person. The law could show them that they needed a Saviour.

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. See *Habakkuk 1:5*.

God warned the Jews through Habakkuk, and others, that he would bring the Chaldeans down upon them, but they did not believe those messengers then.

Paul was reminding them of this truth and warning them not to repeat the same mistake, but they would not believe the work that God would do unto them in bringing the Messiah.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. **43** Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. **44** And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. **45** But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Religious proselytes: One thing of interest here is that the Gentiles besought Paul to preach to them on the next sabbath day the things concerning the grace of God.

Paul, as he would travel would always go to the Jew first early in his ministry, and where would you expect to find the most Jews assembled together on a certain day of the week?

They would be in the synagogue of course on the sabbath day as commanded under the law. The sabbath was given to the Jews under the law. See *Nehemiah 9:13-14*.

The church which is predominantly Gentile today is under grace. This would be only the second group of pure Gentiles to hear the gospel of the grace of God.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, **It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.**

It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: Paul did not go to the Jews first because that was his custom to do so being a Jew. He went because it was necessary to go to the Jew first. See *Romans 1:16*.

Ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life: The Jews here rejected the word of God concerning Jesus Christ being their Messiah (they put it from them) willfully.

Paul gets his first group of Gentile converts here. The first converts among thousands that would spread out and turn the world upside down.

Lo, we turn to the Gentiles: This was the first of three times Paul says that he is going to the Gentiles. The other two times are *Acts 18:6 & 28:28*.

These believers in Antioch of Pisidia formed the first grace church in the world. Jews and Gentiles in one body.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, **I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.** See *Isaiah 49:6*.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

As many as were ordained to eternal life believed: The word ordained means appointed. When were “Gentiles” appointed or ordained to eternal life? Before the word began. See Ephesians 1:4, 2nd Timothy 1:9 & Titus 1:2.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

But the Jews stirred up the devout: These Jews just like Bar-Jesus in the beginning of this chapter tried to keep Gentiles from hearing the gospel so they may be saved.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

They shook off of the dust of their feet against them: Their fellow Jews that didn’t believe. This was a testimony to the Jews in regard to their rejection of the truth.

It meant that they were innocent of their blood because they had told them the truth of God’s word. See Matthew 10:14.

Chapter Fourteen

Paul is stoned

1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. 3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

A great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed: Jews and Greeks who were in the synagogue together heard the gospel and believed.

This would necessitate a church be established in Iconium as well. The word “Greeks” comes from the Greek word Hellen. See Joel 3:6 & John 12:20.

And granted that signs and wonders to be done by their hands: These signs were for the Jews sake, because they had become accustomed to signs in the first covenant, they now were requiring signs at the onset of the new covenant.

Notice also that these signs and wonders were granted only to these two individuals in this place.

God could have chosen not to grant any miraculous powers to them in Iconium, or he could have granted them to others. They were granted on a limited basis to verify his word.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. 5

And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them, 6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7 And there they preached the gospel.

The apostles: We see also here that Barnabas was also called an apostle, who traveled with Paul reaching out to the Jews, as well as to the Gentiles, but it is Paul who is called the apostle to the Gentiles. See Ephesians 4:11 & Romans 11:13.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice,

Stand upright on thy feet.

And he leaped and walked.

He had faith to be healed: The impotent man had faith to be healed after listening to Paul preach.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia,

The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

Jupiter: He was king of the gods in Greek mythology.

Mercurius: Mercury was the Greek god of merchandise, eloquence, and communication and he was a guide of souls in the underworld.

14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And saying,

Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

The apostles, Barnabas and Paul: Barnabas was also considered an apostle (because he was “a sent one”). See Acts 13:1-5.

They rent their clothes: This was symbolic of extreme anger, or despair. See Genesis 37:29. God had granted apostolic powers to Paul and Barnabas.

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

Paul is stoned

19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

These Jews came from the two cities where Paul had just established two churches at. This pattern is followed by the religious Jews numerous times trying to stop the spread of their teachings.

Having stoned Paul: Many people teach that Paul was caught up to heaven and seen things unlawful to utter while he was left for dead. That is pure tradition at its worst. See 2nd Corinthians 12:2 & Revelation 10:4.

Paul here was referring to the apostle John who had seen things he was not allowed to write about. See Revelation 10:4.

Paul wrote about everything he saw from the risen Christ, and even said he would not glory in himself, but in the person he had known fourteen years ago.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

He rose up: Paul was not going to die before he finished his course that God had for him. He had to get to Rome and preach.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Confirming the souls of the disciples: They confirmed in them what they needed to believe.

We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God: Paul never preached the kingdom of heaven message that was preached in the four gospels.

The kingdom of God encompasses all ages, whereas the kingdom of heaven is a specific 1,000-year promise made unto Israel. Do not confuse the two.

They had ordained them elders in every church: This is speaking about the new believers in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe establishing churches and leaders for their churches.

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church

together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

Antioch: This is the Antioch of Syria that they were separated by the Holy Ghost from to begin the work that the Holy Ghost had called them unto. See Acts 13:2.

From whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled: That mission had been accomplished and many Gentiles and Jews had heard the gospel of the grace of God and were saved, and several grace churches were established in Asia Minor.

The team that had gone on this apostolic trip had been recommended by the Kingdom Church in Antioch, but only after the Holy Ghost called them and separated them from the work they were currently doing in Antioch.

How he (God) had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles: This statement does not in any way contradict what Peter said at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:1-11.

Peter did not say the God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles as Luke affirms that is what happened with Paul and Barnabas' team.

He says only that God made choice among the twelve apostles that Peter would be the first to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and that their hearts would be purified by faith.

Peter was preaching the gospel of the kingdom message to a Gentile in Israel that had already been fulfilling Genesis 12:1-3, blessing the seed of Abraham.

These Gentiles would no longer have to submit to circumcision, and have to become a part of Israel now because God had cleansed the Gentiles. See Acts 10-11.

Paul, on the other hand, and his team established grace churches out in Gentile lands made up of Jews and Gentiles in one body. Peter never goes to another Gentile after preaching to Cornelius' family.

He and the other apostles restrict their ministry solely to the Jews (the circumcision) and give Barnabas and Paul the right hand of fellowship to go unto the Gentiles. See Galatians 2:7-9.

As apostles, Paul and Barnabas had the responsibility to confirm that these new churches believed and taught the truth.

It is here, back in Antioch, that Peter makes a visit having been sent by James the Lord's brother and he gets straightened out by Paul for his hypocrisy.

Galatians 2:11 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 thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

This event probably didn't help the relationship of Paul and Barnabas much, and probably contributed to their eventual split.

It was at this time that Paul wrote Galatians, which stands to reason that the revelations in Galatians must not have been known prior to this time.

This explains the problem that arises in chapter fifteen that required a council to resolve. This ended Paul's first apostolic journey.

Chapter Fifteen

The Jerusalem conference

1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said,

Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

Certain men which came down from Judaea: This is speaking about coming down in elevation, as Jerusalem was higher in elevation than Antioch of Syria was.

If it were a directional statement, it would read "certain men came north from Judaea."

Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved: Circumcision had been practiced since the time of Abraham and the thought of a Gentile being right with God without being circumcised was unthinkable to many Jews.

Cornelius' household, however, was never circumcised because their hearts were purified by faith.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem: The "they" were those of the church in Antioch, not the "certain men that came down from Judaea."

This is where Paul was given a revelation to go up unto Jerusalem concerning this matter. See Galatians 2:1-2. Paul was not ordered there by the apostles in Jerusalem. God revealed that he should go to educate them in Jerusalem.

They added nothing unto Paul's knowledge for it was God who was educating those in the conference in Jerusalem concerning what God was now doing through Paul's ministry:

Galatians 2:6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference 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 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 to do.

Paul's ministry was preaching the gospel of the grace of God unto the world, while Peter and the eleven preached the gospel of the circumcision unto the Jews only (the circumcision).

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

Being brought on their way by the church: This meant that the church in Antioch financed their journey and assisted it.

They passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: These are the areas where Jewish kingdom saints were scattered after the persecution that arose concerning Stephen. See Acts 8:1 & 11:9.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying,

That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

The sect of the Pharisees: The Pharisees were the strictest sect (branch) of Judaism. The word sect in Greek is actually the word "heresy." See Acts 26:5.

They tried to move right in and impose Judaism on top of Christianity. Judaism concerned a nation, and circumcision is what separated Israel from the nations.

A Gentile does not become Israel, or spiritual Israel once they get saved. Jew and Gentile are one in the body of Christ today so there is no need of circumcision to separate us. Israel had fallen as a nation with God's in Acts 7 with the stoning of Stephen.

There was a transition period in the book of Acts where you see the emphasis shift from Peter and the eleven in the beginning working with the Jews only to Paul and his company later on going to the whole world building the body of Christ.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

A good while ago: Peter is speaking of his one-time outreach to Cornelius's household in Acts 10.

And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith: The Gentiles who believed were declared clean. See Acts 10:15.

Remember Cornelius was able to be purified by faith in Christ even thou he was not circumcised. He did however bless Israel in

accordance with Genesis 12:1-3 which got God's blessings to come to him.

Today we do not have to bless a Jew in order to have the gospel come to us, because Israel is in unbelief today.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples: Peter was saying that these Gentiles who received the holy Spirit by faith without being circumcised, had no need to add circumcision and keeping the law after they believed in Christ.

12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

Barnabas and Paul: Barnabas (a Jewish kingdom saint) is listed first while at the Jerusalem council, but Paul is always listed first when he is out among the Gentiles.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying,

Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

James: The Lord's half-brother, who became the Pastor of the Church in Jerusalem.

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. See Acts 10-11.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. See Amos 9:11-12.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

The Gentiles having a relationship with God should not have been a shock to the Jews neither should it be today, but since the Jews as a whole are blinded in part, they still don't see the Gentiles in favor with God.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. See Acts 21:29.

My sentence is: His decree as the leader of the assembly.

Abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood: The first two decrees

were spiritual in nature, while the second two were more physical in nature. See Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 19:4, Matthew 5:32 & Acts 21:29.

The pollutions of idols: This is concerning the meat that Gentiles eat that was offered as a sacrifice to idols. See verse 29.

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

Them that preach him: Jews who preach the law of Moses to other Jews in synagogues everywhere. James was telling the Jews not to worry about how this would affect Jews because they had Synagogues everywhere that were preaching the law of Moses to fellow Jews.

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas: Bar at the beginning of a name meant "the son of." The son of Sabas, just as Barnabas was the son of Nabas. This is not the Barsabas of Acts 1:23.

They would call him Judas Barsabas to differentiate him from all the others named Judas. Judas is Greek for Judah, one of the most popular names in all of Israel. Silas would later travel with Paul on his second missionary journey. Verse 40 & Acts 16-17.

23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner;

The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying,

Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law:

to whom we gave no such commandment:

The brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: A Gentile no longer had to become a proselyte to Judaism in order to be saved.

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: No 613 laws like the Jews had to keep under the law of Moses.

From which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well: If the Gentile believers kept themselves from these four things, they would have a good witness, to lost Jews.

That ye abstain from meats offered to idols: Here we are given more clarity as to what it means above concerning the pollution of idols.

Should they eat meat offered to idols? No, it polluted the meat, and those that partook of it would weaken their weaker brethren concerning it.

Paul would give the body of Christ further revelation when he receives it concerning this matter in 1st Corinthians 8:10 & 10:1

The epistle at Antioch

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

The consolation: The letter brought clarification to the two groups as to the differences between them, and how to deal with them. There would be more differences later on as Paul received more revelations from Christ.

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. 33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. 34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

Judas and Silas being Prophets also themselves: They were prophets from Jerusalem's kingdom church. Judas returned to that assembly while Silas stayed with Paul.

And confirmed them: They were sent to let that assembly know that the epistle was truly the words of the Jerusalem assembly.

It pleased Silas to abide there still: He would soon be chosen by Paul when he and Barnabas had a disagreement concerning John Mark. See Acts 15:40.

While Silas was joining Paul helping the body of Christ, he would have remained a recipient of the kingdom promises seeing he began in that program.

There was no jumping out of their kingdom promises and into the body of Christ for Silas, Barnabas John Mark, or any others for that matter because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. See Romans 11:29.

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

What they taught at this time was only a part of what Paul would eventually receive in the upcoming years from the risen Lord.

Paul's second apostolic journey

36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

And some days after: After they returned to Antioch with the letter from James and the apostles.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; 40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

John, whose surname was Mark: John left the work just after the seeing Paul's first Gentile convert in Acts 13 (Sergius Paulus), while a Jew was blinded (Bar-Jesus).

Apostles, and the gifts that followed them, were necessary in the early days of the church to confirm their doctrine while the cannon of scripture was being completed.

When the scripture was completed, they put away the childish things because that which was perfect (complete) had come.

Chapter Sixteen

Paul's second missionary journey

1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

A certain disciple was there, named Timotheus: The word "disciples" is not used exclusively with just kingdom saints. Numerous saints in the body of Christ were called disciples beginning in Acts 15:10 going through Acts 20:1, 7 and 30.

Timotheus (Timothy) was Paul's young soldier in the faith who would later receive Paul's final epistle for the body of Christ just before Paul was martyred (2nd Timothy).

Timothy was a member of the body of Christ because Paul called him his own son in the faith, which meant Paul begat him through the gospel of the grace of God. See 1st Timothy 1:2.

A kingdom saint could not jump from his kingdom program to the body of Christ. The gifts and callings of God are without repentance. See Romans 11:29. This verse concerns Israel, not us today.

A Jewess: A Jewish woman. His mother's name was Eunice, and his Grandmother's was Lois. They were both believers. See Acts 24:24 & 2nd Timothy 1:5.

And circumcised him because of the Jews: Paul did not have to circumcise Timotheus, he did so for expediency's sake.

The Jews would not listen to Timotheus if they knew he was not circumcised, which those in his area already knew. To the Jews, Timothy became as a Jew that he might gain the Jews. See 1st Corinthians 9:20.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. 5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Paul and Timothy were commissioned to go to the Gentiles by the church in Antioch, not Jerusalem.

Later Paul would begin to receive an abundance of revelations concerning the church. See Acts 15:28 & 29. So why did Paul deliver decrees from Jerusalem for grace churches to keep.

They delivered them the decrees for to keep: Acts 15:20. It was Paul that went to Jerusalem by revelation of Jesus Christ to tell them what God was doing through them with the Gentiles.

The apostles were the ones who gave ground here, not Paul. The epistles they sent were to say Paul was right, not the people who came down from Jerusalem who were trying to impose the law on the Gentiles. See Acts 15:20.

So were the churches established in the faith: The faith was already being preached by Paul before the four decrees were given.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. 8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

Forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia: This was speaking of parts of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) not the continent of Asia. The gospel was to go west first to Rome and then the whole world.

Bithynia: Jews had been scattered there and in Asia earlier. 1st Peter 1:1. John the Apostle would write seven epistles to seven kingdom churches in Revelation chapters two and three.

Peter would write two epistles meant for both of these cities, along with three other cities that had kingdom churches in them. 1st Peter 1:1. Paul would not build upon another man's foundation.

Paul was a wise masterbuilder, but he did not lay grace doctrine in the kingdom churches established when the Jerusalem saints fled Jerusalem at the persecution that arose concerning Stephen. See Acts 8:1.

The Macedonian call

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

A vision appeared to Paul in the night: Paul would receive another night vision while in the city of Corinth. See Acts 18:9 & 2nd Corinthians 12:1.

Come over into Macedonia and help us: Paul would sometimes make a plan to go somewhere and preach the gospel there, and at other times God would intervene to give him direction.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; 12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

A colony: This meant it was a Roman City (a colony of Rome) with special laws and privileges.

13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

On the sabbath: The women were Jews who were praying on the sabbath day because there was no synagogue to pray in.

A certain woman named Lydia: She was the first convert in Europe. Lydia and her family would eventually make up the nucleus of the church at Philippi along with the Philippian jailer and the women that were with Lydia down by the river side.

A seller of purple: Purple dye.

Of the city of Thyatira: A city in Asia Minor that Paul wanted to go to but was forbidden. See Revelation 2:18-29.

Which worshipped God: She was a good Jew who worshipped God according to the law of Moses. She was not a kingdom saint, or she would have been baptized as that was required to be a kingdom saint.

Whose heart the Lord opened: The word of the Lord opened her heart. See Luke 24:32.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying,

If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

And when she was baptized, and her household: Paul had been given only some revelations at this time concerning the Church, he would receive more as time went on.

Paul would soon reveal that God never sent him to baptize, but to preach the gospel. 1st Corinthians 1:17. The twelve apostles to the circumcision were definitely commanded and sent to baptize. See Matthew 28:19-20 & Mark 16:15-17.

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying,

These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit,

I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.

And he came out the same hour.

A certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination: A demonic spirit who gives advice. See Numbers 22:7 and 1st Samuel 28:8.

Soothsaying: Like Balaam (fortune telling). See Joshua 13:22.

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, 20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying,

These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

Satan does not like competition, especially when he has been in control in an area for some time, so his minions began to oppose the truth being taught.

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. 25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

At midnight: God killed all the firstborn of Egypt to deliver Israel from their slavery. He delivers Israel with Samson in Judges 16:3.

He gives Ruth to Boaz in Ruth 3:8, He comes for his bride in Matthew 25:6, and He raised Eutychus from the dead at midnight. See Acts 20:7-9.

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying,

Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said,

Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said,

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Sirs, what must I do to be saved: Notice the different response of Paul to the same question that was asked in Acts chapter two when the Jews heard Peter's preaching:

Peter's reply:

Acts 2:38 Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Israel had to repent and be baptized under the gospel of the kingdom preaching by Peter and the eleven apostles to Israel.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved: This gospel (good news) is trusting alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. See 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 and the following verse.

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

They spake unto him the word of the Lord: Paul didn't just say believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, he spake unto him, and his whole house the word of the Lord concerning what he needed to do to be saved. He had to believe the gospel.

And was baptized, he and all his, straightway: This was not done as a public testimony to all those in Philippi. It was done after midnight (straightway).

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. 35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying,

Let those men go.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul,

The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

37 But Paul said unto them,

They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. 39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. 40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Being Romans: Paul was born with Roman citizenship. Barnabas most likely purchased his citizenship as we know he was previously a wealthy man.

Paul and Silas could have had them arrested and thrown into prison for their treatment of Roman citizens, but they did not. Paul showed them mercy.

The gospel invades Europe

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: **2** And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, **3** Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

A synagogue of the Jews: At this time Paul was still going to the Jew first, and then he would immediately reach out to the Gentiles in whatever city he was in. See Romans 1:16.

Reasoned with them out of the scriptures: The suffering of the cross are all found in the old testament scriptures. See Psalm 22, Isaiah 53 & Zechariah 12:10.

4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

The devout Greeks: This meant they were devout in their worship of God according to the old testament. They followed the principle found in Genesis 12:1-3.

5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. **6** And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying,

These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; **7** Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.

Jason: See Romans 16:21.

These that have turned the world upside down: The Jews said Paul and his company had turned the world upside down. They assumed wrongly that it was upside right previously.

Judaism was perverted to the point they crucified their own Messiah, and the world was following their god, Satan.

Now Israel would no longer be the focus during the dispensation of grace given to the apostle of the Gentiles, and the religious Jews hated him and his company.

Israel will be the focus of God once again in the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), and especially in the kingdom. See Daniel 2:44.

8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. **9** And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

Some of them believed in Thessalonica, and Paul was able to continue to disciple them through his letters and return trips.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither

went into the synagogue of the Jews. **11** These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

In the synagogue of the Jews: The Jews of Berea were more noble than the Jews of Thessalonica.

And searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so: Those things that Paul and his company taught them about Christ from the scriptures.

12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

Therefore many of them: Jews in the synagogue of Berea. Plus, the honourable women and men that were Greeks that also studied in the synagogues. See Genesis 12:1-3.

Many Greeks never got circumcised under Roman rule because there were often consequences for doing that as Jews were often hated wherever they went.

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. **14** And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. **15** And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

The Jews of Thessalonica: The less noble Jews.

Silas and Timotheus: They stayed behind to stablish them in the faith. Paul did not have time to ordain elders here because of his short stay due to persecution.

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. **17** Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews: Again Paul is still going to the Jew first. See Romans 1:16.

And with the devout persons: These were devout Gentile or Greek followers of Judaism who studied with the Jews in the synagogue.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say?

other some,

He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods:

because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

The Epicureans: Followers of Epicurus who loved to please the senses of sight, smell, taste, touch etc.

The Stoics: Philosophers of personal ethics.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying,

May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? 20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

Areopagus: Where Ares was judged by the other Greek gods in Athens. A rocky area at the Acropolis in Athens.

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said,

Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

Mars Hill: The hill where Mars (the god of war) was judged. He is also known as Ares above. He was the son of Jupiter in Greek mythology.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription,

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. 24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

The bounds of their habitation: Their national boundaries, which are according to the number of Israel. Deuteronomy 32:8.

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said,

For we are also his offspring,

29 Forasmuch then as we are the Offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

The Godhead: The Trinity of God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. One God manifest in the Godhead. See 1st John 5:7.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. 32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said,

We will hear thee again of this matter.

33 So Paul departed from among them. 34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

When Paul was in the Synagogue in Athens, he disputed with the Jews with the old testament scriptures. When he began to speak to the idol worshippers in the marketplace, he didn't use the scriptures because they were not a part of their history.

He just tells them that God is not in their graven images for he is the Creator, not the created, but the Jews need their proof texts to show them that indeed Jesus is very Christ.

The resurrection of Christ is what they needed to hear about in order to be saved, and Paul did not neglect his duty.

Chapter Eighteen

The Corinthian church is established

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

He reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath: Paul faithfully witnessed to his countrymen because he loved them, but also because God commanded him to go to them first during his Acts ministry.

We ought to be like Paul today in every church reasoning with them out of Paul's epistles and persuading the Pastors, and the people about the mystery program that was revealed to the Apostle Paul. See Romans 16:25-26 & Ephesians 3:8-9.

The very doctrines God and Paul want the body of Christ not to be ignorant of, is the very teachings that the body of Christ is ignorant.

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them,

Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. *See Acts 13:46 & 28:28.*

They opposed themselves: Paul was told early on to go to the Jews first in every city, and then go to the Gentiles.

I will go to the Gentiles: This was the second time Paul tells a group of Jews that he would from henceforth go to the Gentiles.

He did not mean he would wait to go to them after Acts 28:28 as some teach. He meant as soon as I am done going to the Jews in one city, I will go to the Gentiles in that same city.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

Justus: This is one of only three people named Justus in the bible.

Crispus: Paul personally baptized Crispus in Corinth. *See 1st Corinthians 1:14.*

And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized: Paul also baptized Gaius, and the household of Stephanas. *See 1st Corinthians 1:12-17.*

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision,

Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision: Paul has numerous visions that came to him in the night because God often did it this way. *See Acts 16:9.*

Things changed in Achaia as the word of God spread, Satan got active trying to stop it, and he raised up the very people that have the responsibility to spread it, the Jews:

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, 13 Saying,

This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews,

If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.

This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law: This controversy was concerning the law of Moses, not Roman law.

16 And he drave them from the judgment seat. 17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue: Since it was Sosthenes that was responsible for the insurrection that day which violated Roman law he was made an example of to the people.

Any civil unrest in Achaia would have gotten Gallio into trouble with Rome if he had allowed this to get out of hand and it got reported back to Rome.

Sosthenes later gets saved and helps the apostle Paul in his ministry. *See 1st Corinthians 1:1* where he is called Sosthenes our brother.

This makes a couple of the former rulers of the same synagogue in Corinth new members of the local church there in Corinth.

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

Prisca and Aquila: *See Acts 18:2, 26, Romans 16:3 & 1st Corinthians 16:19.*

Having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow: This Jewish vow that Paul took did not violate his faith, but rather helped him with his own nation to prove to them that he still believed the scriptures. *See Acts 21:23-24.*

The Jewish practices such as going to the temple, and keeping vows and holy days, remained during Israel's diminishing. After Acts 28 and those all ceased with the finishing of the canon of scripture by Paul.

Tongues and prophecies ceased when that which was perfect was come (the completed scripture). *See 1st Corinthians 12:8-10 & Colossians 1:25.*

In Paul's final epistles you will find some of this information is given concerning some of this. Paul could no longer heal anyone. *See 2nd Timothy 4:20.*

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying,

I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will.

And he sailed from Ephesus.

He himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews: *See Acts 9:20 & Romans 1:16.*

I must by all means keep this feast: Here we see Paul wishing to keep one of the seven feasts of Israel. Three of which required every Jewish male to come to Jerusalem each year.

These feasts Paul later learned were but shadows of things to come in Israel's future kingdom, they are not for us today in the body of Christ, they were commanded for Israel to keep. *See Colossians 2:16 & 17.*

22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

And gone up, and saluted the church: The church in Jerusalem where he came to keep the feast. This return to Antioch where people were first called Christians ended Paul's second missionary journey

Paul's third apostolic journey

23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

He departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order: In the same order he had previously gone on his last apostolic journey.

Strengthening all the disciples: These were not kingdom disciples, but disciples in the body of Christ.

Apollos

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

A certain Jew named Apollos: He was mighty in the old testament scriptures.

Born at Alexandria: The second largest city in the Roman Empire. The biggest library in the world was there and many schools of higher learning.

This is the place where corrupt manuscripts come from while the pure manuscripts came out of Antioch Syria.

An eloquent man: In contrast Paul was rude in his speech which led some in Corinth to be divided over personalities. See 1st Corinthians 1:12, 3:4, 4:6, 2nd Corinthians 10:10 & 11:5.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

The way of the Lord: This is a reference made 16 times in scripture. All of them are references to the Law given to Israel. See Genesis 18:19, Mark 1:3 and Isaiah 40:3.

Knowing only the baptism of John: Apollos received John's baptism (the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin) which pointed to the coming King and his kingdom that were "at hand."

After Apollos had believed the gospel of the kingdom he was baptized by John. He then left the area to return to Ephesus prior to Jesus beginning his public ministry.

Apollos would have known that one was coming who was mightier than John who would baptize Israel with the Holy Ghost and with fire when he came.

He would have also been waiting for that with anticipation as would all of the Jews who were waiting for their King and their kingdom to come.

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

He began to speak boldly in the synagogue: He was preaching what he heard from John the Baptist so many years earlier, without any knowledge of Jesus' ministry.

Aquila and Priscilla: See Acts 18:2, 26, Romans 16:3 & 1st Corinthians 16:19.

Expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly: They gave him a more complete message than he already had). He first had to understand it less perfectly (completely).

All Apollos needed was the missing piece of the puzzle, and that was supplied by Aquila and Priscilla when they explained that Jesus was the one John spoke about then he gladly believed Jesus as his Messiah.

Nothing is mentioned about whether Apollos was then baptized in Jesus' name, or whether Paul had returned later and laid hands on him. We will meet some similar disciples in the next chapter.

All we know from this verse is that Aquila and Priscilla showed Apollos by scripture that Jesus was the Christ. To say that they taught him the mystery program concerning the body of Christ is to speak when God's word is silent.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

When he was disposed to pass into Achaia: The area of Corinth and Athens to the south of Macedonia.

Who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: Apollos helped the believers in Achaia who were saved by grace.

It does not say he was a member of the body of Christ, and he taught them the grace doctrine, just that he helped them much reaching the Jews:

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

Apollos mightily convinced the Jews (not Gentiles) publicly, by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. It does not say he preached the death, burial, and resurrection, just that Jesus was the Christ.

Would he tell those very things to them, however? Of course he would. Could these Jews then become members of the body of Christ. Of course. Remember, neither you nor Apollos can't put anyone into the body of Christ, only God can do that.

Apollos was not preaching to Jews in Achaia that were disciples of John the Baptist or Jesus and the 12. Those Jews which believed Apollos' preaching became a part of the body of Christ. It doesn't matter that he was a previous follower of John the Baptist.

Chapter Nineteen

Have ye received the Holy Ghost?

1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them,

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him,

We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

Finding certain disciples: As Paul's custom was, whenever he went to a new city, he would first seek out the Jewish community there to preach to them. They were either disciples of Apollos, or John the Baptist before his beheading.

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed: They had not even heard of the Holy Ghost before. They should have known how God would one day pour out his Spirit from Joel and other prophets.

They had heard from Moses, Job, and Jeremiah that when a person died, they would give up the ghost, but that was the only times in the scripture "old testament" where the word "ghost" was ever used.

They knew that they had a spirit, and that it would depart from them when they died, but there is no mention of the words Holy Ghost found anywhere in the "old testament."

3 And he said unto them,

Unto what then were ye baptized?

And they said,

Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul,

John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Unto what then were ye baptized: John, or Christ were the only two answers they could have given. Here are some disciples of John the Baptist who had traveled to Ephesus and had not heard that Jesus was the Christ.

These twelve Jews were incomplete in their knowledge of who Christ was, so Paul enlightened them that Jesus was the Christ as seen above in verse four.

Unto John's baptism: This was for the nation of Israel only, and it was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

If you will remember the twelve apostles were all baptized by John the Baptist, but they were not baptized again because they already believed that Jesus was the Christ, these men in Ephesus were just finding that out.

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus: They needed to believe that Jesus was the Christ, and then he baptized them in Jesus' name.

When Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them: See Luke 1:35, Acts 1:8, 2:1-4, 8:17-18 & 10:41-47.

While Paul was the one that baptized them in water in the name of the Lord Jesus, it was Jesus himself that baptized these twelve Jewish disciples of John the Baptist with the Holy Ghost, not Paul.

Only an apostle could give the Holy Ghost, just like Peter and John did in Acts 8:17-18, Paul was able to do. Just as it is the holy

Spirit that baptizes us into the body of Christ today, not some person in a baptistry.

Paul couldn't put anyone into any program, only God could do that. There was no mention of trusting in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection to these twelve Jewish believers.

And they spake with tongues, and prophesied: Tongues were for a sign to the unbelieving Jews. See 1st Corinthians 14:22.

And all the men were about twelve: These disciples of John the Baptist received the gift of the Holy Ghost that was promised to believing Israel in the book of Joel.

It was confirmed in the gospels, and it was conferred upon those who had believed Jesus was the Christ in early part of the book of Acts. They had not done that yet. There were twelve Jewish men, twelve is the number of Israel.

Notice that when they believed that Jesus was the Christ they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, then Paul laid hands on them and the Holy Ghost came "on" them, not "in" them as he does with us today. See Acts 8:17-18.

The Holy Spirit knew who belonged to which program. These were kingdom saints, and they would receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost after they were baptized in Jesus' name.

Then Paul had to lay hands on these Jews as Peter and John did with the kingdom believers in Samaria with Philip in Acts chapter eight. Tongues were for a sign and the Jews require a sign. See 1st Corinthians 1:22 was written prior to this.

Had these twelve Jewish men not been baptized by John the Baptist, they would have become a part of the body of Christ after hearing the gospel of grace.

They had already sealed their future when they repented at the preaching of John the Baptist and Paul just filled in the rest of the information to these kingdom saints about who it was that John the Baptist had been preaching about.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

He went into the synagogue: The first thing that Paul told them from the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ and that he had to suffer and be crucified and rise again.

The things concerning the kingdom of God: The kingdom of God is not the kingdom of heaven. Paul never preached the kingdom was at hand.

Paul was trying to deliver these Jews from darkness, so that they could be translated into the kingdom (of God) of his dear Son. See Colossians 1:13.

And separated the disciples: He separated the believers from the unbelievers and from them he would form a local church in that area.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12

So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: Special miracles that were different from those that the twelve apostles to Israel did, like the use of handkerchiefs or aprons which had touched his body that could heal people.

Paul could do miracles up until he went to Rome in Acts 28 at Melita where he healed Publius' father and many islanders with diseases, and he was not killed by a venomous beast that had bitten him.

The Jews require a sign. See 1st Corinthians 1:22 & 2nd Corinthians 12:11-12.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying,

We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

Then certain of the vagabond Jews: The Jews were dispersed into all the countries of the world by God, and certain of them were exorcists.

They were ignorant about what they were getting themselves involved in. This word is only used here and in Genesis 4:12-14 concerning Cain.

Exorcists: One who adjures another, or charges them, or puts someone under an oath in the name of a king or God. See Matthew 26:63.

Call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus: They no doubt had heard that Paul was casting out demons in the name of Jesus, and they thought it may work for them being fellow Jews, but something was missing in their walk with God, salvation.

They did not know that being a Jew, like Paul, was not enough, you had to know the Jesus that Paul preached before you could call upon his name.

14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said,

Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

And chief of the priests: What was a priest doing outside of Jerusalem so far from the Temple he was commanded to minister in? There was no old testament office of exorcist, that any priest was allowed to be a part of.

And fear fell on them all: Those at Ephesus would get the message from this loud and clear. God was not favoring Israel anymore, and those believing in Jesus increased in that region because of the Jews failed attempt.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Curious arts: Witchcraft, soothsaying, fortune telling, casting spells. The best thing that you can do when you find the truth of the gospel is to get rid of those things that led you into darkness in the first place.

21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying,

After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Paul purposed in the spirit: Paul knew all along he would eventually end up in Rome because as the apostle of the Gentiles he must go to the capital of the Gentile world. Paul must go there, not Peter.

Can you see why Satan wants everyone one to believe Peter was in Rome yet? It is because of who Paul is, and his office as the apostle of the Gentiles.

If he has his headquarters in Rome then he can lay some claim to the Gentile world, but he can only claim the family and friends of Cornelius as Gentile converts.

Satan wants to mix Peter's program to the Jews in with the grace message preached by Paul and remove Paul from his position as the apostle of the Gentiles.

Timotheus and Erastus: Timothy and Erastus were sent into neighboring Macedonia, to set things in order there while he was preparing to go to Jerusalem.

23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said,

Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

That way: Also called, the way of the Lord. See Acts 18:25.

28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying,

Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. 30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. 34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out,

Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

Paul was forbidden by the Jews from speaking to Gentiles. See 1st Thessalonians 2:16.

35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said,

Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. 37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. 38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. 39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. 40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

Robbers of churches: Notice that the temples of Diana here are called churches. The word church simply means a called-out assembly.

This is only time that Luke uses the Greek word Heirosulos, instead of Ekklesia, which is then translated correctly to show that an assembly of any kind is a church or a temple.

There are many churches in the scriptures, but only one church which is Christ's body that we belong to today if we have trusted Christ. We are the one new man that is neither Jew nor Greek. See Ephesians 2:11-16.

There was the "church in the wilderness" mentioned in Acts seven by Stephen, which was the assembly of the children of Israel that were called out of Egypt to assemble in the wilderness.

There was the Jerusalem church which was made of none but the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

James, the Lord's half-brother, became its pastor, and the twelve apostles were in it along with the little flock who the kingdom was given to, making it a called-out assembly of Jews only.

The town clerk here had warned the people of Ephesus that they would suffer the wrath of Rome if they were to riot contrary to Rome's decrees for lawfulness in its realm.

Chapter Twenty

The gospel of the grace of God

1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

It is in Macedonia that Paul penned the great epistle to the Romans, and when he came into Greece, he wrote the book of 2nd Corinthians.

Paul called unto him the disciples: A disciple is a student of the word of God. This title is used of both grace believers and kingdom saints.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, 3 And there abode three months.

With every new revelation that Paul received he would undoubtedly face more persecution and trouble from kingdom saints not wanting to recognize any new revelations.

And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. 4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. 5 These going before tarried for us at Troas. 6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

The days of unleavened bread: Why is this Jewish feast mentioned? One of the reasons is to mark the timing of Paul's travels on this trip.

It would have been after the Jewish feast of Passover and before the feast of firstfruits, so it was in the spring.

The first day of the week

7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

Upon the first day of the week: Sunday is the first day of the week when many meet to remember that Christ arose on the first day of the week.

The Jews looked forward to a day of rest on the last day of the week (the sabbath) and now we in the body of Christ look back to the day he obtained our eternal rest.

The disciples came together to break bread: This meant that they met for fellowship around the word of God.

They had a meal and an evening service that lasted to midnight. A lot of miracles happened at midnight in the bible when things are at their darkest.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. 9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep:

There were many lights in the upper chamber: There was light (illumination) where the word of God is being taught correctly. Another miracle at the darkest hour.

There sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus: He fell out the window because the third loft was in the upper chamber where they were assembled.

Deep sleep: A lot of miracles happened in the bible when a deep sleep came upon someone.

These words are used together ten times and nine of those times a miraculous thing takes place. See Genesis 2:21, 15:12, 1st Samuel 26:12, Job 4:13, 33:14-15, Daniel 8:18 and 10:9.

A young man named Eutychus: His name means fortunate.

and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. 10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

And fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead: Luke the Physician wrote that Eutychus was taken up dead, he should know. Eutychus fell from the third loft.

Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him: Paul went down to the first floor, and embraced him. Just a touch from Paul's hand, or a handkerchief from him could heal a person according to the scriptures.

Trouble not: The only other times when "Trouble not" is used in scripture are times when very fortunate things happened to, or for people. See Luke 7:6, 8:49 & Acts 15:19.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. 12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

When he therefore was come up again: Up to the third loft.

They brought the young man alive: Paul was still able to heal people here in Acts twenty, which would have been nearing the end of his last apostolic journey.

Once Paul arrived at his final destination, Rome, he would no longer be able to heal anyone. See 2nd Timothy 4:20.

13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot. 14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. 15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus. 16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

The day of Pentecost: Again, this helps us to determine the time of year. Pentecost was the fourth feast on the Jewish calendar.

It was a big deal for Jews, and the city would be crawling with Jews from all over the world, many of which had heard about all the new teaching swirling around and would be looking for answers in Jerusalem.

They would not find any answers from the religious Jews there, but they would be able to find the answers to their questions from Paul.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance towards God: This phrase has confused many people today as to just what is it that we are to repent of.

During the time in which Jesus and the twelve preached the gospel of the kingdom to Israel, it was Israel that needed to repent of their sins, be baptized in Jesus' name, while believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God for the remission of those sins.

And faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ: Under the gospel of the grace of God, Jews and Gentiles need to repent of their unbelief by believing Jesus' died for their sins, was buried, and rose again the third day. See 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that

bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my

course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem: Not bound by man to go where he didn't choose, but committed to go wherever God wanted him to go to accomplish his will.

So that I may finish my course with joy: What course is he talking about? He wants to finish his course testifying the gospel of the grace of God. He wants to finish what he started.

He then goes on to say in verse twenty-five that what he had (past tense) preached unto them, the kingdom of God, was the whole counsel of God.

And to finish my course: In order for Paul to finish his course which he received of Jesus Christ he must first have started it which he did in Acts chapter nine when he was first told the course that he would follow. See Acts 9:15.

The gospel of the grace of God: This is first used here in this chapter, but it is used to describe Paul's course which he wants to finish, not start, with joy.

The gospel of the grace of God is another title used to describe the gospel of Christ that Paul had been preaching all along. That was his ministry to preach, and it is ours still today.

Were things changing for Israel as time was passing, and they were diminishing? Absolutely, but the gospel that Paul preached was not.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God: This means that Paul shared everything that had been revealed unto him up to that point concerning the revelation of the mystery. See Romans 16:25-26.

To all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers: Ninety nine percent of the time God uses the terms of shepherds and flocks to describe Israel, but this is an exception.

The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood: Jesus Christ is God, and he shed his blood for his church. This blood is perfect sinless blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock: Paul refers to the church of God of God, and he calls them a flock (meaning sheep).

He does this only once. Have you ever heard of the phrase, the exception to the rule? We know that believing Israel is called the little flock in Luke 12:32.

Paul is not talking to Israel's kingdom saints here. He is talking to the church, which is Christ's body.

The main tactic Satan employs to destroy churches today is with seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. He gets people to wrongly divide the word of truth. See 1st Timothy 4:1.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

To give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified: The words "and to the word of his grace" lets us in the body of Christ know, we have our own inheritance. We don't inherit Israel's promises.

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said,

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

The words of the Lord Jesus: These words are never written in the gospels, but it doesn't say that. It says that Jesus said these words. Not everything that was spoken, or done by Jesus, was written down.

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

For many of them it would indeed be the last time they would ever see Paul again because he knew himself that once he got to Jerusalem he would be arrested and eventually go to Rome.

There he would bear witness before kings and governors and most likely die, but he was ready for whatever course God had for him.

Chapter Twenty-one

Paul meets up with James

1 And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: 2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. 3 Now when we had

discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. **4** And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

Who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem: It was the people who told him not to go, because the Spirit told them what would befall him if he went.

Prison, beatings, shipwrecks, but none of those things moved Paul as we see later.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again. **7** And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. **8** And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. **9** And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

Philip the evangelist: Philip was an evangelist for the kingdom saints, whereas Timothy was to be an evangelist in the message of grace for the body of Christ. See Ephesians 4:11 & 2nd Timothy 4:5.

One of the seven: These seven mentioned in Acts chapter six and were selected to minister unto the widows who were being neglected.

Philip was the one who went and did a work in Samaria in Acts chapter eight, and then led the Ethiopian eunuch to the Lord on his way back to Ethiopia.

Four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy: We see that his daughters had been given the temporary gift to prophesy. These were kingdom saints. They were not part of the body of Christ which began with the apostle Paul. See Revelation 14:4 & 1st Timothy 1:15-16.

They were doing the same thing that two others had just done in prophesying about the persecution that Paul would face if he went on to Jerusalem, but none of those things moved Paul.

Agabus would also say the same thing. There is no evidence that this one-time gift was anything more.

10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. **11** And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said,

Thus saith the Holy Ghost,

So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. **13** Then Paul answered,

What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

A certain prophet, named Agabus: Agabus was a prophet for the kingdom Church, but here he is prophesying about Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles.

God would use this trip to get Paul to Rome where he was going to get an all-expense paid trip paid for by Rome, thanks to his Roman citizenship that God made sure he had before he was born.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. **16** There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

This was the end of Paul's third apostolic journey:

James; and all the elders

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. **18** And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

The disciples of Caesarea: This was where Philip and his daughters were, Cornelius' family and household. These were all kingdom saints.

Paul went in with us unto James: Notice that Peter is not mentioned as the prominent one anymore, James the Lord's half-brother is the pastor of the church in Jerusalem now.

Some claim that James usurped the role from Peter, but nothing in scripture backs that up. James was the Pastor, while Peter was an apostle, they are different offices.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

What things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry: What ministry? The one they discussed at the Jerusalem conference where Paul would go to the uncircumcision, and they would minister to the circumcision.

Galatians 2:9 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.

20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him,

Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

Thou seest brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe: These are the Jews that were compelled by the twelve apostles to save themselves from this untoward generation. See Acts 2:40.

They are all zealous of the law: These Jewish kingdom believers in Jerusalem were still operating under the Law because they had not been told not to. If God had wanted them to stop, he would have told them to do so.

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

Thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses: Paul doesn't get a chance to answer James here.

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; 24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

Paul goes ahead and does what James asked him to do and he takes this vow.

Purify thyself with them: A ritual cleansing before offerings in Jerusalem.

This lets you know the kingdom saints were still operating the same way they were waiting for the time of Jacob's trouble to begin. This would all end with the destruction of their temple in 70 A.D. See John 11:55.

Be at charges with them: This meant they wanted him to do what they were going to do.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. See Acts 15:28-30.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

To signify the accomplishment of the days of purification: This is the same type of purification as there was in Numbers 6 that was called the days of separation.

An offering should be offered for every one of them: This has caused much debate by those who would try to water their actions

down to claim they only gave a financial offering to the church in Jerusalem.

This was not a Nazarite vow like in Numbers 6:13, because a Nazarite was not to shave his head. See Judges 16:17-22. Samson did have the same days of separation involved in his vow as did this vow. See Leviticus 12:1-2.

It was an offering for their vow, not for having their sins remitted. Paul had not yet received his final revelations from God, so he acted on the information he had at that time.

Some say no Gentiles believed before Acts twenty, Sergius Paulus in Acts 13 was a Gentile who got saved under Paul's preaching who didn't bless any Jews.

These Jewish kingdom believers continued to practice the law for a time, and they along with the whole nation were eventually dispersed into the Gentiles nations by God for its rejection of Christ.

It would be many years before Paul made it to Rome to begin writing the last seven of his epistles.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, 28 Crying out,

Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

When the seven days were almost ended: The days of separation or purification.

The Jews which were of Asia: The Jews he had previously tried to convince with the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. See Acts 20:4.

And brought Greeks also into the temple, and had polluted this holy place: An uncircumcised person was considered unclean under the old testament and therefore they were unable to enter the temple area.

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. 31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

They left beating of Paul: He was beaten with rods three times. See 2nd Corinthians 11:25.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among

the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

To be bound with two chains: *See Acts 21:11.*

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people. **36** For the multitude of the people followed after, crying,

Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain,

May I speak unto thee?

Who said,

Canst thou speak Greek? **38** Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul said,

I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

A Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia: *See Acts 6:9, 15:23 & 41.*

40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

Chapter Twenty-two

Paul's defense

1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. **4** And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

Hear ye my defense: You will notice that Paul's defense is really his sharing of his testimony of how he came to Christ.

I persecuted this way unto the death: *See Acts 8:1-4.*

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. *See Acts 9:1-2.*

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. **7** And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me,

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered,

Who art thou, Lord?

And he said unto me,

I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. *See Acts 9:3-7.*

Noon: Peter's vision was also at noon. *See Acts 10:7.*

When you read Paul's other accounts of his salvation on the road to Damascus you will notice that those that were with him did actually hear a voice (Acts 9:7), but that they did not understand the voice.

In chapter twenty-six Paul tells you that Jesus spoke to him in the Hebrew tongue, just as Paul did here before his countrymen.

The reason why these men were not able to understand the voice Paul heard was that God was not about to reveal the mystery to these men, as it was to Paul alone that he was revealing that truth. Perhaps they did not understand Hebrew.

10 And I said,

What shall I do, Lord?

And the Lord said unto me,

Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. **12** And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, *See Acts 9:8.*

A devout man according to the law: Paul makes mention of that fact that this kingdom saint was a devout man according to the law, and that he had a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there.

Many synagogues had kingdom saints attending them, and they were still devoutly practicing the law. We today in dispensation of grace are not under the law of Moses and never have been. *See Romans 6:14 & 15.*

The glory of that light: This is the glory of God the Son spoken about in Revelation 21:23.

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight.

And the same hour I looked up upon him. **14** And he said,

The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and

shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins: God did not tell Ananias anything about baptizing Paul in Acts 9?

Ananias took it upon himself to baptize Paul because the commission given to the twelve apostles to Israel required its recipients to be baptized to receive the remission of sins.

Paul was the one to whom the Lord would reveal the mystery program to, not Ananias.

Water baptism was required for a kingdom saint as it was part of their washing as a nation to become a priest in Israel's future kingdom. See Exodus 19:5-6, Exodus 29:1-7 & 1st Peter 2:9.

17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said,

Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me,

Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: Paul thought they would listen to him because he was the previous leader against the Christians, and he could prove it, but God knew their hearts.

Satan would not allow his greatest traitor to witness before these Jews, so he stirred their hearts against him, but what Satan did not know is that God was allowing Satan to send Paul away so that he could reach out to the Gentiles.

If Paul would have stayed and ministered amongst the Jews, there would be even more confusion as to his role with the Gentiles, and that of the twelve with the Jews. God knew what he was doing.

Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles: This testimony of Paul's salvation experience was not a second sending of Paul, it was just another account by Paul of the events of his salvation. See Acts 9 & 26.

Paul was only sent out by Christ once; he just had more information as he received further revelation at numerous times.

Paul has already been going to Gentiles from Acts 13 and onward. Sergius Paulus was a Gentile in Acts 13 and many others that Paul preached to were as well.

When Israel lost its most favored nation status they would then be accounted or numbered as part of the nations/Gentiles. Today God does not see people as Jews or Gentiles, just as saved or lost.

Israel today has no special status in the dispensation of grace, they will however in the tribulation and the kingdom. Notice that they gave Paul audience until he said one word, Gentiles (dogs).

This was unthinkable yet for the Jew as long as they were under Rome's thumb because the prophets all foretold that the Jews would go preach to the Gentiles in the kingdom.

There were no prophecies about the Gentiles hearing the truth before Israel rose to her glory, because that is a part of the unsearchable riches of Christ that Paul mentions that have been kept a secret since the world began. See Ephesians 3:8.

The Gentiles: The idea that God would send a Jew to the Gentiles to preach the gospel to them was reprehensible until the kingdom when the Jews would rule over the Gentiles.

The Gentiles however currently ruled over them, and they considered them dogs. They knew they would one day go to the Gentiles according to the prophets in their future kingdom when they ruled over the Gentiles.

The dispensation of grace was ushered in because of Israel's unbelief, and it will end at the rapture. After the time of Jacob's (Israel's) trouble the kingdom will be established, and Israel will go out to the Gentiles.

But now, in this dispensation, they are both preached to on a level playing field.

23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, 24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. 25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by,

Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying,

Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman?

He said,

Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered,

With a great sum obtained I this freedom.

And Paul said,

But I was free born.

A Roman: A citizen of Rome with all its rights and privileges.

I was free born: Saul of Tarsus was born a Roman citizen, which would later give him free access to travel the known world, and he would enjoy many freedoms that non-Roman citizens did not have.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. 30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

**Chapter Twenty-three
Paul before the council**

1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. 3 Then said Paul unto him,

God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 5 Then said Paul,

I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written,

Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.
See Exodus 22:28.

Thou whited wall: Paul uses a quote of Jesus that was very well known by the high priest because it was said to his scribes and the Pharisees in the past.

They looked like the beautiful white walled sepulchres that incased the bones of dead men.

Matthew 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council,

Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. 8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. 9 And there arose a

great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying,

We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day: This was an affront to the high priest and the Jews religion unless Jesus really was the Christ.

Notice how those who were blinded by religion would easily violate the word of God when it threatened their system.

The Sadducees were the modern-day liberals. They did not believe in the hope of Israel which was their resurrection into their kingdom.

The Pharisees did but they did not believe that Jesus was the Christ because that would mean they were wrong and that they had participated in killing their Messiah.

Paul used a tactic to catch the devil's crowd off guard and get them fighting amongst themselves. He pitted the two groups against one another.

God could have delivered Paul, but he also gave him a great mind which he expected him to use from time to time.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle. 11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said,

Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. 14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said,

We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. 15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

The high priest himself was included in this plot to kill Paul. Religion will blind someone to the point of killing someone else who threatens their control.

So must thou bear witness also at Rome: Paul was going to make it to Rome, one way or another, and this announcement from God didn't tell Paul how that would come about, just that it would happen.

This announcement would no doubt give Paul the encouragement he needed to keep pressing on, even when his countrymen were plotting to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said,

Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said,

Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him,

What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said,

The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly. 21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

Paul's sister's son: God could have just caused a tower to fall on Paul's enemies, or sent a legion of angels to kill them in their sleep, but instead he used a little boy (Paul's nephew) to alert the chief captain of the plot to kill him.

22 So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him,

See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

23 And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; 24 And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. 27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. 28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: 29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. 30 And when it was

told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: 33 Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him. 34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

35 I will hear thee,

said he,

when thine accusers are also come.

And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

Antipatris: This was a city in Israel built by Herod the Great in honor of his father Antipater. The battle of Aphek was fought there in the Old Testament. See 1st Samuel 4:1-10.

It was out of the way, but a great place to hide someone temporarily while people are trying to kill them.

Paul's Roman citizenship was what would get him an audience with Governor Felix and with Herod. Without it, he would not have had the opportunity to speak the word of God to those in attendance.

Cilicia: This was a province in southern Turkey. It is mentioned seven times in the book of Acts, and in Galatians 1:21. The governor wanted to know what province Paul was from so he could determine what jurisdiction was over him.

Chapter Twenty-four

The resurrection

1 And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul. 2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying,

Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, 3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. 4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words. 5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: 6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. 7 But the

chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, 8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

A certain orator named Tertullus: Notice the high priest hired an orator to speak their case against Paul, who also used flowering words to try to convince Felix that they only wanted what Felix wanted, great quietness.

Paul, on the other hand, didn't need any counsel to represent him, because the holy Spirit of God would give him what he needed to say in his defense.

The sect of the Nazarenes: See Acts 28:22.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered,

Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself: **11** Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. **12** And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: **13** Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

They had no right to have Paul arrested on trumped up charges since they were all based upon their hatred of him.

Paul once was one of them, but he had been saved and now was the leader of what God was doing in this present dispensation of grace and that made him their enemy.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: **15** And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

The way which they call heresy: Paul believed the scriptures that Christ would be resurrected from the dead, but the religious leaders did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, nor that he had risen from the dead. See Psalm 2.

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. **17** Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. **18** Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. **19** Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me. **20** Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, **21** Except it be for

this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

The resurrection of the dead: Notice Jesus' words to Martha concerning her brother Lazarus who had died:

John 11:25 Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, thou he were dead, yet shall he live. 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? 27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings: These were the offerings given by the Gentile churches for suffering Jews.

Purified in the temple: He went through the days of purification required before entering the Temple.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said,

When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him. **24** And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. **25** And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered,

Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. **27** But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Paul said that he worshipped God by believing all things written in the law and in the prophets and that they call that way heresy.

Paul said he agreed with the scriptures concerning the resurrection of the just and of the unjust, and Israel's leaders did not. What an accusation against Israel's leaders.

He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come: Felix was convicted by the words which Paul spoke, but he still left Paul bound because he had counted the cost of serving Jesus Christ, and he preferred the pleasures of sin for a season.

Chapter Twenty-five

I appeal unto Caesar

1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. **2** Then the high priest and the chief of

the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, **3** And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

The high priest and the chief of the Jews: The religious leaders were planning to kill the apostle Paul; this shows you the spiritual state of Israel's religious leaders.

4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither.

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.

The judgment seat: The Bema Seat.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. **8** While he answered for himself,

Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.

9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said,

Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

10 Then said Paul,

I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. **11** For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered,

Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.

I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: Israel had no jurisdiction over Paul because he had committed no crime in Israel.

Paul said if he were guilty of speaking against the law, he would gladly allow them to put him to death. Since he was speaking of the very hope of the nation of Israel (their resurrection) he would not allow them to judge him, because he was a Roman.

I appeal unto Caesar: Now Paul would finally have his audience with Caesar. How could he get an appointment to stand before Caesar to appeal to him?

Either by Roman law, or at the request of the Emperor, Paul was arrested in order to appeal as a Roman citizen before the emperor. Paul was really the prisoner of Jesus Christ, not Rome. See Ephesians 3:1 & Philemon 1:1 & 9.

13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus. **14** And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying,

There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: **15** About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. **16** To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. **17** Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. **18** Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: **19** But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

King Agrippa: This is Herod Agrippa.

The manner of the Romans: Roman law protected Roman citizens from abuses by non-Romans. Paul used his Roman citizenship to get before as many leaders of Rome as possible with the truth of God's word.

News would spread of this famous prisoner and his thwarting of those who were trying to have him killed. Paul would use God's word, his wits, as well as his citizenship to get him to his final destination, Rome.

20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. **21** But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar.

22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus,

I would also hear the man myself.

To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth. **24** And Festus said,

King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. 26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. 27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.

This was not the first time Israel's leaders would try to get around Roman law, but it would be Felix who would lose his job if he sent a prisoner to Augustus Caesar without having any charges filed against.

Chapter Twenty-six Paul's Salvation Testimony

1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:
2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: **3** Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. **4** My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; **5** Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. **6** And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: **7** Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. **8** Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

A Pharisee: It is from the Hebrew word "Paras" meaning to separate.

The hope of the promise: Israel's hope is the resurrection into their earthly kingdom one day.

The big problem with Paul is that he claimed Jesus was the Christ, and that Israel had killed their Christ, and that the resurrection was through that very same person, for Jesus had said to Mary:

John 11:25 I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews: The Jews didn't like Paul preaching about the resurrection of the dead through Jesus Christ.

9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **10** Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. **11** And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Even unto strange cities: Gentile cities, such as Damascus.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, **13** At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. **14** And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue,

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord?

And he said,

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. **16** But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; **17** Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, **18** To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Unto whom now I send thee: Paul was told this while he was lying on the ground near Damascus some twenty years earlier. He was to go to the Gentiles soon after his salvation experience.

That they may receive the forgiveness of sins: You receive the forgiveness of sins when you place your believe the gospel of the grace of God. See 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

Your sins are not forgiven before you believe the gospel. They were paid for 2,000 years ago, but that payment is not applied to the unbeliever.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Damascus: When, just after his salvation he went and preached to the Jews there that Jesus was the Christ. See Acts 9:19-22.

At Jerusalem: When he went up to Jerusalem after the Jews tried to kill him in Damascus, after his time in Arabia. See Act 9:23-29.

Throughout all the coasts of Judaea: This is when Paul said that he was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ. See Galatians 1:22.

And then to the Gentiles: Beginning with Sergius Paulus in Acts 13.

Repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance: Repent means to change your mind. God repented when he changed his mind about what he was going to do concerning Israel.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. 22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: 23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. *Isaiah 60:3 & 42:6.*

Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: We know exactly what Paul said to the Jews because he told us in verse 23.

You don't tell a lost Jew about the mystery program before you tell them about Jesus being the fulfillment of the prophecy program.

Paul three times mentions the word "Gentiles," and yet people still say there are no Gentiles saved until Acts 20, or 28.

No amount of men's arguments however can take away the word Gentiles in this chapter. This chapter is about Paul retelling what God told him to do, and who he was to do it with.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice,

Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 But he said,

I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. 26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul,

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said,

I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian: This is now the second time the term Christian is used in scripture. It is first used of those in Antioch of Syria (Acts 11:16) where Paul began helping Barnabas.

Paul did not discourage the use of the title of Christian, which was well known to all, even King Agrippa. Nowhere does it say in scripture that anyone, but John was a Baptist. John was called the (singular) Baptist.

Paul was very clear in preaching to these people, and he wasn't worried about them not believing what he said. He was only worried about saying what God wanted to be said, and what his listeners needed to hear.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: 31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying,

This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus,

This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

Chapter Twenty-seven

Paul is shipwrecked

1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

A centurion of Augustus' band: A soldier that is over a band of 100 men. Augustus was the Caesar that Paul appealed unto in Acts 25:11-25.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

Aristarchus: He is first mentioned in Acts 19:29, 20:4 and in Colossians 4:10 as his fellow prisoner.

He was not a prisoner during Paul's first imprisonment, only his second when it appears that Rome was less tolerant of Christianity.

Luke includes himself in the "we and us" in verse two as being a part of Paul's team. Luke (Lucas) had been with Paul since Acts 16.

3 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

Julius courteously entreated Paul: Paul had obviously made a great impression on this centurion who was responsible for getting

Paul to Rome, because he allowed him to go see some friends in the area.

Gave him liberty: This is a term still used today for sailors who are allowed to leave their ships for a short while.

Paul was not a flight risk, because he didn't want to escape his captors, he wanted to stand before Caesar to tell Rome's leaders and the world, the gospel of the grace of God.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. **5** And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. **6** And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. **7** And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone; **8** And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. **9** Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, **10** And said unto them,

Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul. **12** And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

The fast was now already past: This refers to the time of the year when you could make good time sailing.

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete. **14** But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. **15** And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. **16** And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: **17** Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. **18** And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; **19** And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. **20** And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved

was then taken away. **21** But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said,

Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. **22** And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. **23** For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, **24** Saying,

Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. **26** Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

There stood by me this night the angel of God: This prophetic announcement along with its fulfillment helped some of those present on that day to consider the God that Paul spoke about who could deliver them all from the raging Sea.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; **28** And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

Fathoms: A fathom is six feet, the height of a man.

29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. **30** And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, **31** Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers,

Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. **33** And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying,

This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. **34** Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. **36** Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. **37** And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. **38** And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. **39** And when it was day, they

knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. 40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. 41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. 42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. 43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: 44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

Things happened just as Paul had been told by the angel. Paul was safe regardless of what any man or group wanted to do to him.

He must stand before Caesar, and he used a Centurion to stop the soldiers who wanted to kill the prisoners to keep them from escaping. He reached at least one on that ship by his words.

Chapter Twenty-eight

Paul reaches Rome

Way back in Acts chapter 9:15 God tells Saul of Tarsus that he was going to send him to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

Now he is about to reach the Gentile world capital, Rome.

Things begin to change once Paul gets to Rome. More revelations are given to him from the risen Saviour, and Paul's ability to heal is taken from him as the dispensation of God is fully given to him for us, to fulfil the word of God. Colossians 1:25.

1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. 2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

The island was called Melita: Ancient name for Malta.

The barbarous people: Barbarians, non-Greek speaking Gentiles. Verse 4 below.

No little kindness: They showed much kindness.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves,

No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. 6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

A viper: A poisonous snake. God allowed Paul to survive a venomous snake bite to be a sign to these Barbarians that God was working in their midst. The Barbarians were Gentiles.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. 8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. 9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: 10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

A bloody flux: Dysentery. (A gastrointestinal disorder). Notice Doctor Luke gets specific about this person's symptoms, but he is not healing anyone. God is through Paul, not Luke.

Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid hands on him, and healed him: Again, Luke the Physician had nothing to do with anyone getting healed here.

Others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: We see Paul here healing many which would have paved the way for him to witness to them, but again, Luke records nothing of anyone getting saved here.

This was Paul's last time that he would ever heal anyone ever again, because once he arrived at Rome, he would no longer be able to heal.

That was because the sign gifts were to cease after that which is perfect (complete) is come (the word of God). 1st Corinthians 13:10.

It would be at Rome that Paul would receive the prison epistles from God with many new revelations for the church. Trophimus was Paul's close friend, but three years later Paul tells us something interesting concerning him:

2nd Timothy 4:20 Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

Why would a man that had the ability that Paul had not send him a handkerchief to heal him, as was able to do in the past? Paul no longer had the power.

It ceased as did all the sign gifts when the apostle of the Gentiles reached the Gentile capital. It was at Miletum where he left Trophimus sick.

Paul was about to receive the last of his revelations from the ascended Lord, but not until he was in Rome, the capital of the Roman empire.

These epistles would make no mention of Israel having a prominent place with God in the present dispensation of grace.

That was because of their diminishing and fall recorded in the book of Romans. Israel will be restored when they come into their

earthly kingdom, and every promise God ever made to them will come to pass.

Paul also tells us that the sign gifts were only temporary until that which is perfect is come (Paul would receive the final revelations to complete the word of God over the next few years. See 1st Corinthians 13.

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

Whose sign was Castor and Pollux: The twins of Greek mythology in the constellation Gemini, in the Zodiac, and are attributed with saving people in trouble at Sea. It is interesting that this is mentioned immediately after Paul's shipwreck at Melita.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. 13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome. 15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

Where we found brethren: This would have most likely been Jewish brethren, who would gladly take in fellow Jews.

Because there no mention of sharing the gospel while they stayed in Puteoli, many believe that they were already believers, but were they kingdom saints, or fellow grace believers? We don't know.

When the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us: These brethren knew of Paul and his companion's reputation because when they heard of them, they came to meet them from afar. These could be some of the people mentioned in Romans 16.

Appii forum, and The three taverns: They were near Rome along the Appian Way. The three taverns were not bars, but three shops at the last major stop before getting to Rome.

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

Paul was suffered to dwell by himself: Paul was allowed to stay in his own hired house because he was a Roman citizen, provided that a soldier kept him secured while awaiting trial.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them,

Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

The chief of the Jews: The leaders of synagogues of Rome.

The hands of the Romans: He was arrested and handed over to the Roman officials.

18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. 20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain: The hope of Israel is the hope of the resurrection. Jesus Christ is the resurrection. See Acts 23:6 & 24:21.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

21 And they said unto him,

We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

As concerning this sect: A sect is a branch of something. Christianity was seen as a branch of Judaism. See Acts 24:6.

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

He expounded and testified the kingdom of God: He used the writings of Moses and the prophets to teach the Jews that Jesus was Israel's Saviour.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. 25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word,

Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. See Isaiah 6:9-10.

Strike three Israel

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

What was the one word that caused many of the Jews to quit listening to Paul? Gentiles. Why was that?

Because all Jews knew that Israel must be restored back in the land with the Messiah reigning before they were to be a light unto the Gentiles in the kingdom. See Isaiah 60:1-3.

They didn't want to accept was that God had put Israel's program on hold and he had ushered in the dispensation of grace where Jews and Gentiles were on the same level.

The middle wall of partition had come down, Jews and Gentiles could both become part of the body of Christ. The Gentile would not have to become a part of Israel to have salvation, because of Israel's blindness. See Romans 11:25.

The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: This was the third and last time that the Jews were told by Paul that God was taking the message to the Gentiles, because many Jews would not listen to it and be converted. See Acts 13:46 and 18:6.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. 30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house: He was under house arrest because he was a Roman citizen. This was not afforded to non-Roman citizens.

Preaching the kingdom of God: This is not the same thing as preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Paul never preached the gospel of the kingdom because that message was prophesied in the scriptures.

Paul preached the mystery program, which was not mentioned in the scriptures, but was kept hidden from the foundation of the world. See Romans 16:25-26.

His message grew as more revelations came to him. The books of Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon had not been given to Paul until he spent two years in a Roman prison.

1st Timothy and Titus were both written after Paul's short release from prison in 63 AD, while 2nd Timothy finds Paul back in jail, awaiting his death.

The book of Hebrews is not a Pauline epistle because chapter two is very clear who the writer heard his message from, it was from the twelve apostles.

Paul did not receive his message from man, but from the ascended Christ. See Galatians 1:11 & 12. As the kingdom was gradually withdrawn from Israel, the miracles began to cease, and the Jews were blinded nationally.

All the while the doctrines of the body of Christ were progressively being revealed to the apostle Paul by revelation.

The End

Romans

Introduction

The author of the book of Romans is Paul, while Tertius was the actual penman. Romans 16:22. Paul's name appears in all of his epistles as the very first word in each of them to let the reader know who it is that is writing to them.

He holds the office of the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13) which stands in stark contrast to the twelve apostles to the nation of Israel who ministered to the circumcision (the Jews). Galatians 2:7.

The book was written from Corinth just before Paul headed to Jerusalem to minister to the poor saints there whose kingdom hopes had been put on hold with Israel's rejection of their King.

Romans 16:25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

Chapter One

The Gospel of God

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

Paul: Paul is the first word in all of Paul's thirteen epistles.

A servant of Jesus Christ: See Titus 1:1. The word for servant is never translated as the word slave. Only 7 out of the 128 times it is translated as the word bond, or bondman.

Called to be an apostle: The word apostle means a sent one. Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles.

Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Every believer is called to be a saint, but only a few were called to be apostles in the days leading up to and following the resurrection. Romans 1:7 & 1st Corinthians 1:2.

There are no apostles today in the body of Christ, this office was done away with, along with the office of prophet, when Israel's kingdom program ceased, and the word of God was completed (*that which is perfect is come.*) 1st Corinthians 13:10.

Separated unto the gospel of God: Which meant he had to first be separated from something else.

He was separated from preaching the law of Moses to the nation of Israel as Pharisee, and he was separated unto the gospel of God (the good news of God).

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

The work/course that Paul was originally separated for, and sent out on in the beginning, he wanted to finish. Acts 20:18-24 & 2nd Timothy 4:6-8.

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

Verse two is a parenthesis inserted in between verses one through seven. It is necessary to read verse one, and verses three through seven all together, and then insert verse two after you understand the context.

Afore: The word "afore" is an archaic English word meaning before.

Where was the gospel promised by his prophets in the holy scriptures? The prophets foretold that the poor would have the gospel (good tidings) preached unto them. Isaiah 40:9, 51:27, 61:1 & Nahum 1:15.

The prophets even foretold of the Messiah's death, burial, and resurrection. See the verses that Paul quoted himself on his first apostolic journey concerning this in Acts 13:32-35.

It is Paul who first preaches that all who believe in Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection alone are justified without the law of Moses in this dispensation. Acts 13:39.

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: The gospel of God concerns God's Son who is our Lord. The word "Lord" here means he is our Master.

Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh: He came in the flesh as a man, as a descendant of David. He was always God. 1st John 4:2-3, & 2nd John 1:7.

4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

And declared to be the Son of God with power: He has always been the Son of God, but after the resurrection from the dead he was declared to be the Son of God with power.

Matthew 28:18 All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.

This declaration was made long before it ever happened when the holy Spirit gave this revelation to David to write it down for all generations to see. Psalm 2:7 & Acts 13:33.

Israel cannot say that God did not have a Son, because David prophesied of the Saviour's coming as God's Son in the whole 2nd Psalm: Psalm 2:12.

According to the spirit of holiness: According to the fact that Jesus Christ was born without sin, and he lived a sinless life. Isaiah 7:14 & Hebrew 4:15.

2nd Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, that knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

By whom we have received grace: We receive grace by Christ's efforts on our behalf. We get God's riches at Christ's expense. Ephesians 2:8-9.

And apostleship: We, along with Paul, have received apostleship for obedience to the faith. We are sent to be ambassadors for Christ among all nations. Romans 16:26.

For obedience to the faith among all nations: This phrase is mentioned here in the beginning, and end of this epistle.

Romans 16:25 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:

While the good news (glad tidings) was promised in the writings of the prophets, it was never defined there.

Only in Paul's epistles do we learn what came about because of Christ's death, and resurrection. This is what Paul called "my gospel" in Romans 16:25.

For his name: Because of who Jesus Christ is, we are to represent him to others. Psalm 23:3.

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

Among whom are ye also: Paul is saying that since the Romans are among all nations that they are also included here.

The called of Jesus Christ: We are called along with Paul to take the truth to all nations. No longer is salvation of the Jews, for that program ended after the cross. Salvation is to all who will believe the gospel of Christ by faith.

The kingdom message was restricted from the Gentile nations during the earthly ministry of Christ, and the first part of the book of Acts, and it was to the Jew only. See Matthew 10:1-8 & Acts 11:19.

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.

To all that be in Rome: Were there any believers in Rome? If not, who then was Phebe delivering the letter to?

Beloved of God: Paul narrows the "all" down to those who are beloved of God, which is all those who have believed the gospel.

Called to be saints: This verse does not speak about calling someone to salvation as some have erroneously attributed. It speaks of the responsibility of the believer to answer the call to live like the title we have already been given (saints).

A saint is someone who has Christ's righteous imputed to them at salvation. All believers have Christ's righteousness imputed to them. Romans 4:22-24 & 2nd Corinthians 5:21.

Grace to you and peace: Paul uses these two words to these Roman believers which is identical with his five earlier epistles, and his seven epistles written later.

It wasn't the common greeting of the age in which Paul was writing as some erroneously say, it is doctrinal truth for all who live in this dispensation of grace.

From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace come from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, not from Paul.

It is the holy Spirit that baptizes us (places us) into the body of Christ the moment we believe the gospel of the grace of God. It is at that moment we receive his grace.

No one receives grace by being water baptized, or by taking the Lord's Supper. Romans 6:3, 1st Corinthians 12:13 & Ephesians 2:8-9.

When the apostle mentions the word peace, he is telling his readers that God is no more at enmity (war) with his creation, because his Son has made peace between us by his death on the cross. Colossians 1:20-22.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

Through Jesus Christ: Acts 15:11, Romans 3:24, 5:1, 11, 15, 6:23, 7:25, 15:17, 16:27, 1st Corinthians 15:57, Galatians 3:4, Ephesians 2:7, Philippians 4:7 & Titus 3:6.

Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world: As the faith of Jesus Christ was spread, these Roman believer's faith was strong because of what they had to suffer under Nero's watchful eye.

It had only been about twenty-three years since Paul had been saved that believers throughout the whole world had heard of the faith of these believers in Rome.

Other believers from Turkey (Asia Minor) and Eastern Europe (Greece) had obviously taken the gospel with them after hearing it from Paul on his earlier apostolic journeys.

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;

God is my witness: Only God can see the work we or Paul have done in our spirit.

Whom I serve with my spirit: This means that Paul was always praying for the saints in Rome. It was the spiritual warfare that went right alongside the physical work that he did.

The gospel of his Son: Paul is very specific in not calling the gospel, the gospel of the kingdom, which was preached in the four gospels, but he calls it the gospel of his (God's) Son instead.

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 ye may be established;

A prosperous journey: His prayers were not for money or safety, but for God's word to save souls, and to build up believers.

I may impart unto you some spiritual gift: The spiritual gift Paul wanted them to have in Rome was more of the doctrine that further made up "the mutual faith" that he wanted them to have with him.

To the end ye may be established: The word "establish" appears three times in Paul's writings in regard to believers being established in God's word, and the word "established" appears only two times. 1st Thessalonians 3:2.

The word "stablish" occurs four times in Romans 16:25, 1st Thessalonians 3:13, 2nd Thessalonians 2:17 & 3:3.

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

The mutual faith: Paul longed to impart some spiritual gift unto them at Rome to establish them, which gift was to give them a fuller understanding of the faith Paul had.

These recipients could not have had as much knowledge as Paul had yet because Paul had been the first to receive these revelations.

He was now imparting this knowledge to these believers to establish them in these new truths. 2nd Corinthians 12:1-11 & Revelation 10:3-4.

For example, they could have been saved by Paul's gospel, but not have heard about the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery as mentioned at the end of Romans. Romans 16:25-26.

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.

I would not have you ignorant, brethren: Paul says this same thing numerous times in his writings concerning the mysteries revealed unto him. Romans 11:25, 1st Corinthians 10:1, 12:1, 2nd Corinthians 1:8, 1st Thessalonians 4:13,

The body of Christ still remains for the most part ignorant concerning these mysteries.

But was let hitherto: The word "let" means to hinder. Paul wanted to go to Rome previously, but he was prevented by God from going until the proper time.

Even as among other Gentiles: Paul here says that he wants to have some fruit among those in Rome, whom he calls his brethren, and he is not talking about fellow Jews here.

We know this because he says the words "among other Gentiles" to let you know that his audience was primarily Gentiles, but not exclusively. He wants to see Jews and Gentiles save and disciplined by these believers in Rome.

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.

I am debtor: Paul was saying of himself the thing that is true for all believers, and that is that we are all debtors because of what Christ has done for us.

That should compel us to tell others of God's Son. Why would Paul want to preach the gospel to believers in Rome, if as some say the book is only written to believers?

The book of Romans is not written just for believers, it is written to two classes of people, the saved, and the unsaved.

Others erroneously teach that Romans is only written to the lost. Another group can be thrown in that were recently mentioned, the Gentile proselytes to Judaism.

Knowing this will help you to rightly divide the scriptures better so you don't apply something to yourself as a member of the body of Christ that really belongs to Israel.

Paul wanted to preach to the saints to confirm the revelations that God had given unto him.

He wanted to preach to the Gentiles because that was his calling from God. He also wanted to preach to his brethren (the Jews) because he had a special burden for them. Romans 11:13 and 9:3.

The Greeks: They were those in the Roman Empire that spoke Greek. Obviously, those in the country of Greece spoke Greek. The apostle Paul spoke Greek. Acts 21:37.

The Barbarians: Gentiles who did not speak Greek.

Both to the wise, and to the unwise: This is speaking of the wise who spoke Greek, (the language of the Roman Empire) and the unwise, who only spoke their native tongue.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The gospel of Christ: We see that Paul says that salvation is to everyone that believeth, period! Not to everyone that believeth and keeps the law, or is a good person, but to everyone that believeth.

The power of God unto salvation: The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. See 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

To the Jew first: Once Paul was saved, he was sent to preach to the Jew first, to save a remnant according to the election of grace. See Romans 2:9-10, 9:11, 11:5, 7, & 28.

This Jew first principal remained in effect until Paul received the revelation that blindness had come to Israel. Their advantage as a nation has now been put on hold until the dispensation of grace is complete. See Romans 11:25.

There is no more Jew and Gentile today in the body of Christ, but a one new man according to Ephesians, and salvation is to everyone that simply believes today. See Ephesians 2:15.

When Christ came, he came unto his own (fellow Jews), it was because at that time God was offering the long-awaited kingdom to Israel. See Matthew 4:17-23 & John 1:11.

In the gospels Christ commanded his twelve disciples to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. See Matthew 10:1-7.

After all of Israel had heard they would have the responsibility to be a light unto the Gentiles during the kingdom age, which hasn't occurred yet, because of Israel's rejection of their King.

Jesus and his disciples took the gospel of the kingdom to the Jew exclusively.

And also to the Greek: Notice it did not say, "And also to the Gentile." The word "Greek" is first used in Mark 7:26-30 in the story of Jesus healing a Greek woman's daughter who had a devil.

The word is also used two other times in the gospels to refer to the Greek language written above the cross of Jesus. It is not used again until we get to Acts 16:1 in the story of Timothy, whose father was a Greek.

It is used only one more time in Acts 21:37 when the chief captain asked Paul if he could speak Greek. It is used three other times Romans 10:13, Galatians 3:28 and Colossians 3:11, and it refers to anyone who wasn't a Jew.

In Romans 2:9-10 you find the only other place that the Jew first principle is mentioned in scripture specifically, and then the word Greek is replaced by the word Gentile.

The word "Greek" is from the word Hellenis. Greece is called the region of the Hellas. This is where we get the phrase Hellenistic Jews from.

The Greek word for Greeks is used three more times in Paul's epistles Romans 3:9, 1st Corinthians 10:32 and 12:13 where it is translated as Gentiles instead of Greeks.

That is because the word was used interchangeably to mean non-Jews. All of the other times the word "Gentiles" appear, it is from the Greek word Ethnos, meaning nations.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. Habakkuk 2:4.

The righteousness of God revealed: It is revealed in the good news (the gospel that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

One word from Habakkuk is intentionally left off here by the apostle Paul. The word that is missing is the word "his."

Paul is saying that in the old testament, the just lived by "his" faith, but now we live by the faith of him who saved us (Jesus Christ). Galatians 2:20.

From faith to faith: The righteousness of God is revealed from the faith of Jesus Christ to our faith.

The righteousness of God is revealed from man's faith before the cross, to the faith of Christ after the cross. Our faith is found in Galatians 3:26. Romans 3:22, Galatians 2:16, 20-22 & 3:22.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven: The wrath of God must be revealed from heaven because mankind refused to act in godliness and righteousness.

Under grace today we do not experience God's wrath against sin because of what happened at Calvary. God's wrath will be revealed during the tribulation period once this dispensation ends. Jeremiah 30:7.

Who hold the truth in unrighteousness: They hold it in their minds, and in their hearts because of what they have heard, and seen, and have ignored.

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

That which may be known of God is manifest in them: The work of the law was written in our hearts by God so that we are without excuse (Romans 2:15), not on our hearts as it will be in the kingdom for Israel with the new covenant. Jeremiah 31:31.

God hath shewed it unto them: The triune Godhead (which is invisible) can be seen by observing God's creation.

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:

The invisible things of him: God himself is identified as invisible in 1st Timothy 1:17. Many of the things that he has created in the heavens are also invisible. Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. Colossians 1:15-16.

Being understood by the things that are made: Governments are set up on the earth which mirror the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers in heavenly places, unfortunately they have been corrupted by fallen angels and fallen man.

Even his eternal power: Psalm 19:1 & 97:6.

Godhead: This is the biblical word for the Trinity. God is triune. God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy Spirit. 1st John 5:7.

This verse appears only three times and all of them are found in Paul's epistles. Colossians 2:9 & Acts 17:29.

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.

When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful: Mankind knew God, they intentionally did not give him the glory deserving him.

But became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: *Ephesians 4:17-19.*

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.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools: *Proverbs 3:35.*

And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God: God is immortal, meaning he cannot die (become corrupt and decay), because he has no sin, which is only one reason why he is glorious.

Into an image made like to corruptible man: Mankind is mortal because the wages of sin is death, and therefore man is corruptible. He will die. Romans 6:23.

Adam was made in the image of God, but he fell into corruption when he sinned, and he plunged all of mankind into sin. Genesis 1:27 & Romans 5:12.

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 for ever. Amen.

God gave them up to uncleanness: God gives up the sinner that rejects him after so long to his sin, and a natural digression into deeper sin begins to occur.

Notice that God doesn't give up on the sinner, but he rather gives up the sinner to his sin. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The lusts of their own heart: Psalm 78:18, Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 5:28 & James 1:15.

To dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Men with men, and women with women.

Who changed the truth of God into a lie: They denied the truth that God put in them, and the evidence that he placed in creation that there is a God, and they turned it into the lie that there is no God, and that creation was worthy of our worship.

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:

God gave them up unto vile affections: This is the second of three places in this chapter where God tells us what he has done with mankind in the past, because of their rejection of him.

Their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: They changed the natural use of the man, and went against nature to be with other women.

To be against nature means to be unnatural. Even nature (animals) understands that there are two sexes that come together to reproduce.

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 recompense of their error which was meet.

The natural use of the woman: Nature is there as a reminder for man that a man needs a woman to reproduce.

Animals clearly understand this. Man's vile lusts come about when they reject a Creator, and give in to unnatural thoughts (those that go against nature).

Men with men, working that which is unseemly: Unseemly means not natural. Leviticus 20:12.

That recompense of their error which was meet: These men receive in themselves (in their body) that just (meet) payment (recompense) for their error (their sin).

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

They did not like to retain God in their knowledge: People don't want to meditate on a Creator, who has a perfect plan for his creation. They want to make their own rules.

God gave them over to a reprobate mind: A vile mind. All of mankind, in Noah's was given up, and then eventually given over, to a reprobate mind for their sinful ways. 2nd Timothy 3:8 & Titus 1:16.

To do those things which are not convenient: Not proper, or fit.

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, 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.

Who knowing the judgment of God: Leviticus 20:13, Romans 2:2-5 & 2nd Thessalonians 1:5.

They know that what they are doing is wrong and they do it anyway. They give into the lusts of their flesh until they are eventually consumed by them.

Worthy of death: God is talking about the lost person who revels openly in their sin. He is not speaking about saved people here in this chapter.

Chapter Two To the Jew first

Chapter two needs to be studied in its context which began in chapter one. It cannot be fully understood, and easily misapplied when not studied together with chapter one.

1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: Paul here speaks to the moralizer that will rail against the open sin of others, while harboring the same sin in his own life.

For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: If we are involved in the same sin, we should repent of our own wickedness.

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

The judgment of God: This is first mentioned in the preceding chapter (See 1:32). God will judge all who sin, not just those whose sins are known.

According to truth: God does not judge arbitrarily. He judges according to the truth of his word.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

O man: The word "O" is used in older English to directly address someone. Genesis 17:18.

And doest the same: Again, this is speaking to a lost moralizer. If you are saved today, your sins were paid for by Christ 2,000 years ago, and you received forgiveness when you placed your faith in Christ. Romans 1:32.

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Longsuffering: Because God is good, he is longsuffering, and he forbears, giving mankind many chances to turn back to him.

Saul of Tarsus (Paul) serves as our pattern today in the dispensation of grace of the longsuffering of God for all who should believe on Christ after him for everlasting life. 1st Timothy 1:15-16.

The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance: Every good gift is from him. He could just let us suffer the wages of our sin, but he offers us the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. James 1:17 & Romans 6:23.

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Impenitent heart: Unrepentant. The lost need to repent of their unbelief in God and accept the free gift of eternal life that only comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 6:23.

Treasureth up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath: This is speaking about the time when the lost will be judged that they are storing up wrath for themselves that they will experience for all eternity.

And revelation of the righteous judgment of God: After the wrath is ended, Jesus Christ will reveal himself to the earth and there will be righteous judgment meted out.

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

Who will render to every man according to his deeds: Salvation is a gift of grace. We don't work to get or keep our salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9.

We will receive rewards for our deeds that we have done for Christ since we have been saved.

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory: We are seeking the future, the end of our salvation when we get to experience the rewards of placing our faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Eternal life: This is what awaits the one who has placed his faith in the finished work of Christ on their behalf. Verse 9 & 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

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 doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

Indignation and anguish, tribulation and anguish: This is what awaits the unbeliever for all of eternity.

To the Jew first: The Jew still had an advantage if they believed the truth, but it was also a disadvantage if they did not believe the truth at the time that Paul wrote Romans, because God had given the Jew the oracles of God.

They were not only held to a higher standard, but they were for that time to be reached first with the gospel, that is why Paul would initially go to the Jew first everywhere he went.

Today we are to go to all men equally with no distinction of ethnicity. There is no requirement to go to the Jew first today, but do go to the Jews with the good news. Romans 1:16.

The Gentile: Verses 9 and 10 are the only two times in the whole Bible that the word Gentile is used in the singular. It is translated from the Greek word Hellen.

All other times the word Gentile appears in the plural form translated from the Greek word Ethnos, meaning nations.

11 For there is no respect of persons with God. 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;

For there is no respect of persons with God: Each person will be held accountable to the witness that was given to them.

The Jew, prior to the dispensation of grace, was under the law of God, so he had a distinct advantage, and because of that advantage he was held to a higher standard than the heathen that did not know the law.

For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law: This is speaking of the Gentile that didn't have the law.

They did, however, have the work of the law written in their hearts as we all do. Romans 2:15. The wages of sin is death, according to Romans 6:23 and that sinner will die one day.

This was also verified in the law. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Ezekiel 18:20 & Romans 6:23. Here we are taught that this principle was in effect before the law was ever given to Israel. Romans 5:12-14.

As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law: This is speaking of the Jew who was under the law until this dispensation of grace began.

Both of these two classes of people will be judged according to the truth that was revealed to them during their dispensations. Genesis 18:25, Acts 17:31 & Romans 2:16.

You need to read verse sixteen below along with this verse to fully understand what Paul is trying to tell us, and those that were alive during the first century.

13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

Notice the parenthesis that begins in verse 13 and ends at the end of verse 15. This is speaking about Jews under the law (in times past), it is not speaking about you today.

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 shew 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;)

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law: All of mankind was born with the work of the law written in our hearts.

It convicts us through our conscience, just as it does a lost person that certain things are wrong. So, if we never heard the gospel we would still be without excuse because God has written these things in our heart.

The lost Gentile will perish because he has the work of the law written in his heart, just as Adam did.

The lost Jew who also has/had the work of law written in his heart as well as the law of Moses will be held to a higher standard in that day because he has/had both sets of laws to be judged by.

The lost person knows inwardly that they are guilty before God and they make excuses for their guilt, and they accuse others to make themselves feel better, but their actions can never take away their guilt because God has written it in their hearts.

Their only hope is to place their trust in the fact that Jesus paid their debt, and they can be declared not guilty by God by believing in his Son and his sacrificial death for them on the cross, and his victory over death via his resurrection.

What about the lost person before the law, because it only says that he shall perish? Of course, there was no written law of Moses given to them.

There was the work of the law written in their hearts (their conscience). They knew inwardly by that, that there is a God, and they had also the outward witness of Creation.

They will be judged by those two witnesses given to them, and not by the law of Moses.

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

The day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ: *John 5:22.*

In order to better understand verse sixteen, it is imperative that you read it along with verse twelve, as verses thirteen through sixteen are parenthetical, which serves to help illustrate the surrounding verses.

God is not saying here that someone that was under the law of Moses will be held accountable to the revelation that Paul received thousands of years later.

That would make God unfair. Jesus will however be his judge in the same day as he also is judging those of this present dispensation.

According to my gospel: We however will be judged according to Paul's gospel, or the gospel that Paul received from the ascended Christ. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

This is the first time Paul mentions the gospel that we looked at in chapter one and calls it "his gospel." Sometimes he calls it "our gospel" as well.

It was the gospel given unto him. Romans 16:25, Galatians 1:11-12, 2:2, 7, Ephesians 3:2, 2nd Thessalonians 2:14, 1st Timothy 1:11 & 2nd Timothy 2:8.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, 18 And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; 19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, 20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

Behold, thou art called a Jew: This verse provides the who that God is talking to about so you may have the proper context. He is not talking to you today.

Sadly, many a Jew has rested or trusted in the law for their own righteousness. While much knowledge comes from the law not one drop of righteousness can come from it.

In fact, the law teaches us that we cannot rest or trust in anything but God, because the law shows us that we can never live up to what God demands, but there are always those that like to justify themselves because of the knowledge they possess.

A guide of the blind: The Jews had the oracles of God given to them to teach to others, but they misused it.

Which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law: They did not wholeheartedly embrace the law, but they tried to use it to their own selfish advantage.

The scriptures teach that knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. 1st Corinthians 8:1.

21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? 22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? 23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

Isaiah 52:5-6.

Dost thou commit sacrilege: A misuse of things considered sacred. Not buildings or physical things, but the things that God holds dear.

The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you: Again, it is clear that God is speaking to the Jew under the law, not you today.

Paul is telling the Jew that they have a reputation as teachers of the law, but then he asks them if their walk was talking louder than their talk was.

If so, then they were not keepers of the law, they were then violators of the law in the sight of the Gentile world and God.

Paul asks them while they were teaching others the law, were they themselves committing sins of omission and commission? The inference is that they were.

Were they not doing what they should be doing, and doing the very things they were telling others not to do? Yes, they were, and the name of God was being blasphemed through their disobedience.

25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: It would profit those who were under it while it was still in effect. Not you today under grace. Romans 6:14-15.

Circumcision was a token of the covenant that God had made with Abraham, it had no special power in it. It did not make a man a better man.

It served as a middle wall of partition between the covenant people and the Gentiles (the uncircumcision).

It was an outward action that the parents made for their child that they commitment raise that child up in the law and teach them to die to the fleshly desires, and not to live as did the heathen did, giving in to the flesh.

While circumcision was four hundred and thirty years before the law, it would later become a part of the law of Moses.

Circumcision is not a part of being under grace, for in Galatians 5:3 Paul testifies to the Jews that whosoever is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law.

If you trust in your circumcision as part of your righteousness, then you must do the whole law perfectly, and you cannot.

Only one person ever did, Jesus, so you don't have to. If you broke the law your circumcision turned into uncircumcision, and you became outside the law. So, be glad you are under grace today.

26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his

uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? 27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

The uncircumcision: This was those Gentiles that were not given the law that was given to Israel, while the law was still in effect.

Paul was saying that it was a shame that so many Jewish men had the token of the covenant that God made with Abraham, but they did not have that which the token signified.

Uncircumcision which is by nature: People are not born circumcised. They are born naturally uncircumcised.

When a Gentile who was never given the law earnestly attempts to keep it from his heartfelt love for God it condemns the very ones who say they are just because God gave the law to them.

The problem is that the law could never justify a man, Jew, or Gentile, and neither could circumcision, or baptism.

Paul clearly points this out to his readers to show everyone that none is righteous, but God. The law shows us that very clearly.

By the letter: The letter of the law. Romans 2:29 below, 7:6 & 2nd Corinthians 3:6.

28 For he is not a Jew, 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.

He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly: Someone circumcised in their actual flesh is a Jew in a physical sense.

He is a Jew, which is one inwardly: This is speaking to a Jew who was circumcised in the heart. Paul is not calling people who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour a spiritual Jew.

Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter: The letter means the letter of the law of Moses. 2:27 above, 7:6 & 2nd Corinthians 3:6.

A Gentile Christian does not become a Jew upon their new-found faith! Verse twenty-nine does not teach that a Gentile Christian is really a Jew if he has been spiritually circumcised in the heart.

Paul is speaking to Jews, not Gentiles here and he is telling them that they are not Jews just because they had a piece of flesh cut away from them as a child, but they are Jews in God's eyes when they are following from the heart God's desires for their life.

Paul is saying you can run around all day and claim that you are a literal descendant of Abraham, circumcised on the eighth day and you die and go to hell if you do not admit you are a sinner in need of God's forgiveness.

God is able to raise up children unto Abraham out of a bunch of stones if he so desires.

It does not matter to God who you are, whether Jew or Gentile, both are guilty before a holy God, and both need the righteousness of that can only come from accepting Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Whose praise is not of men, but of God: Just because a bunch of people circumcised a Jewish baby eight days after his birth does not make that Child circumcised in heart and mind.

They made a fair show in the flesh as is spoken about by the Judaizers in Galatians 6:12-15. Modern day Judaizers have replaced circumcision with baptism, and they glory in their baptism numbers instead of glorying in Christ.

Chapter Three

What advantage?

1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

What advantage hath the Jew: What did the Jew have that a Gentile didn't have?

The oracles of God: (Logion) These are the very words uttered from God that were committed (entrusted to) to the Jewish nation.

Paul was saying that the Jew had a big advantage because they had the word handed down to them from generation to generation. It had become a part of them.

3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

For what if some did not believe: What if some Jews did not believe?

The Gentiles as a whole did not believe because the oracles of God were given to the Jews, but the advantage gained by the Jew in possessing the law quickly became a disadvantage to those who did not believe it, nor practice it.

Just because a Jew did not take advantage of the law they possessed does not make the faith of God without effect. He doesn't force faith on anyone. He blesses those with it.

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. Psalm 51:4.

Here Paul partially quotes king David, where he is confessing his sins to God and explains that God is just in his dealings with man.

God will always overcome any judgment that men may throw his way because he is just, and the Justifier of the ungodly.

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance: If we say that our continuance in wickedness will commend God for his grace towards men, then we must also admit that God is unrighteous because he turns around and judges us in his vengeance.

God cannot be our judge if he himself is unrighteous. God is perfectly righteous, and he can never justify our sin to magnify his grace.

It is because he is righteous that he can be our judge. It is because he is gracious that we can be forgiven.

7 For if the truth of God hath 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.**

God's grace is not magnified by our sin but rather our continuance in sin makes a mockery of the grace of God.

We cannot accomplish a spiritual task that will produce true rewards in heaven if we embellish (lie) the truth to try to help God out.

God doesn't need our help, so let it be a slanderous report when someone accuses you of doing evil that good may come. Do not give the world an opportunity to blaspheme the name of Christ because of our freedom in Christ.

Whose damnation is just: This is speaking of the lost people who slander God's people for their own ends. God is just in sending the unbelieving slanderer to hell.

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;

In no wise: In no way. Is the Jew any better than a Gentile? No! In no way! They had an advantage if they would have been obedient to it, but it became a disadvantage because of their rebellion and disbelief.

Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: Here we find the two-part outline of Romans 1-3:8. Both Jew and Gentiles are under the condemnation of sin, which is death. Romans 6:23.

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 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: Psalm 5:9, 10:7, 14:3 & 140:3.

The lost, whether they be Jew or Gentile, have a large problem with their tongues, because the tongue tells us what the condition of the person's heart is.

Matthew 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

15 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 There is no fear of God before their eyes. Isaiah 59:7-8.

Paul is quoting king David from Psalm fourteen here to solidify this teaching in the ears of any self-righteous Jew who may be trusting in himself.

With the exception of David's obvious sins with Bathsheba and Urijah, he was a man after God's own heart.

Have you ever cried out to God like David did in dozens of the Psalms for the whole world to see? What David was publicly, few men have ever attained privately.

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith 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.

Romans 7:7.

Them that are under the law: The law is not binding for the Jew today, nor is it for the Christian.

We are not under the law, but under grace. Romans 6:13-14. The law never saved anyone ever, it only condemned them before God. Acts 13:39.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, 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;

But now: This current dispensation began when Saul of Tarsus was saved on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. 1st Timothy 1:15-16.

Paul is about to elaborate on a major dispensational change that has taken place implemented by God himself.

The righteousness of God without the law is revealed: The righteousness of God is revealed to us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ's death on the cross today, and his resurrection.

By faith of Jesus Christ: This is the faith that saves us, not our own faith. Our faith changes with our feelings but the faith of Jesus Christ never changes or waivers. Galatians 2:16 & 3:26.

Each person has a different amount of faith, and many have a different faith than other people, but our eternity is not based on our shaky faith but on the unmovable faith of Christ.

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: To fall short, or to miss the mark of perfect obedience to the law. Jesus Christ is perfect righteousness; therefore, he perfectly exhibits the glory of God to sinful mankind.

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Being justified freely by his grace: *Ephesians 2:8-9.*

Through the redemption that is Christ Jesus: We belong to our father the devil because of sin, and Jesus bought us back by his sinless life, and his death for us on the cross.

A propitiation: An atoning.

Through faith in his blood: In the past, sins were only covered temporarily by the blood of bulls and goats until the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) shed his sinless blood on the cross to cover our sins. Ephesians 2:13.

The remission of sins that are past: These verses are not saying that Christ only died for your past sins (a down payment if you will) and you must now pick up the installments.

It is evident by the context that he is referring to the different dispensations, and all of them are covered by the blood of Christ.

Jesus Christ's death on the cross satisfied (made propitiation for) the debt of all men for all time, for those under the law, before the law, and for us under grace today.

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

At this time: This is speaking of the time called "but now" by Paul in verse twenty-one above, also known as the dispensation of grace.

God is declaring his righteousness to the world by those who believe in Jesus. Notice how Paul emphasizes in verse twenty-one and verse twenty-six that a change has occurred in God's dealings with man.

Just when is Paul stating that the "but now" period began? Was it during Christ's earthly ministry? No! It could not be because he was born under the law Galatians 4:4 and Christ ministered under the law.

For some examples, please see the above verse and remember how that throughout the gospels Christ perfectly kept the law and told his followers to do so also.

Remember Christ's response to the rich young ruler when he asked, "What good thing must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said, "What did Moses command?" "Keep the commandments," Jesus replied, this "do and thou shalt live." Matthew 19:16-17.

We would not tell someone that today because we are under grace. We would say the same thing that the apostle of the Gentiles taught us, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved". Acts 16:30-31 & 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

The justifier of him that believeth in Jesus: Jesus declares us just through faith, no longer guilty.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

Of works: The law of works leaves room for boasting, but Ephesians 2:8 & 9 clearly teach that salvation is not of works lest any man should boast.

The law of faith: The law of faith leaves no room for boasting in ourselves. Salvation is all of God and none of man.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Justified by faith without the deeds of the law: A person is declared righteous the moment they believe the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:24 & 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

God has already proven he is the God of any who would call upon him. In the old testament if a Gentile wanted to be saved all he had to do is convert to Judaism and he would be accepted by God.

Every Jew knew that. Today, there is no need to convert to Judaism because Judaism today is in unbelief.

30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

Justify the circumcision by faith: They had in their possession the faith of God for mankind, and they could be saved by faith in what they already possessed.

Uncircumcision through faith: The Gentiles on the other hand were not entrusted with the word of God as the Jews were so we have had to come to it to be justified through the faith that was not ours originally.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

We establish the law: We do this through faith.

The law convicted the Jew that was under the law to see that he could not be justified by his works. By faith he then tried to keep the law.

We do not establish the law as a system that we under grace should place ourselves under. We simply establish that the law was necessary for the Jew at that time to show them they could not live up to God's righteous standard.

Chapter Four

Father Abraham

Chapter four can be better understood by the context provided at the end of chapter three. Read Romans 3:28-31 before reading this chapter.

Remember that the faith spoken about here predated Jesus Christ's earthly ministry, and Paul is speaking to those who have believed in Jesus by faith in his resurrection, and comparing them with the faith of Abraham and those under the Law before Christ.

1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

Abraham our father: This is the first time Abraham is mentioned in Romans. Who was Abraham? Was he Israel? No. Jacob his grandson was later called Israel. Genesis 32:28.

There is a reason why God did not call Abraham Israel, but rather he called Jacob, Israel. Did Abraham own any land in the promised land? No, only a burial cave.

He did not possess what was promised to him, so God would have to raise him from the dead to fulfill his promise to him. He will raise him from the dead in the kingdom promised to him and his descendants.

Abraham was Paul's father in the physical sense, in that he was a descendant of Abraham, and so is he a father to all Jews. Here, however, Paul calls Abraham the father of those he is writing to as well. Verse 12-16 below.

The flesh: This is speaking about the physical body, and the works of the body. Galatians 6:13.

Notice how that Paul starts out by calling Abraham our father, Paul is writing as a Hebrew to other Hebrews. He is also writing to Gentile believers because Abraham is the father of all who believe.

What did Abraham find: He found justification by faith, 430 years before the law existed. Genesis 15:5-6.

2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Read Genesis

15:5-6 and compare that with Galatians 3:16 and you will find many seeds versus just one seed.

Justified: To be declared righteous before God. It does not say that Abraham believed that Christ was going to die for his sins.

Abraham did not have knowledge of that, but what he was told by God he believed, and that is why he was justified by faith.

He was justified by Christ as are all saved people, but all he knew and believed at the time was that God would produce through him a great nation.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

To him that worketh: To him that tries to be justified with God by his works (Good deeds).

The reward: Justification by grace through faith.

Reckoned of grace: If a man attempts to be justified by his works, apart from faith, he becomes indebted to God, and he is unable to pay his debt.

Debt: The wages of sin is death. No amount of works can erase his debt; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

His faith is counted for righteousness: If a man however believes in Christ by faith, he receives (is reckoned) the reward of grace.

Do not be confused as to the necessity of works under the law. Israel was commanded to work under the law, but not for their salvation. Their work was the evidence of their faith.

Those who worked without having faith would incur the total penalty of their sin. Today salvation is totally apart from work. It is not the evidence of our salvation.

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 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. Psalm 32:1-2.

The blessedness of the man: The blessedness of having your iniquities forgiven, and your sins covered.

Imputeth righteousness without works: To impute means to put it to your account. 1st Samuel 22:15 and 2nd Samuel 19:19. The word appears only three times, but the Greek word for it is used 41 times in the "New Testament".

Where it is translated as the English words, reasoned, reckon, compute, and numbered. David said these words not long after his sin with Bathsheba, and the murder of her husband Uriah.

David was under the law, and never saw the dispensation of grace coming, because it was kept secret since before the foundation of the world. Romans 16:25-26.

Notice in verse seven that David says that the person who is forgiven has his sins covered. That does not mean a tarp was thrown over them. His sins are no longer imputed unto him.

The believer has Christ's righteousness imputed unto him. David did not know, nor could he have known the unsearchable riches of Christ because they were hidden to him in God.

David's sins were forgiven him when he had confessed them even under the law, and they were ultimately atoned for by Christ.

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

This blessedness: God imputing righteousness without works.

The circumcision only: Only those who have been circumcised.

Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness: Abraham was reckoned righteous without circumcision when he simply believed God's word.

In uncircumcision: When did God declare Abraham righteous? Genesis 15:6. When he was uncircumcised. Circumcision did not come until Genesis 17:5.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

The sign of circumcision: Noah had the sign of a rainbow in the sky, while Abraham's sign was in the flesh, it was circumcision.

Righteousness is imputed to us today just like it was to Abraham in his day, by faith. He is a father, both to the circumcised as well as to the uncircumcised.

That he might be the father of all them that believe: This is speaking about us today.

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. 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.

The father of circumcision: This is speaking of those of Abraham's physical descendants (Jews) that were circumcised, and who walked in the steps of the faith of Abraham.

Who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham: Those who were circumcised and walked in the faith that Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Compare this with the circumcised Jews in John 8:30-45 who claimed to be children of Abraham.

The promise: That he should be the heir of the world. He was given the promise in Genesis 12 five chapters before he was circumcised in Genesis 17.

Genesis 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he

believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

The heir of the world: This will ultimately be fulfilled in the kingdom. This promise was never given to the body of Christ, it was given Abraham, and to his descendants alone that walked in the same steps as Abraham by their 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 worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

They which are of the law: Israel under the Old Testament.

If Moses, and those that received the law were the heirs, then Abraham and his seed up until their time were left out in the cold spiritually speaking. Righteousness was by faith, and not the law.

The promise: That righteousness would be imputed by grace through faith.

The law worketh wrath: The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23.

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,

Therefore it is of faith: The promise made to Abraham that he should be heir of the world.

The promise might be sure to all the seed: Any Jew who will tell you that righteousness is of the law would have to disqualify every Jew before him all the way back to Abraham, because they have all broken it.

If righteousness is of faith, and it is, then the means by which we receive it is by God's grace. Ephesians 2:8-9.

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Genesis 17:4-5.

Even God, who quickeneth the dead: It is God who can make alive those who were dead.

And calleth those things which be not as though they were: This verse is yanked out of its context by many today, because it is not talking about us performing miracles by our speaking them into existence.

He called Abraham to be a father when he and his wife were dead in the area of having any children at that point in their life. Romans 4:19 below.

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. Genesis 15:5.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an 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 had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Genesis 15:6.

He considered not his own body now dead: Abraham believed God could give him children even when he was 100 years old.

It was imputed to him for righteousness: It is the same meaning as Genesis 15:6 where it uses the word "counted" instead of imputed.

Abraham believed God's earlier promise would be fulfilled, even when he was called upon to offer his son as a sacrifice.

Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead. God will never accept our works for justification, only our childlike faith like Abraham exhibited here. Leviticus 7:18, 17:4, Romans 4:11, 5:13 & James 2:23.

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, 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.

It was imputed to him: This speaks of God's imputing righteousness to Abraham because of his faith. The story of Abraham's great exhibition of faith was not written by Moses just so that Abraham could have a legacy.

It was written about for all who would come after him who would try to be justified by God through the works of their own hands. Abraham stands alone as the father of many nations who all look to him as an example for their lives.

Who better than Abraham to write about for us living today to learn that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by his blood he has saved us.

Chapter Five

Justified by faith

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Being justified by faith: By the faith of Jesus Christ, we are justified (made just) and are no longer at war (enmity) with God. He no longer views us as the children of our father, the devil.

He now sees us as his children. This all comes about only through the work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We have peace with God: God is not at enmity with us today in the dispensation of grace.

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand: It is only by faith in Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross for us that we have access to God's grace.

The glory of God: The holiness that God alone has. Christ lived a sinless life. Hebrews 4:15.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And

patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts: The Holy Ghost was given to us the moment we trusted Christ for our salvation. Then we were placed into the body of Christ and sealed in his love for eternity. 1st Corinthians 12:13.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

In due time: Since mankind was unable to save themselves, Christ died for the ungodly, at the appointed time. Galatians 4:4.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

God commendeth his love toward us: He showed us his love.

While only very few would give their lives for the average moral guy that lives down the street, only a few more may make the ultimate sacrifice for a close friend or family member.

Christ actually died for the worse in all of us, from the child molester to the mass murderer. He doesn't wait for us to clean up our act before he saves us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Being now justified by his blood: We are declared just by Christ's sinless blood. Christ had to die and shed his innocent blood.

We shall be saved from wrath through him: Because we are justified, we are now delivered from wrath (hell, as well as the tribulation period) for those alive when the rapture occurs. 1st Thessalonians 5:9.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

When we were enemies: Christ's substitutionary death on the cross reconciled us who were at enmity with God (at war).

We shall be saved by his life: Jesus was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

The atonement: Each believer receives the atonement upon salvation, which is best described as the "at-one-ment" we have because we are saved. Our sins were atoned for by Christ.

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

As by one man sin entered into the world: The one man is Adam, Eve was deceived.

God holds Adam accountable because after that he had received the only law ever given to him, and he just stood there silent beside Eve as Satan deceived her.

And death by sin: The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23. The soul that sinneth it shall die.

So death passed upon all men: Cain, Abel, and Seth were all born sinners, and all who followed after born sinners as well.

For that all have sinned: Before our salvation we were all in Adam (in his loins). We sinned in Adam. Now that we are in Christ, he makes us righteous.

Adam's sin brought death to all mankind because Adam died "in the day" that he ate of the fruit because he did not make it to his second day in God's eyes. 2nd Peter 3:17.

Adam unfortunately passed sin down to all the future generations so that all are born in sin. Death is both physical, and spiritual separation from God for eternity for the person who dies in their sins.

13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Until the law sin was in the world: The imputation of sin comes with the knowledge of sin, which came with the giving of the law.

Before there was the written law, mankind was under his conscience, and what few commandments God had given to mankind before that time.

Sin is not imputed when there is no law: It does not say there were no consequences for sin. There were consequences for Adam's sin, Cain's sin and on and on.

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.

Death reigned from Adam to Moses: The wages of sin still was death, even though the law had not come into being yet. Romans 6:23.

The similitude of Adam's transgression: Their sin was not identical to Adam's sin.

The figure of him that was to come: Adam is a type of Christ. Types we must remember are not a perfect picture of what they portray.

No human ever born could perfectly represent Christ because all mankind are sinners, and he was without sin.

Jesus was neither born in sin, as are all of us, nor has he ever committed any sin.

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, hath abounded unto many.

The offence: This is sin. (The Fall).

Paul switches from using the word "all" in verse twelve to the less inclusive word "many" in this passage because he has now divided the "all" up into two camps, saved and lost.

The free gift: (Salvation). The gift by grace.

All of the lost today are still dead in their trespasses and sins, while the many who are saved have received the gift of the grace of God by Jesus Christ through faith.

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.)

Condemnation: Because of Adam's sin we were all born in sin.

Justification: Because of Christ's righteousness we can all be justified by faith by receiving the gift of righteousness.

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.

By the righteousness of one: Jesus Christ was born without sin because of the virgin birth, and he never sinned even on time. Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23 and Hebrews 4:15.

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

The law entered, that the offence might abound: The law entered at Mount Sinai. The offense is the sin of Adam.

Two thousand years had passed since Adam sinned until God gave Moses the law to Israel to show them his holiness and their exceeding sinfulness.

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

As sin hath reigned unto death: The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23.

Even so might Grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life: Grace's reign is eternally more far reaching than the reign of sin ever could be.

Sin reigns until death in the life of a lost man, but it can only reign in a believer's life as he gives in to it. Grace reigns when we yield to the Spirit and allow it to have control in our lives.

Chapter Six

Baptized into Jesus Christ

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

Shall we continue in sin: We are not to force God's hand in dispensing more of his grace by our continuing in sin, only a wicked man would even consider such foolishness. Romans 3:8.

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

We that are dead to sin: Once we are saved, we are dead to sin, this doesn't mean we are not tempted to sin because we are still carrying around our sinful flesh.

We will always have that battle as long as we live in our flesh. See Paul's battle in Romans 7. Paul is talking about our spiritual

death to sin that occurred, which occurred when we were baptized into Christ by the holy Spirit.

Living in sin is not just shacking up with someone who is not your spouse, it is living in defeat to any sin. Living in continual sin should not be practiced by us because we are to let Christ now live through us.

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Baptized into Jesus Christ: This is our baptism by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ (which occurs at our salvation. 1st Corinthians 12:13 and Colossians 1:18-24.

Galatians 3:26 For ye 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.

If verse three were speaking of water baptism, then water baptism would save us, but this verse speaks of the Spirit's baptizing us into Jesus Christ's body, and into his death.

Getting immersed in water doesn't put you in Christ, but believing on him does. We literally died to our flesh, and then buried it spiritually at the moment of our salvation.

The big problem is that our flesh keeps trying to resurrect itself daily, and we in turn need to die to it daily, spiritually speaking.

Baptized into his death: Did Jesus Christ ever sin? No! Sin had no hold over him. Death could not hold him because he was not guilty of sin (the offense).

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.

We are buried with him by baptism into death: Water baptism does not place us into Christ. It is the holy Spirit that takes us out of Adam's sinfulness, who then places us into the righteousness of Christ.

Walk in newness of life: We are to walk in the newness of life, not as the old man walked.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Planted together in the likeness of his death: To be planted means to be placed into the ground. If you say these verses are speaking symbolically of water baptism, then you have to translate this verse to say:

"If we have been planted together in water, then we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

Many have been baptized in water (immersion), and with water (sprinkling), who did not trust in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection for their justification, and they will die in their sin.

Christ died our death for us because we could not pay the wages of our sin. When Christ died, all who believed on him died with him.

It was a supernatural act where we were "placed into" Christ (baptized into Christ's body) the moment we believed the gospel, not the moment we got wet. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

We shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection: Your body will be raised from the dead at the rapture in the likeness of Christ's body being raised from the dead.

You are not raised because of your own righteousness, but because of his righteousness, that is why it says in the likeness of his resurrection and not exactly as Christ was raised from the dead.

You and I have no power to raise ourselves from the dead because we are sinners, he was not. Not because you or I went through a water ritual, but because you trusted in the gospel of your salvation. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

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. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Our old man is crucified with him: The old us before our salvation. Ephesians 4:22-24 & Colossians 3:9-10.

That the body of sin might be destroyed: When our sinful body is physically buried it will eventually decay into dust.

Christ literally died our death for us. So that we wouldn't have to pay the wages of our sin, which is death in hell for eternity.

We were the servants of sin before our old man died with Christ, so we should no longer serve our flesh. Because of our new nature we are now free to serve our new master Christ.

A circumcision of the heart takes place at our salvation that cuts the flesh away from our soul and spirit, so it is no more us that sin, but our old flesh that we carry around with us.

Freed from sin: The new man is not free from ever sinning again, we are freed from the wages of sin. Romans 6:23.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

We be dead with Christ: This is speaking in the present tense. Christ died our death 2,000 years ago.

We shall also live with him: This is speaking in the future tense. It is speaking of our eternal life in heavenly places. Ephesians 3:1-3.

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Death hath no more dominion over him: *Hebrews 7:27.*

Reckon ye also to be dead indeed unto sin: We are to reckon the old man dead with Christ when we are tempted, and then reckon the new man alive through Christ.

Because of what Christ did for us coupled with our faith, sin does not have to have dominion over us unless we choose to let it.

Even a lost person can control to a certain degree the lust of the flesh. How much the more should a child of God be victorious over sin with God's spirit indwelling them?

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Because Christ has already won the victory over sin, we need to remind ourselves of that and resist the flesh's attempts to re-enslave us on a daily basis.

13 Neither yield ye 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.

Neither yield ye your members: Our mind and our body parts. Because you have been made alive in Christ you need to submit your mind, and body to glorify Christ and not give place to the flesh.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Ye are not under the law: The law was a school master to convince Israel that they needed a Saviour.

Under grace: We have a Saviour and all we have to do is to remind ourselves of this, and then yield our members unto Christ.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

We are not under the law, but under grace: These words are put in two adjoining verses to hopefully get the point across that we are under the dispensation of grace now.

First Paul tells us that we should not sin because we are now under grace, and now he tells us that we should not sin because we are not under the law.

Since a lost person is to be judged by the law one day why would we who are free from that law want to serve that old master? If we choose to serve sin while under grace, then the natural consequences of our sins will occur.

When they partook of the Lord's supper with sin in their life God stepped in, and as the scriptures say, some were sick, and some were fallen asleep (dead) because of their service to sin.

The question must be asked is, Is this still happening today? No it is not.

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Ye have obeyed from the hearth that form of doctrine which was delivered you: This speaks of the gospel of the grace of God in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

Upon your faith in Christ your body was circumcised, and cut free from your soul and spirit, so that when you sin it is no longer you (your soul and spirit) that sins, but your body. Romans 1:5 & 16:26.

It is your spirit that is free from sin. Your fleshly body is still under the curse, and the desire to sin will continue to plague you until you receive a new body when you get to heaven.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members

servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

Because of the infirmity of your flesh: Because of the weakness of our sinful flesh.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed: A marriage is to produce offspring (fruit). Israel became an adulteress wife, and she produced no fruit. Luke 13:1-9.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

But now being made free from sin: We are born sinners (slaves to sin), but upon salvation we become servants to God.

To be free from sin is similar to a slave who has been set free, he doesn't have to go back to his old master and serve him anymore, but sometimes we do just that with our flesh when we sin.

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The wages of sin is death: Wages are what we are owed for the work we have done. The wage for our sin is death, an eternal separation from God for eternity in the lake of fire, but the gift of God saves us from the wages of our sin.

The gift of God is eternal life: A gift is free for those who will simply receive it by faith. Eternal life has been paid for by Jesus Christ by his sacrificial death on the cross on our behalf.

Chapter Seven

To death do us part

1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

I speak to them that know the law: Paul here speaks not just to those Jewish believers who know the law of Moses, but also to all in Rome that understand law in general.

Have not pagans been governed by laws. Paul uses the law to teach about man's standing/state under grace as opposed to their previous standing under the law.

Since God gave mankind the law, he will judge the lost man by it. We on the other hand if we have been saved are freed from the law and its penalty.

Anyone who knows the law knows that the death of an individual annuls any contracts. What a person was bound to under the law he is released from by his death.

If a person were bound to someone by a particular law and either of the two people died that contract would be null and void unless there were stipulations in the contract that specified what was to happen in the event of a death.

Paul, however, uses the marriage contract to teach our relationship as believers to the law today while under grace.

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth: Israel is the wife of Jehovah, bound in a marriage relationship to him until death.

The law of her husband: It is stated in the beginning of verse two, but it is from Exodus.

She (Israel) commits adultery with others gods, and God gives Israel a writing of divorcement. She is no longer his wife. Isaiah 50:1.

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: God dies on the cross to buy her (Israel) back.

The heathen woman does not think for a second that she is an adulteress if she leaves her husband and marries another. It is the one who knows the law of Moses that can make that distinction.

The husband here in this illustration is God, and Israel as we know was married to God through the law covenant, for the law was a legal contract between Israel and God. Isaiah 50:1.

An adulteress: In a legal sense an adulteress is a married woman who left her husband to be with another man (without her husband having broken the marriage covenant by his own infidelity).

Israel, over and over again, is called an adulteress because she continually played the harlot (spiritually speaking) by worshipping other gods, while God all the while remained faithful unto her (Israel).

Paul uses this common law that is understood by most to teach us that because Christ fulfilled the law it is now dead to us so that we are free to be married to another.

This would be a necessary teaching that the Jewish hearers needed to hear so they could move on from the old to the new.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ: Israel could never keep the law and so the contract that Israel had made with God died when Christ fulfilled it at the cross.

He became a curse for us on the cross and by his dead body we were freed from the law. When we believe on Christ for our salvation we are no longer under the curse of the law.

Notice in verse four that it is no longer referring to the law as dying but Paul says it is you who have become dead to the law by the body of Christ. We are crucified with Christ. The law is nailed to the cross and it dies.

We are freed from that law when we believe which circumcises our heart, or literally it separates our flesh from our soul and spirit all by the body of Christ (the literal body of Christ), and not the Church, which is his body.

Our bodies did not literally die when we believed, but Christ's body died, and we have received deliverance from the law because of his body's death. We have become dead to the law by his sinless body.

That ye should be married to another: Verse four teaches that we as believers are married to Christ.

This has unfortunately scared many that have learned that the body of Christ (the church) is not the bride of Christ, believing Israel is the bride of Christ, and they will dwell in the city of new Jerusalem.

This is talking about saved individuals being married to Christ. It is not talking about the church being married to Christ.

That we should bring forth fruit unto God: The fruit of a marriage is their offspring or children.

All of our righteousness in the flesh are as filthy rags in God's eyes, they are the fruit that is unto death, but now that we are saved are good deeds are fruits unto God that are well pleasing in his sight.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 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.

When we were in the flesh: We were literally held prisoners by our flesh before we died with Christ.

But now we are delivered from the law: The holy Spirit now indwells us, and we serve our new husband (Christ) out of love and not out of law.

When Paul speaks of being "in the flesh" in the past tense he is referring to the time before we were saved.

At our salvation, our flesh is cut away by the holy Spirit from our soul and spirit and we are now literally two separate people (the spirit man and the flesh man), both of which are at war with one another.

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. Exodus 20:17.

Since the law worked in our members to bring forth fruit unto death the natural question one would ask then is, "Is the law sin?" Of course not!

We don't blame a lawmaker when someone kills someone, we blame the killer. It is not the law that is at fault either because it is simply the standard of righteousness that is expected to be obeyed.

The problem many have with the law of God is that its standard of righteousness is impossible to maintain for anyone because it expects total obedience which only one man has ever been able to obtain and that was Christ.

That is what the law of God is supposed to do by convicting us of our sin and our need for God and his righteousness and thereby drawing us to our only hope of salvation.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. 9 For I was alive

without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

Sin, taking occasion: Sin did not all of a sudden revive at the giving of the law, but it did in a sense in the mind of the hearers of the law on that day.

Before the law Israel was ignorant of its precepts but upon hearing it the knowledge of sin was awakened in them, and it was an overwhelming sensation.

All manner of concupiscence: All types of sinful desires.

For without the law sin was dead: Before the law sin was not imputed unto man when there was no law. Romans 5:13.

When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died: When the law came.

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.

The commandment, which was ordained to life: Read what Jesus said concerning the law in Luke 10:25-28.

The law was given for man to realize that he was dying because he was a sinner and his sin had separated him from his Creator, and he needed a Saviour.

Sin's ultimate end is death, but the ultimate end of the law was to point people to the only one who can give life and that is Christ.

Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me: Sin, taking occasion by the law/commandment.

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.

The law was and is a good thing because it shows us why we are all going to die one day. It shows us our need for a Saviour. It shows us our need to be delivered from this sin cursed body we live in.

The law is good if its purpose is understood. It is also a standard that shows us when we disobey and obey God.

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 dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

The law is spiritual: From God.

I am carnal: Sinful flesh. Paul is not trying to make excuses for his flesh, he is simply teaching a biblical truth that takes place in the life of a believer when they get saved and that continues on throughout their Christian life.

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 dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

Our spirit is not the one committing sins, for it cannot sin. It is our flesh which has been cut away from our spirit.

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.

The law of God: Verse 25.

The law of my mind: Verse 25.

The law of sin: Verse 25.

Again, we see two men in one here. The spiritual man and the fleshly man, both co-existing in the same geographical space, but both at war with one another.

There is coming a day when the fleshly man which is in a state of corruption will die and put on incorruption as Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians fifteen and then the battle of the two men or natures will be over.

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.

The body of this death: Our sinful body which is depraved, and wants to satisfy its fleshly desires.

At salvation the flesh was cut away from the spirit, so that with the mind we can serve God, it is our flesh that is weak which wants to serve its master, which is sin. Christ has delivered believers from the body of this death.

The law of God: Righteousness, holiness. Romans 6:19.

The law of sin: Unrighteousness. Romans 6:23.

Chapter Eight

In Christ Jesus

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 hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

No condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus: You were placed into Christ's body the moment you believed the gospel.

1st Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Once a person is in Christ Jesus he can never be condemned. John 5:24.

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus: We have a new nature now as believers.

The law of sin and death: The soul that sinneth it shall die. Christ does not tell us that we are free from ever sinning again, or from death.

Our flesh must pay the penalty of sin, which is death, but if you are saved, your soul and spirit has already been cut free from your body.

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.

It was weak through the flesh: The law was weak because of the human element involved, our flesh.

God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh: Christ came in the "likeness" of sinful flesh, not in sinful flesh, as each one of us did at our birth.

This speaks of the virgin birth. Isaiah 7:14 & Matthew 1:23. The necessity of the virgin birth was so that God's Son could come without sinful flesh.

When God originally created Adam, he made him "after his own likeness" in Genesis 1:26, but Adam sinned and corrupted that likeness.

Adam's sons were not born in the likeness of God as their father was created, instead, they were born in sin after the likeness of their father Adam.

When Christ came, he was not in the likeness of you and I, as fallen sons of Adam, but he came in the likeness of Adam prior to his fall (without sin).

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 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.

They that are after the flesh: This is speaking of lost people. The lost/carnal mind thinks about fulfilling the desires of his flesh because he is still attached to his flesh.

They that are after the Spirit: This is speaking of saved people. The believer has been detached/circumcised from the power of his flesh by the Spirit the moment he trusts Christ.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

The body is dead: A lost person can't please God because he is not in Christ, but he is still in sinful Adam. Romans 5:10-12.

The Spirit is life because of righteousness: This is speaking of the righteousness of Christ. Romans 5:10-12.

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 your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Quicken your mortal bodies: To make alive. Psalm 71:20.

The believer has the sure hope that God shall make his dead body alive by the power of the Spirit, which is the earnest of our inheritance (the down payment) at the moment we believed the gospel. Ephesians 1:13-14.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

We are debtors: Because the Spirit quickens our mortal bodies, we are debtors to the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body. We are to tell the flesh no.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The sons of God: The scripture calls us the sons of God because we by faith believed in the Son of God, and we were placed in Christ at that moment.

This is not referring to us being sons of God by creation like the angels are referred to as. Genesis 6 & Job 2.

The spirit of bondage again to fear: This is a reference to the law of Moses, with its system of rules and regulations, tutors, and governors to lead. Israel was to be servants under that law.

The spirit of adoption: We received the Spirit of adoption the moment we were saved, and we are not seen as children needing to be led around by governors and tutors, but as fully mature sons and daughters of God.

This is the first time that the word adoption is used in scriptures, and it does not mean what the modern definition of the word means.

Adoption in scripture has to do with a child at a set time that is appointed of the father is adopted into the family with full rights and privileges of being a son.

Whereby we cry, Abba, Father: By the Spirit of adoption, we cry Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth 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 with him, that we may be also glorified together.

The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we (believers) are the children of God.

Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: As children of God, we are heirs of God, and at the moment we trusted Christ we were received by God as his children, and then we were placed into his Son as heirs with him.

If so be that we suffer with him: There are different levels of suffering that a person may go through as a believer simply because of where we were born.

That we may be glorified also together: If you don't suffer with him, he will still be glorified for his suffering while you stand back and watch.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

The sufferings of this present time: Paul, and the initial recipients of this epistles suffered greatly for their faith.

The glory which shall be revealed in us: All we have suffered in this life is not even worth mentioning when compared to the glory we shall receive when the sons of God will one day be manifested at the onset of Christ's kingdom.

The earnest expectation of the creature: The down payment we (the creature) received was the Holy Spirit the moment we got saved.

The Holy Spirit seals us in the body of Christ and he will keep us secure until the rapture of the body of Christ.

The manifestation of the sons of God: We will be fully manifest as the sons of God in a twinkling of an eye.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The bondage of corruption: We were made subject to vanity and one day we will lose these vile decaying bodies and put on a new one that will be recognized by all believers of all times just like when the disciples recognized Moses and Elijah at the mount of transfiguration.

The glorious liberty of the children of God: The freedom we will have for death, and sin in our new resurrected immortal bodies.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits 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 seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together: Because of Adam's fall, not only was all of humanity cursed, but all of creation as well, and one day soon the curse will be lifted from both, but until that day, we both are groaning and travailing in pain together.

The firstfruits of the Spirit: We were sealed with the holy Spirit the moment we believed the gospel and are eternally secure in our salvation.

The adoption: The redemption of the body at the rapture.

Hope: We have the hope which the non-believer does not that we are saved and already possess everything that God has for us, and we are just waiting to receive it.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered: All believers have the Spirit indwelling us.

According to the will of God: The holy Spirit helps us when we don't know how or what to pray for or what to do. He is our intercessor.

The Spirit intercedes in our behalf to God and then He is used by God to minister back to us His response according to His will for us.

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, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Them who are called according to his purpose: They are previously described as them that love God, not as someone chosen to be saved.

Whom he did foreknow: This speaks of the mystery program regarding the church in the age of grace. Ephesians 3:8-9.

God had a plan before the world began to have a special organism called the body of Christ that would be conformed to the image of his Son.

Predestinate: Predetermine. This word is dealt with in the next verse.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Whom he did predestinate: We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, and called to be sons.

Before time began God foreknew that Gentiles would be saved in this dispensation of grace and he predestinated those who would be saved to be conformed to the image of his Son. We are not predestined to be saved.

Them he also called: Those who he predestined to be conformed to his image.

Them he also justified: Those who were called, and predestinated. Justification is to be declared righteous by God.

Them he also glorified: Those who were justified, called, and predestined. Glorification is what every saved person receives one day.

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?

How shall he not with him also freely give us all things: Since God spared his own Son for us, He will also freely give us all things.

Our blessings are all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Ephesians 1:3. It is Israel that is promised earthly blessings.

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Lay any thing to the charge: Level and accusation of guilt.

God's elect: Those God has elected to do his will. Since God has justified us there is no charge that can be leveled against us by anyone that can carry any weight with God.

No one can condemn someone that God has declared righteous.

There are many things that are called "elect" in scripture that are in different ages under different programs, so to lump them all together will cause a perverse doctrinal view of election as many already have.

There are elect today in the body of Christ which Paul speaks about in verse thirty-three and there are also elect in the old testament under the law that are different.

The elect were the believing remnant up until the body of Christ was formed after the resurrection. Example: The Messiah is called "mine elect" in Isaiah as well as Israel herself is called "my elect" in the same book.

The believing remnant of Israel during the tribulation period is also call "the elect" in Matthew and Revelations, but they are all different from the elect during the church age.

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 thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Psalm 44:22.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

We are more than conquerors through Christ when all of lives trials come our way because we shall receive a far greater reward than we can imagine for the light trials that have come our way in this life.

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.

Death: Death can't separate us from the love of God for it is then that we truly begin to live in his presence. This proves that soul sleep is unbiblical.

Life: Life can't separate either, for he is the way the truth and the life.

Angels: Satan and his minions cannot separate us from the love of God.

Principalities, nor powers: Satan's minions represented here (fallen angels).

Things present, nor things to come: The certain trials of today or tomorrow. The things listed above are all powerful things, but they are only created things, and no match for the Creator.

Chapter Nine

My kinsmen according to the flesh

Chapters nine through eleven are a parenthetical portion about God's dealings with the nation of Israel in their past, present, and future.

We are introduced to a new word in these three chapters. The word is "election." It is used once in this ninth chapter, and three times in chapter eleven. It is used only two other times.

Isaiah 45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

Its root is the word "elect" which is mentioned in chapter eight. Jacob is called God's servant, and Israel is called God's elect in Isaiah 45:4. The Son of God is also called God's elect in Isaiah 42:1.

The doctrine of election as you will see by a simple study of the word in scripture is connected with the word service, and not salvation.

Election does not mean service, nor does elect mean servant. Christ is God's elect, and we as believers are called elect today because we are "in Christ" God's elect.

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost: This is evident in the book of Acts where we read about Paul wanting to go back to Jerusalem to reach his kinsman there with the gospel regardless of the danger.

The Holy Ghost agreed with Paul's witness concerning his countrymen. 1st Thessalonians 1:5, Hebrews 9:8 & 10:15.

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:

I could wish myself accursed from Christ: Paul knew better than any that there was no way he could take Israel's place of punishment by wishing himself accursed.

To do so would make God unjust in allowing a sinner to die for other sinners. Christ is the only one that can die for another person and make the payment for their sins. Deuteronomy 21:23 & Joshua 6:17-7:15.

This is similar to Moses wanting God to blot himself out of his book instead of the children of Israel for their sin against God. Exodus 32:31-33.

My brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Fellow Israelites. Verse four below.

4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

The adoption: This is a reference to God's adopting Abraham's descendants for the specific task of being the nation that he would use to reclaim the earth with.

The glory: This refers to the glory that God receives by the world when the few (believing Israel) manifests forth his glory by obedience to him.

The covenants: These are the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and the New Covenant, that were all made with the nation of Israel.

The giving of the law: At Mount Sinai. Exodus 19-20.

The service of God: This is a reference to the duty and calling to service that was given to Israel by God. It is what they as a nation were called and elected to do.

The promises: Promises made to the children of Israel, not the body of Christ. Romans 15:8, Galatians 3:16-21, Hebrews 6:12, 7:6, 8:6, 11:13, 17, 33 & 2nd Peter 1:4.

5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Romans 15:8.

Whose are the fathers: Israel belongs to God.

Whom as concerning the flesh Christ came: Concerning mankind, Christ came to his own (Israel) and his own received him not. John 14:6.

Who is over all: Jesus Christ is over Jew and Gentile alike.

6 Not as though the word of God hath 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. Genesis 21:12.

For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Jacob name was changed to Israel. Genesis 32:28. His name meant supplanter. He was a deceiver.

His new name Israel represents his new life after wrestling with God as he was returning back to the land of Israel.

Not all of Jacob's descendants are Israel. Jacob had twelve sons, but God here is referring to the believing remnant of Israel as the true Israel in his eyes. The Israel of God. Galatians 6:16.

Just because someone was circumcised on the eighth day into a Jewish home does not make them an Israelite in God's eyes.

Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: Since Abraham had Ishmael, and Isaac, Ishmael's lineage was not the promised seed.

Not even all of Isaac's seed could be called Israel because Isaac had two sons as well. Esau and Jacob (Israel).

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.

The children of the flesh: Ishmael and his seed were children of the flesh, because Abraham and Sarah didn't trust God to give them the seed, but thought he needed their help by giving Sarah's handmaid to Abraham to produce an heir.

Esau was a child of the flesh only because he was not the one chosen to be the father of the nation of Israel. Only Jacob could be.

The children of promise: Esau the elder would serve Jacob the younger because God had ordained that to happen. The promise had to go to Jacob even though he was a rascal because God elected it to be so.

The word of promise: *Genesis 18:10.*

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 calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. *Genesis 25:23 and Malachi 1:2-3.*

Three Patriarchs are mentioned here in identifying the children of God, Israel, Isaac, and Abraham.

Rebecca and Sara are also mentioned to help further narrow down exactly who it is that God is referring to here. Circumcision is a matter of the heart.

Trusting in the Messiah of Israel makes the Jew both physically and spiritually of Israel. Obviously.

It was to Abraham and Sarah that the promise was given of a son. He is also the Father of many others through the flesh or through his carnal relationship with Hagar which bore Ishmael.

Rebecca is mentioned because she bore two sons to Isaac, and God chose only one to be the one through whom the Messiah would come and that was Jacob.

The purpose of God according to election might stand: Esau was elected to one day serve his younger brother, but nowhere in the story do we ever see Esau serving Jacob, they do however fight a lot.

Esau will indeed serve Jacob when all nations serve the Messiah during the kingdom. Election has to do with what elect are called to do, not about being elected for salvation.

Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated: The verse Paul is quoting is written well over a thousand years after Esau had already rejected God. Malachi 1:2-3.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. *Exodus 33:19.*

It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth: It is not of him that is born first that God has to choose, but God can choose to bless the younger instead on an occasion.

No other elder sons were having this rule broken in their families. It was practiced by all the surrounding nations. A younger daughter was not supposed to be given in marriage before the elder. Jacob knew about this all too well.

The exception proves the rule. God blessing Jacob instead of Esau proves the right of the first born. If it happened all the time, then it wouldn't be a rule.

Mercy is a positive act of God and yet people blame God if he shows mercy to one, they think he should show mercy to all. Why? God can show mercy to whomever he pleases.

Can you do whatever you will with what is yours? Does a stranger have the right to expect you to give to him the same gift that you gave to your child? No! Of course not.

God doesn't have to show mercy on sinners, but he does on those today who put their trust in his Son for their salvation.

That is the basis today for him showing mercy. We don't deserve it, just like those who don't accept his Son, but he bestows mercy on us in spite of us on his Son's behalf.

God had a system of blessing the firstborn, and Esau sold his birth rite for some pottage, and he later despised his birth right, but Jacob coveted it. God showed mercy to the one who wanted what God loved.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. *Exodus 9:16.*

It does not say here that God "created" Pharaoh to be damned, but that "he raised him up" so his power should be showed in him throughout all the earth.

God used Pharaoh, and his nation to bring glory unto himself, and to have his name declared throughout all the earth.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Once again salvation is not the issue here, but service is. Some have erroneously devised a doctrine of irresistible grace out of this passage and a few others, but that is simply not the case.

God knew that Pharaoh would resist him before he was ever born, and God still allowed him to be born. He could allow only people to be born that would eventually get saved, but he allows all the same opportunity to choose him or not.

Paul introduces the picture of the potter (God), and the lump of clay. From the same lump of clay (dirt/earth etc.), God makes two vessels, one unto honour and another to dishonour. These vessels are mentioned in Jeremiah 18:1-6.

To make one vessel unto honour: and another vessel unto dishonour: God can take a marred vessel of clay (the house of Israel in unbelief) and make a new vessel out of it unto his glory.

Israel will be a vessel unto glory in the kingdom one day, but today for the most part, she is still a vessel unto dishonour.

22 What if God, willing to shew 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,

To shew his wrath: On the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.

To make his power known: To make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy. God wants the world to know him.

The vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: The unbeliever who rejected God's witness to them.

The vessels of mercy: The believers who accepted God's witness to them. God was longsuffering, and he used Paul first as a pattern of God's long suffering to all who should believe on Jesus Christ after him, to life everlasting.

Paul was a vessel of wrath, but God was longsuffering, not pouring out his wrath on him and his nation since then. Paul got saved and became the first vessel of mercy in this dispensation. We are also vessels of mercy. 1st Timothy 1:15-16.

A Jew can become a vessel of mercy today because of the cross. God is not pouring out his wrath today in the dispensation of grace, but once this dispensation is ended the wrath of God will be poured out on the vessels of wrath.

That is why it is called the time of Jacob's trouble. Israel has not yet fulfilled all seventy weeks of punishment, wrath that God has promised that he would pour out.

They have endured sixty-nine weeks of it, but not the last week, which will occur in the tribulation period. God in eternity past had a secret, or mystery that he kept hidden from before the foundation of the world until after the cross.

Which he had afore prepared unto glory: He would bestow his mercy upon the Gentiles and make them vessels of glory in heavenly places, this gracious act shows the riches of his glory to all for all eternity.

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? 25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

Hosea 2:23.

Even us: In the previous 23 verses God talks about the vessels of mercy and of wrath from previous dispensations, and here he talks about us today in the dispensation of grace.

Paul is the instrument today through which God showed the world his longsuffering in saving the chief of sinners, and making him his apostle of the Gentiles. What grace!

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.

Hosea 1:10.

Ye are not my people: This is speaking of Israel, not the body of Christ! The house of Israel was called Loammi (not my people) in Osee (Hosea) 1:9 & 10, and the same nation will one day again be called the children of the living God.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: *Isaiah 10:22.*

28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. *Isaiah 28:21.*

A short work: What is the work that the Lord will make upon the earth that only a remnant of Israel will be saved out of?

The seventieth week of Daniel, the time of Jacob's trouble. What does Matthew 24:22 and Mark 13:20 teach us about the length of the days of Jacob's trouble?

That God would shorten those days for the elect's (Israel's) sake, or they wouldn't survive those days and enter into their kingdom.

The place where it was said, ye are not my people, is a reference to Israel in the valley of Jezreel, also known as the valley of Armageddon.

The quote is from Hosea chapter one where God literally divorces Israel from himself, because of their spiritual adultery. Paul alludes to the time of Jacob's trouble as only a remnant of Israel enduring unto its end.

That time is shortened by God in righteousness so as to preserve the few remaining Jews left to enter into the kingdom along with the righteous Jews from the old testament days.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. *Isaiah 1:9.*

The Lord of Sabaoth: The LORD of hosts. *Isaiah 1:9.*

As Sodoma: Sodom was utterly destroyed. Genesis 19:24. Only God could have left Israel a seed (remnant), so they would not become destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah were.

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, hath 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 stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. *Isaiah 8:14-15.*

The righteousness which is of faith: Israel went about things all wrong, and many believers are following in their footsteps today by trying to be declared righteous by their works.

The law of righteousness: The law of Moses. Israel as a nation has been temporarily set aside during this age and is a part of God's earthly plan to rule and reign on the earth during the kingdom.

Chapter Ten

Israel's salvation

1 Brethren, 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. *Acts 21:20.*

Paul was referring to his own personal desire for reaching as many Jews of his day and time as he possibly could.

Paul knew that Israel had been set aside (blinded) as a nation, and only a remnant would be saved.

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. *Philippians 3:9.*

God's righteousness: Deuteronomy 9:5, Psalm 24:7, 51:14, 71:16, Isaiah 41:10 (Jesus Christ is the right hand of God's righteousness), Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:5, 21-22, 2nd Corinthians 5:21 & 2nd Peter 1:1.

Their own righteousness: As protectors of the very oracles of God Israel was without excuse, because they failed to see in them the absolute holiness of God, and the utter sinfulness of mankind.

It was given to them to show them their need for God to sanctify them, but they sought to sanctify themselves by their legalistic observance to man's interpretation of the law.

The righteousness of God: Jesus is the righteousness of God spoken about that Israel would not submit to.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. *Matthew 5:17 & John 8:24.*

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness: Christ is the fulfillment of the law. Paul does not say that the law is the end for righteousness to everyone that obeys it. Belief in Christ is what makes one clean from their sins.

The law was Israel's schoolmaster to point her to the Messiah, and once she had found her Messiah she no longer needed to be under her old schoolmaster. Galatians 3:24-25.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. *Leviticus 18:5.*

The righteousness which is of the law: A man of faith who lived under the law prior to the cross, received the righteousness of the law by faith as he obeyed the commandments God had given to him.

Prior to the law people received the righteousness of faith under the Abrahamic covenant apart from the works of the law.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine 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.) *Deuteronomy 30:11-13.*

The righteousness which is of faith: Israel sought God's righteousness by the keeping of the law, but they rejected the Christ whom the law spoke of.

Israel needed to recognize the works that Jesus did as a fulfillment of the law, but they did not.

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; *Deuteronomy 30:14.*

The word of faith, which we preach: Israel had heard the truth from Moses in the past, but they also needed to hear Christ when he came to them, and when the apostles preached to them. Verse 9.

When Paul says the word of faith, which we preach, he is not saying he preached the law of Moses. Deuteronomy 30.

He is also not saying that he preached the gospel of the kingdom that the twelve apostles all preached to Israel.

He is saying that just as both of those two preceding messages were supposed to be accompanied by faith, so was Paul's message to be believed by faith alone. Ephesians 2:8-9.

There was not a list of works that would accompany their belief as in the past.

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Notice the two words "mouth" and "heart" that are used here. They are coming from the previous verse in Deuteronomy 30:14 that was spoken to Israel.

The word of faith is confession of Jesus as Israel's Lord, coupled with a belief in their heart that God has raised him from the dead. Notice the word Paul uses here is "confess" and not profess.

Israel had to confess with their mouth, and believe in their heart that God had raised Christ from the dead to be saved.

Some make salvation dependent upon one's public "profession" of faith, which is a work that can never save anyone today.

A lot of confusion surrounds ones making a public profession of one's faith with their mouth, because in the same portion of scripture it also says that they must believe with their heart.

Is the heart that pumps blood capable of believing anything, or is that simply symbolic of the mind believing?

The truth is that a person is saved today by faith alone, without the works of the law, simply by believing in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

With the heart man believeth unto righteousness: Genesis 15:6, Deuteronomy 30:14, Proverbs 23:7, Mark 11:23, Luke 24:25, John 14:1 & Acts 8:7.

With the mouth confession is made unto salvation: The word salvation has two meanings.

It can mean a physical deliverance from someone, or something, that is temporal in nature (like being saved from getting hurt), or it can mean a spiritual deliverance from the wages of sin for all eternity.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. *Isaiah 28:16 & 49:23.*

Paul mentions two things, believing with the heart unto righteousness, and confession with the mouth unto salvation, and he uses an old testament verse here in verse eleven to prove what he said in verse ten.

The "he that believeth" from Isaiah 28:16 was understood by Israel to be other Jews who would one day believe in their Messiah in Christ's day and those in the tribulation period while his kingdom was being preached as "at hand".

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. Joel 3:22.

Here Paul says that there is (present tense: at the time Paul was writing) no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord overall, is rich unto all that "call upon him".

The words "call upon the Lord" in verse thirteen go hand in hand with the second part of verse ten, which says that "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

There is a lot of disagreement as to the parenthetical chapters of Romans 9-11 as to what in these three chapters can be applied to the body of Christ, because the subject of these three chapters are clearly Israel.

Romans 14:5 Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

See 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 for the easiest description of what a person needs to believe today in order to 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, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Isaiah 52:7.

It is important to keep the context of these three parenthetical chapters to get the whole meaning of what Paul is trying to teach us here.

Remember that chapters nine through eleven are dealing with the nation of Israel, and what God is doing with them in Paul's day, as compared to how he has dealt with them in the past.

Some things have remained the same while others have changed dramatically, for instance today there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, but that was not always the case.

God had given the Jew many advantages but with their rejection of Christ those advantages have now turned into disadvantages because they will be used as a witness against them for rejecting God's Son. Notice what Isaiah says:

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? Isaiah 53:1.

They have not all obeyed the gospel: The "they" is Israel that Esaias was speaking about.

Lord, who hath believed our report: Isaiah is asking the Lord, who in Israel believe God's word through the prophets and apostle's mouths.

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Faith cometh by hearing: Faith does not come by confessing with your mouth.

Paul quotes Isaiah fifty-three and begins by saying that Israel would not believe her prophets words, which is evidenced by their crucifying the Messiah.

Israel was without excuse because they had every advantage. They had the word of God, and it was with them wherever they went, but they could not recognize their own Messiah because of the sin of pride.

Verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world: Christ originally commanded his 12 apostles not to go the Gentiles, nor into any city of the Samaritan before his resurrection.

After his resurrection however (and after Pentecost), those Jews who came to the feast from all over (Act 2:1-11) and heard the gospel of the kingdom took it back to their Jewish communities scattered amongst the Gentiles throughout the world.

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. Deuteronomy 32:21.

The word provoke is used 42 times and most of those times it is speaking of Israel provoking God to anger.

Here God says he is going to provoke Israel to jealousy. Who is the foolish nation that Paul reminds Israel about from the writing of Moses?

Many have guessed that it is the church, but the church is not a nation. Israel is the nation, but which Israel?

A foolish nation: The foolish nation is the little flock of believers in the Jesus, including the twelve apostles.

The believing remnant in Israel were the Israel of God, not the unbelieving Jewish majority, God often called his sheep. The word remnant is used 70 times in relationship to Israel in the bible. Galatians 6:16.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

The apostles shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, as a nation within a nation. Matthew 19:28.

20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

Isaiah 65:1 I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

The Messiah was literally saying to Israel, "Behold me, behold me" while he ministered to Israel for three years and they would not behold him.

Esaias is very bold: He was bold in saying that the nation of Israel was not really seeking after God, a remnant however was.

I was found of them that sought me not: This is speaking of the little flock of Israel beginning with the twelve apostles and all of the other Jewish people that believed on Jesus when he came unto his own.

They were not looking for him, but he found them not in the rabbinical schools of Jerusalem that were elevating man's

traditions above the word of God, but these were found while fishing or sitting at the receipt of customs.

Whenever you deviate from the word as Israel's religious leaders did you can search all you want for the Messiah, but you will not be able to find him because your tradition will block your view.

In the four gospels Jesus speaks of the little flock as being a foolish nation that was no nation. God takes a remnant out of Israel that is the believing remnant and makes a new nation out of a nation.

Luke 12:32 *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. *Isaiah 65:2.*

All day long I have stretched forth my hands: To oppose with your hands in battle, to pray or plead with your hands. God was doing the later.

Chapter Eleven

Hath God cast away his people?

The preceding two chapters explain why God gave up Israel temporarily, while this chapter explains the election of a remnant of Israel that God was still saving during Paul's early ministry.

It is important to remember that although God was giving up Israel as he had already done to the Gentiles (Romans 1), he was not replacing Israel with the church.

That is called replacement theology, and that is a doctrine of devils straight from Satan himself.

1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Hath God cast away his people: To thrust forth, to thrust away, to put it from you, to put away. Acts 7:27, 39, 13:46 & 1st Timothy 1:19.

God did not cast away all of Israel, only those who didn't believe. A remnant believed. Remember only a remnant of 2 people entered into the promise land (Caleb and Joshua) and the rest never did because of unbelief.

This chapter was written in the Acts 20 time period which proves that Israel fell many years before Acts 28, and were then cast away. Israel fell in Acts 7 with the stoning of Stephen.

Which means the body of Christ had to of started before Acts 20. The body of Christ started with the salvation of Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9, and then the first Gentile was saved in Acts 13. The body of Christ is Jews and Gentiles in one body.

I also am an Israelite: A descendant of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Israel/Jacob was the father of 12 sons who became known as the twelve tribes of Israel. Genesis 32:28.

Paul says here that he was not cast away, so remember that when determining who the remnant according to the election of grace is.

The tribe of Benjamin: The youngest son of Jacob, and the smallest tribe. The tribe that King Saul came from. Genesis 35:18.

2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets,

and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. 4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. *1st Kings 19:10-18.*

Israel as a whole was not cast away after the crucifixion, for Paul himself was an Israelite. Even in Elijah's day there was a remnant who believed.

Paul ministered at a very unique time in history when God was moving from Israel's prophecy program to the church, which is Christ's body, and its mystery program.

His people which he foreknew: His people is speaking about the children of Israel. The "he" here is God. The word "foreknew" means to know beforehand. Acts 26:5, Romans 8:29 & 2nd Peter 3:17.

5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

At this present time: When Paul was writing this epistle.

A remnant according to the election of grace: There was during Paul's day, a remnant of Jews saved according to the election of grace.

They were those that Paul always went after first whenever he went somewhere preaching the gospel, to the Jew first, and then to the Gentiles.

Paul is not saying that there is a remnant of seven thousand Jews saved in every generation. Paul is our pattern today for believing by faith, and receiving salvation by God's grace.

Paul was the least deserving man on the planet to be saved, and yet God saved the "chief of sinners," who was God's number one enemy on the earth at that time. 1st Timothy 1:15 & 16.

By the end of the Acts period Paul no longer went to the Jew first, instead he received new revelations from God which are found in his prison epistles.

Today we are to consider the Jews just like we consider Gentiles, as our equals, with no preferential treatment for either of us. Romans 9:11, 11:7, 28, 1st Thessalonians 1:14 & 1st Peter 1:10. The word remnant means that which remains. Isaiah 11:11.

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.

Then is it no more of works: This is not a question that Paul is asking, but rather a statement is being made about salvation in times past as compared to now.

The "it" spoken about is salvation, and Paul says it is no more of works. If salvation today is no more of works, what does that imply in times past (prior to the dispensation of grace)? Ephesians 2:8-9.

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. 8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. *Isaiah 29:10.*

That which he seeketh for: Israel was seeking for righteousness.

The election: This is the remnant according to the election of grace mentioned in the preceding verses.

It: The “it” that Paul refers to, is the righteousness of faith mentioned above.

The remnant of believing Israel received it, (the righteousness of faith) because they were not trusting in their own works, but in the work of Jesus dying for their sins.

The rest were blinded: The rest of Israel were blinded spiritually. It did not say they were blind.

If Israel were blind, they would have an excuse, but because they were able to see, and they refused to see what was right in front of them.

God blinded them, because they heard the words of their prophets and rejected them, he caused them not to be able to hear (to understand). Psalm 69:22-23.

9 And David saith, 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 alway. Psalm 69:22-23.

Their table: This is a similitude for the place Israel was to go for spiritual refreshment. Unfortunately, they went to tradition, instead of to the word of God, and it cost them greatly.

That burden was too heavy for Israel to carry back then, but she continues to bow down her back under the impossible load of the law even today.

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.

Have they stumbled: Israel stumbled and fell as the nation of favor, and their kingdom was postponed. Psalm 27:2 & Romans 9:32.

Their fall: Israel’s fall as the channel of blessing to the Gentile nations. Isaiah 60:3. They have not fallen forever.

They will get back up as a nation one day. For the time being however they are placed on a shelf until the fullness of the Gentiles become in.

To provoke them to jealousy: Gentiles being saved would provoke Jews to be jealous for the salvation that God was sending to the Gentiles.

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?

The fall of them: Israel.

The riches of the world: The Gentile nations receiving salvation.

The diminishing of them: Israel’s decline from their status as the channel of salvation to the Gentile nations. John 4:22.

Their fulness: Israel will reach their full potential as a nation in the future millennial kingdom when Christ sits on his throne, and they rule and reign with him.

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

I speak to you Gentiles: Paul is speaking to Gentiles. Gentiles are non-Jews. Keep that in mind as you study the rest of this chapter. Some have failed to do so, and they have divided the body of Christ unnecessarily.

The apostle of the Gentiles: There were twelve apostles to the nation of Israel, but God has only one apostle that is distinguished as “the” apostle of the Gentiles.

I magnify mine office: God gave Paul the office, and he was to magnify it to the world for them to follow. 1st Timothy 1:15-16.

Paul was not one of the twelve, nor the thirteenth apostle, their ministry was to the nation of Israel, also known as the circumcision.

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation 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?

Provoke to emulation: Paul wanted to provoke his fellow Jews to receive Christ as their Saviour.

The casting away of them: The them is Israel who were cast away by God for their unbelief. Again this proves the body of Christ began sometime prior to this time (Acts 20) when Romans was written. It was immediately after the casting away of Israel (Acts 9).

The reconciling of the world: The bringing of salvation straight to the Gentiles apart from the law given to Israel. 2nd Corinthians 5:19-20.

What shall the receiving of them be: The nation, apart from the remnant were cast away, so the whole world could be reconciled to God, and since that is the case now, what will it be like when they are received back by God at the onset of the kingdom? Glorious!

Life from the dead: This is what Paul says will happen for believing Israel from all generations. Israel will be born again when they are resurrected and enter into their kingdom.

Firstfruit, lump, root, and branches

16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

For if the firstfruit be holy: The word “for” at the beginning of this verse connects this section to the previous.

This is a reference to a group of believers that precedes an even bigger group of believers. The firstfruit was not the whole harvest, but a first sampling of the whole crop.

The lump is also holy: The lump in scripture is a reference to the whole bunch. For example, Isaiah says, "Take a lump of figs." Isaiah 38:21.

It is similar to a cluster of grapes. Not all of Israel are saved, or will be saved, but all believing Jews make up a lump, or a cluster.

If the root be holy, so are the branches: This is either Paul reemphasizing his previous point with another similitude, or he is going all the way back to Abraham as the initial root, and his believing offspring as the natural branches.

The branches represent Jews in a tree that are meant to produce good fruit. If Israel did not produce fruit the branches would be broken off for a time for new branches to be grafted in.

A wild olive tree

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

If some of the branches be broken off: The olive tree "represents" Israel, and the branches that have been broken off are unbelieving Israel.

The wild olive tree represents the body of Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles in one body where there is no difference.

And thou, being a wild olive tree: Notice that God is speaking directly to the wild olive tree, which tells us that they coexisted at the same time.

Notice that both trees are "olive trees", one identified so far just as an olive tree, Israel, and one as a wild olive tree. Israel is depicted as four different types of trees beginning in Judges 9:8 with the olive tree (Fig, Vine, & Bramble)

What is the difference? Didn't the Jewish nation once all come from a Gentile by the name of Abram? What happened to that wild olive tree named Abram, he became something he wasn't. A good olive tree by his faith.

He received circumcision and became the father of the no longer wild olive tree, but a tree in a covenant relationship with its Creator. That tree would later get the law given to them and it would help prune that tree into a good tree.

Grafted in: The words are used together only four times, and all are found in this chapter. Romans 11:19, 23 & 24.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith.

Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in: The "thou" here is the body of Christ, made up of Jews and Gentiles in one body.

Well: God agrees that the natural branches were broken off so that the wild branches could be grafted in.

Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith: While thou is singular, it can represent a single group, like the body of Christ.

Then God's word tells us why the natural branches of the olive tree (Israel) were broken off. Unbelief, which is the opposite of faith.

They did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, so they were broken off after they were given ample opportunities to hear the truth and see the signs that accompanied the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom.

Be not highminded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

The natural branches: Unbelieving Israel.

Be not highminded, but fear: We in the body of Christ have no reason to fear that God will also not spare us because we are eternally secure under grace.

These believers were told to take heed of what happened to Israel unless they make the same mistake and suffer the same consequence.

Take heed lest he also spare not thee: This is speaking of the Gentiles as a whole as he did when he previously gave them up and saved Abram. Romans 1:24, 26 & 28.

The time for Gentiles to be saved apart from Israel is today, before the rapture occurs. God will start dealing with the world through Israel again once we are taken out of here.

Many individuals have feared these verses, and have used them and taught that one might lose their salvation if God so chose not to spare them.

These verses are not speaking about individuals, but the Gentiles as a whole being compared to the Jewish nation as a whole.

Israel was cast away in Acts seven, and the dispensation of grace will end at the rapture, and we should take heed of that and get busy for the Lord building up the body of Christ.

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.

Them which fell: The unbelieving Jews as a nation have received the severity of God, but the Gentiles have received the goodness of God in this dispensation because of their faith in Jesus.

Thee: The Gentiles who believe in Christ today, receive the goodness that comes from God alone.

An individual Gentile who believes the gospel, and is saved, and receives the goodness of God is eternally save (secured) and can never lose their salvation.

If thou continue in his goodness: If the Gentiles as a whole make the same mistake that the nation of Israel did as a whole, then the Gentiles like Israel was, will be cut off.

This passage is not talking about a saved individual losing their salvation, but about the Gentiles as a whole, just like it is talking about Israel as a whole.

If would be very fair to say that only a remnant of Gentiles believe the gospel today. We are quickly becoming just like Israel was when they were cut off.

It was not a hard thing for God to graff wild olive branches in by faith, to the natural olive tree, and it will be even easier to graff back in the natural branches (Israel) when they return by faith.

This will happen on a large scale when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, and the rapture occurs.

Israel's prophecy program will kick back in, and the Jews will begin to believe the preaching of the 144,000 and the two witnesses and those that do believe in their Jewish Messiah will be grafted back in again.

A good olive tree

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert 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?

The olive tree which is wild by nature: This statement helps us understand this whole chapter, but it is almost always overlooked or ignored because it doesn't say what some want it to say. The olive tree is wild by nature, like Gentiles.

A good olive tree: A tree (Israel) that has been pruned by its owner (God), by his word. Read all of Psalm 52:1-9.

Psalm 52:7 Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness. 8 But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

David bare good fruit for God because of his faith, while Doeg and Saul bared corrupt fruit because of their lack thereof.

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye 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 shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: Psalm 14:7 & Isaiah 59:20.

Ye should not be ignorant of this mystery: One of the mysteries revealed to Paul that we in the body of Christ (brethren) are to be stewards of.

1st Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Paul warns his readers that they shouldn't be ignorant of God's dealings with Israel because they will become wise in their own conceits and will stumble doctrinally as a result of it.

Every major difference in most denominations is because they begin to spiritualize verses that belong to Israel. Israel's blindness is only temporary until the rapture occurs when the fullness of the Gentiles is come in.

Israel's blindness is not the mystery, that is found in the old testament, the mystery revealed through Paul is that we Gentiles are blessed with salvation today apart from Israel. Salvation today is not of the Jews as it was in time past.

All Israel shall be saved: Psalm 14:7 & Isaiah 59:20.

27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. Isaiah 27:9, 30:15 & Jeremiah 31:31-34.

At the end of the tribulation period all of Israel that remains will be both saved physically, and spiritually, and go into her kingdom.

The believing dead of Israel are then resurrected to eternal life, and the nation as a whole is born again in a day.

That is when the new testament is written on the hearts of the house of Israel, and the house of Judah (the two houses shall also become one nation).

28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

The gospel: Faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ alone. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

They are enemies: As in Paul's day the blinded nation of Israel is an enemy of the gospel, and of those that preach it.

While they may not be taking up arms against Christianity they are in total opposition to its teachings, because of their traditions.

As touching the election: Paul says that they are beloved for the fathers' sake, because of the election (believing Israel). They were not beloved for the fathers' sake because of the unbelieving majority of the nation.

The gifts and callings of God are without repentance: This is a fact stated concerning Israel and God's final purpose for them as a nation in Christ's future kingdom.

Verse 29 will help you understand the transitional situation that occurred during the Acts period, which is dealt with in our Acts study at the beginning of this volume which you are reading.

This verse is almost always used totally out of its context to get people not to quit something. It is talking about Israel and her future role in the kingdom. God will not change his mind concerning them today, nor in the future.

30 For as ye 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 hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Ye: Gentiles.

In times past: Before the dispensation of grace. Ephesians 2:3. The Gentiles were all concluded in unbelief at the tower of Babel, then God called out Abraham and saved him, and made him the father of the Jewish nation.

Obtained mercy: Obtained salvation.

Now: In the dispensation of grace. Ephesians 2:13.

Their unbelief: The unbelieving in the nation. After Christ's rejection by Israel, God then concluded both Jew and Gentile in unbelief so that he now by grace could have mercy on all of us that would believe.

Your mercy: We today need to be merciful unto the natural olive tree (Israel) so that we might bring some of them to faith.

God has concluded both Jew and Gentile in unbelief so that he may have mercy on us all if we will believe by faith. Romans 1-3.

There is no difference today between Jew and Gentile today, for all must come to him by faith alone, apart from any works of the law.

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! 1st Kings 10:23, 2nd Chronicles 1:11-12, 9:22, Psalm 36:6, 104:24 & Job 11:7.

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Isaiah 40:13, & Jeremiah 23:18.

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? Job 35:7.

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen. Colossians 1:16.

God in his infinite wisdom devised a program for the redemption of the earth with the nation of Israel, and the heavens with the body of Christ (the church), and both of these programs are centered in Jesus Christ.

Chapter Twelve

The Practical Part

We now come to the practical part of the book of Romans which fits perfectly with chapters one through eight where the apostle Paul so beautifully delineated many of the doctrinal truths regarding salvation.

God saw fit to place the practical part of this book after the parenthetical section regarding God's dealings with the nation of Israel during this age of grace.

Here believers learn what we are to do now that we have this understanding of the change taking place with God, the nation of Israel, and the body of Christ.

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

I beseech you: Paul is begging his readers to follow his instructions.

By the mercies of God: *Romans 11:30-32.*

Present your bodies a living sacrifice: God doesn't need dead sacrifices that can't be used to reach others. Give him your best.

Holy: This speaks about the condition of our sacrifices, they ought to be holy.

Your reasonable service: That which is expected of every believer.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This world: The world's system, of which Satan is the ruler. Ephesians 2:2. This verse means that you shouldn't allow the trends of the world to dictate what you do, where you go, how you speak, and what you wear.

The renewing of your mind: Our minds are of this world because we are sinners, but we renew our minds daily with prayer, scripture study, and fellowship with other believers.

That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God: God has a perfect plan for the body of Christ today to fulfill his will.

We are to renew our minds concerning that plan that had been kept secret from before the world began, but now it has been made manifest. Romans 16:25.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

The grace given unto me: Paul was first given grace in order to be saved, and then to be the apostle unto us, to educate us in the body of Christ concerning his plan for his body.

Paul here warns believers of the snare of pride concerning their Christian walk. We are not to think our gift or office is more important than someone else in the body of Christ.

The measure of faith: You don't need the amount of faith Paul needed to be our apostle, but he gave you the exact amount of faith you will need to do his will for you in the body of Christ.

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.

Many members in one body: Paul refers to the church as the body of Christ. The doctrines of concerning the body of Christ were given by revelation to us today through the apostle Paul. Ephesians 5:21-33 & Colossians 1:18.

This occurred after the Jews as a nation had rejected the kingdom offered to them in the gospels, and in the early part of the book of Acts.

Office: A position of responsibility in the body (Church).

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 on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

The grace given unto us: This speaks of the gifts given unto each member of the body of Christ (the Church). It also speaks about how each should minister in the areas they have been gifted in.

Prophecy: They were to prophesy according to the proportion of faith given to them, and they were not to say God spoke, when he did not. 1st Corinthians 13:2 & 14:3.

Ministry: Let all things be done decently and in order. 1st Corinthians 13:1-8.

He that teacheth: Teaching doctrine.

He that exhorteth: Instruction in God's word. Luke 3:18, Acts 13:15 & 20:2.

He that giveth: To share.

He that ruleth: A elder/leader in the church. 1st Timothy 5:17.

He that sheweth mercy: Forgiving others. Telling others, the gospel so they may be saved.

9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Let love be without dissimulation: Deceit, or hypocrisy. Do you love what God loves, or what your flesh loves?

Abhor: Hate that which is evil to the point of distancing yourself from it. In these next eleven verses Paul describes specific virtues that should be in every member of the body of Christ.

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

In honour preferring one another: Putting others first.

Fervent in spirit: A zealous desire to do things for God in a way pleasing to him.

Rejoicing in hope: Having a positive outlook because we know God works all things together for good.

Patient in tribulation: Someone who trusts God to see them through things.

Continuing instant in prayer: A person of prayer who prays when they learn of a need.

Distributing to the necessity of saints: If a believer your assembly didn't have one of the necessities of life (like food) then the church should help that person out.

A temporary helping hand. This differs from the requirement Jesus told believers of the kingdom message while it was at hand.

They had to sell all that they had and to come and follow him. Matthew 19:21, Luke 12:33, 14:26, 27 & 33.

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Matthew 5:44.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 1st Corinthians 12:26.

16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Be of the same mind: Likeminded.

Mind not high things: Exalted things like power and prestige.

Men of low estate: Common people.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Deuteronomy 32:35

Provide things honest in the sight of all men: 2nd Corinthians 8:21.

Avenge not yourselves: Don't get revenge.

Give place unto wrath: Love them by showing them mercy like God showed you.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Matthew 5:44 & Proverbs 25:22.

Thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head: Paul was the chief (leader) of sinners, and yet God reached down on the Damascus road and saved his worst enemy. 1st Timothy 1:15.

Saul of Tarsus was kicking against the pricks of conviction when he saw believers responding to him in Christ like love instead of hatred while he was persecuting them. Acts 9:5.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Overcome of evil: To let evil enrage you to the point you are of no good to anyone.

Chapter Thirteen

The higher powers

1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Be subject unto the higher powers: Paul makes these statements while Nero is Emperor in Rome who ruled as an absolute tyrant.

For those in Rome, this would be a much harder teaching to accept than for those who were just under Roman law, which was just about everyone at this time.

Believers everywhere then, and now, need to be in subjection to the higher powers because they are ordained of God. If they are evil, and you live in a democratic state, then you should use your influence to remove them.

Nero was ordained of God to be Emperor at the time Paul wrote this epistle for reasons known only to God.

Sometimes rulers are placed in power as a reward for their citizen's righteousness, and at other times a tyrant may be placed in power to chastise them.

They that resist shall receive to themselves damnation: Paul did not mean eternal damnation or else he would have said that, like in Mark 3:29 and other places.

The word damnation is translated as such from a Greek word *Krimeia*, where we get the word Crime from.

Paul was referring to their condemnation legally speaking and in the eyes of all who recognize the authority place in the hands of the government by God.

I can be condemned of a crime, but not condemned to death, or condemned to hell. The context determines the definition. To be condemned literally means to be found guilty.

The punishment must fit the crime. A jail sentence for resisting the government is far different from eternal damnation in hell.

There are times when we are to resist the government as Christians and there should also be a proper amount of resistance as we are guided by the scriptures.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

He is a minister of God: To resist our God appointed leaders just because they are predominantly heathens is to resist God himself, because he has appointed them, and he has ordained government to prevent anarchy, or lawlessness.

A revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil: God does not ordain governments to do evil, but to punish evil. The problem is not government, but evil men is government.

Resistance isn't always wrong, in fact there are times in the scriptures where we see that we are to resist. In areas of our faith, we are commanded to obey God rather than man.

A good example is when the twelve apostles to the nation of Israel were commanded by its national leaders (the powers that be) to quit preaching in Jesus' name.

They that resist the powers will be punished by those in power even to the point of them bearing the sword against them. God does not condone anarchy.

6 For this cause pay ye tribute 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; honour to whom honour.

Pay ye tribute: We are to pay our taxes (tribute) for the support of these higher powers who in turn are to be a terror for us unto evil works and a rewarder of them that do good.

We are to render dues to whom dues are deserved, and not unto whom they are not. We are not required to be walked on or over by them, and we are to only pay what is legal for us to pay.

Every believer should claim every deduction they are entitled to, and then use that for God's work, and the well-being our families.

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: *Leviticus 19:18.*

He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law: Nowhere in Paul's epistles are we commanded to keep the law to receive eternal life. Loving someone, however, is the perfect definition of what grace is all about.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. *Exodus 20:13-17 & Leviticus 19:18.*

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: 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 armour of light.

Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed: We are saved from the wages of sin, which is death, and separation from God for eternity. We are delivered from that terrible fate that all unbelievers still face. Romans 6:23.

The works of darkness: *Ephesians 5:3-4.*

The armour of light: *Ephesians 5:8-14.*

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

Chambering: Defiling oneself sexually, to be a whoremonger. Hebrews 13:4.

Wantonness: Filthy conversation, Lasciviousness. 2nd Peter 2:7 and Jude 1:4.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ: We are already in Christ positionally, but we must put on the Lord Jesus Christ daily before we go out and do battle against the works of darkness. Galatians 3:27.

Make not provision for the flesh: Placing ourselves in situations where we are likely to give in to temptation that is how we make provision for the flesh. Romans 7:18, Galatians 4:1 4 & Philippians 1:22.

Chapter Fourteen

Weak in the faith

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

Him that is weak in the faith: A new believer who has not been instructed much in the faith delivered to us today.

Another, who is weak, eateth herbs: A vegetarian who is weak in the faith. Paul instructs us to receive someone who is weak (new or misguided) in the faith, but not to doubtful disputations.

We are not to fight with them or to separate from them because they do not have the light that we have. These are not issues of major doctrinal concern that Paul is dealing with here but issues of the individual's conscience.

If God has received him as a brother, we are to receive him. Do not make the requirement for fellowship with you that all people have to become clones of you. What a boring world that would be.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

God is the master of that man, not you. To judge someone who is not your responsibility to judge is to bring him down (falleth).

He shall be holden up: Held up, or held accountable.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

One man esteemeth one day above another: This is in regards to holy days, and Sabbaths.

Notice that Paul is not giving us a doctrinal argument for worshipping on the sabbath day verses the Lord's day here he is just giving us a principal that will work in any area where God's word is silent.

Remember the sabbath day was given to Israel and not to the church. Under the law if a person did not keep the sabbath they were to be stoned to death.

Prior to the cross mankind was given six days to labor with the final day of the week as a day of rest which pictured the rest that would come ultimately in the Messiah.

Now that he has come, we that are saved have received our rest, so we look back to the Lord's day, Sunday, when he rose from the dead, and we assemble together on that day to commemorate it.

Those that teach that we have to keep the sabbath day do so because they believe they think they are "spiritual Jews" and that they have replaced Israel.

They place themselves under laws that were not intended for Gentiles to keep in the age of grace.

Let everyman be fully persuaded in his own mind: Don't go along with your camp just because that is how you were brought up, find out if something is right or not for today.

You can be biblical in following something today (like keeping the sabbath) because it is found in the bible, but you would be dispensationally incorrect for today.

You are not Israel under the law, you are the body of Christ under grace. Romans 6:14-15.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth 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.

None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: We as individuals are not an island to ourselves. Just because your camp, or family does some religious thing today, it does not mean that God is still doing that today.

For example, God does not want you to build an Ark today to save your family, he is not putting the body of Christ under the law because Israel was once under the law. We are under grace today. Romans 6:14-15.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. *Isaiah 45:23*

Set at nought: To disregard something or someone. Proverbs 1:25.

For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ: Paul includes himself, along with his audience, in this future judgment that awaits all believers in the body of Christ.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

A stumblingblock: When we judge someone in an area of a preference, we place a spiritual stumblingblock in front of our brother causing him to fall, and we will give an account for those actions at the judgment seat of Christ.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 18 For he that in these things serveth 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 another. 20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

There is nothing unclean of itself: Paul was persuaded of this truth by Jesus Christ himself.

You may be persuaded by your camp's teachings that you can't do something that God allows because they are not fully persuaded from the word of God, but by their own crowd.

Don't destroy what Christ is trying to build in your family and in your church with issues of preference, try to persuade them to what is right and don't use peer pressure to get them to conform to what you are doing.

22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

He that doubteth is damned if he eat: Some people make themselves miserable by judging people in areas of a bible teaching when they don't really know what the whole counsel of God's word has to say about a subject.

There are things that we are to judge such as sin, and doctrinal error, but this chapter has a lot to do with preferences that really don't matter one way or the other.

If you think something is sin, even when it is not, and you willingly participate in it, then God says that you have sinned, not against him, but against your conscience.

Chapter Fifteen

A minister of the circumcision

1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

We then that are strong: Someone who is strong is not easily offended, who doesn't attack another immediately when they see something different about them, instead they bear with them in spite of disagreeing with them inwardly.

Infirmities: Sins, physical illnesses, or weakness in spiritual things. Christ was the perfect example of bearing others infirmities when he took our sins upon himself, and died in our place.

We are to emulate his example, and die to ourselves to serve others.

2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. 3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. Psalm 69:9.

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning: The word "for" links this verse to the second half of verse three above, which is a quote from Psalm 69:9.

Through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope: The scriptures echo, or give us the hope of our future with Christ. It is a certainty if we have trusted the gospel alone for our salvation. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Be likeminded one toward another: Just as those in the upper room were in one accord so we in the body of Christ should be in our service to God. Acts 2:1.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us: Christ received Paul as Saul of Tarsus, the chief persecutor of the Church of God and he forgave him.

A minister of the circumcision

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision: This is a reference to the Jews who were all circumcised since the days after God called Abram out of the Ur of the Chaldees.

He was not sent to none but unto the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. Matthew 10:5-7 & 15:24.

To confirm the promises that were made unto the fathers: Jesus came to the circumcision to confirm the Old Testament promises made to Israel's ancestors, mainly Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and King David.

The main promise was the kingdom which was being preached by Christ and the 12 as being at hand. Matthew 4:17.

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. Psalm 18:49.

That the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy: This was mainly speaking about Gentiles in the kingdom, as the Church, which is Christ's body, was not spoken of in the Old Testament. It was hid in God. Ephesians 3:9.

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. Deuteronomy 32:43.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. Psalm 17:1.

12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. Isaiah 11:1.

When these promises were made to the fathers, they all understood them in light of the thousand-year reign of Messiah in the kingdom on earth.

They did not see the church age for it was still a hidden mystery kept secret in God until it was revealed to Paul. Romans 16:25-26.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. 14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 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 by the Holy Ghost.

The grace that is given to me of God: Romans 12:3, 6, 1st Corinthians 1:4, 3:10, Galatians 2:9, Ephesians 3:2, 7, 8, 4:7 & 2nd Timothy 1:9.

That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles: Paul doesn't minister to us Gentiles the things promised unto the fathers (Jewish ancestors) as Jesus Christ did to the circumcision in verse eight.

He is not "a" minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, but "the" minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. He is the apostle of the Gentiles. Romans 11:13.

Jesus Christ was a minister to the circumcision, as were the twelve apostles. Galatians 2:1-9. Paul alone is the apostle of the Gentiles.

Ministering the gospel of God: This was different from the promises to the fathers that Jesus confirmed to the circumcision.

The promises to the fathers are all a part of the prophecy program while the gospel of the grace of God that Paul preached is a part of the mystery program that had been kept secret from before the foundations of the earth. Acts 20:24.

The offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable unto God: See the mystery among the Gentiles in Colossians 1:20-29.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory 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 hath not wrought 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, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

To make the Gentiles obedient: *Romans 1:5 & 16:26.*

From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum: Paul preached everywhere in between Jerusalem and Illyricum, which was just to the north of Greece on the Adriatic Coast.

I have fully preached the gospel of Christ: This is the same gospel as mentioned in verse sixteen as the gospel of God.

Notice that Paul emphasizes that he fully preached the gospel of Christ, even in Jerusalem. He did not preach the gospel of the kingdom to them as some teach.

20 Yea, 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, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. Isaiah 52:15

Lest I should build upon another man's foundation: Paul was not laying the gospel of the grace of God over top of the gospel of the kingdom that the twelve preached to Israel, he was laying the foundation Christ gave to him as the apostle of the Gentiles. *Romans 11:13.*

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 by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

My journey into Spain: Christ was not named by many in Spain, so Paul planned to go there and stop along the way in Rome where many churches had been established.

See *Romans 16* for a list of all the churches that existed there in people's homes.

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

A certain contribution: *1st Corinthians 16:1-4 & 2nd Corinthians 8:1-15.*

The Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things: The Jewish Saviour. Salvation is a spiritual thing. Prior to

the dispensation of grace given unto Paul, salvation was of the Jews. *John 4:22.*

Their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things: This is speaking of helping with physical gifts at that time because their kingdom program had ceased, and they were now destitute having sold everything as commanded by Jesus. *Luke 12:32-33, 14:26-33 & 18:22.*

28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

Sealed to them this fruit: Paul bringing the offering from the Gentile regions to the suffering kingdom saints in Jerusalem. Verse 26.

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 you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; 31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

The fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ: He wants to establish them fully in the gospel that was given to him by the risen Christ. *Romans 16:25-26.*

Them that do not believe in Judaea: He knew that danger awaited him in Jerusalem by his former associates, who viewed him as a traitor to Judaism now.

That my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints: Some kingdom saints in Jerusalem still did not trust Paul who previously persecuted the kingdom church in Jerusalem. *Acts 9:1-2.*

The brethren/saints received Paul, and his companions, with their financial gift gladly according to *Acts 21:17*. Paul would be arrested the very next day.

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.

Instead, Paul arrived in chains after spending two years in Jail in Caesarea, then finally arriving in Rome where he spent the next two years in house arrest in his own hired house. *Acts 21-28.*

Now the God of peace be with you all: It seems that Paul is ending his letter, but more is to follow. Paul now will mention all his friends, and the churches that have started in Rome.

Chapter Sixteen

The revelation of the mystery

1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Phebe our sister: Phebe is later mentioned in verse 27.

The church which is at Cenchrea: Acts 18:18.

She hath been a succourer of many: An helper.

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.

Priscilla and Aquila: Paul first met Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth as they fled from Rome after Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome. Acts 18:2, 18, 26 & 1st Corinthians 16:19.

Paul lived with them and worked with them for they were tentmakers as well. It is evident that Paul taught this Jewish family his gospel and they received it very quickly.

Laid down their own necks: They literally laid down their lives for the apostle. This could have occurred in Ephesus. Acts 19 & 20.

Paul was so grateful to them for saving his life he no doubt told all the churches of the Gentiles of their heroics because they all wished to thank them for delivering the apostle to the Gentiles from those who would destroy him.

They apparently accompanied Phebe on this journey to Rome as Paul would not send just one lady traveling alone on this long and treacherous journey, nor would he risk losing this epistle that God had given him by divine revelation.

Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia: Achaia is a province in Asia where Paul went to preach the gospel, Epaphroditus was Paul's first convert there.

He held a special place in Paul's memory as is witnessed by Paul calling him his "wellbeloved."

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. 7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us: This was most likely John Mark's mother, who was named Mary, as she is the only Mary mentioned after Saul gets saved.

Paul says she ministered to us (his team), not to him alone. Barnabas and John Mark were a part of his team. Acts 12:12 & Colossians 4:10. Mary was with Paul when Colossians was written after Paul had arrived in Rome in Acts 28.

Who also were in Christ before me: Andronicus and Junia were in Christ before Paul, but they were not "in the body of Christ," which is a different thing.

The Jewish kingdom disciples that remained in Israel with the twelve apostles were abiding "in Christ," the Vine. John 15:1-5. The twelve apostles continued on in Israel preaching the gospel of the circumcision (a kingdom message).

Paul took the gospel of the uncircumcision (grace) to the whole world. Galatians 2:1-9. We are in Christ today, because we are in the body of Christ. Colossians 1:24.

Who were of note among the apostles: Which means they were saved under the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom message

and no doubt ministered with the twelve early on before going to Rome.

There were for a while two programs operating at the same time until Israel's blinding at the end of the book of Acts.

It is evident that they now knew the gospel of the grace of God which Paul preached for had they not known it Aquilla, and Priscilla would have soon remedied that as they did with Apollos.

According to 1st Timothy 1:15 & 16, Paul was the first person in the body of Christ. Which makes sense if there were two programs going on at the same time until Israel's rejection.

1st Timothy 1:15 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 for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ me show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Paul was the leader (chief) of the rebellion against God and his Messianic church he was building in Israel and God in his great mercy reached down and saved his arch enemy and made him the apostle of the Gentiles.

Not long after Paul's salvation experience in Acts chapter nine did the ministry to the Gentiles begin.

The twelve apostles to the nation of Israel however stayed and ministered to the Jews with only a few exceptions like when Peter in Acts 10 had his vision to go to the house of a Gentile.

God let the twelve apostles to Israel know that something new was taking place with the saving of Saul of Tarsus and making him the apostle of the Gentiles. Romans 11:13.

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. 9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. 10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. 11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. 12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. 13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

This could very well be the Rufus mentioned in the gospel of Mark 15:41 who was the son of Simon who carried Christ's Cross, but we can't be sure.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

Here we have another church, which had at least five people in it that Paul knew personally, no doubt there were many more Paul hadn't met because the world was being turned upside down with the gospel.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. 16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

Salute one another with an holy kiss: This was, and still is a practice in the Middle East and in some other countries. 1st Corinthians 16:20 & 2nd Corinthians 13:12.

The churches of Christ salute you: Paul calls these assemblies “the churches of Christ,” and not the church of Christ, or the church of God, both of which are singular. Each church was a local independent church with Christ as its head.

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye 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.

Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: We are to publicly identify those who cause division that speak contrary to the doctrine given to us by the apostle Paul. 2nd Timothy 1:13 & 2nd Timothy 2:2.

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 concerning evil.

I would have you wise unto that which is good: God offers us today the manifold wisdom of God, in the mysteries revealed to the apostle Paul concerning this dispensation. 1st Corinthians 2:7-8.

And simple concerning evil: We are not to be ignorant to Satan’s devices, but we are not to spend our time the studying all the doctrines of devils, but rather the doctrines of Christ. Psalm 19:7, 119:130 & 2nd Corinthians 2:11.

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

The God of peace: Romans 15:33, Philippians 4:9, 1st Thessalonians 5:23 & Hebrews 13:20.

Bruise Satan under your feet shortly: To bruise here means to humble (humiliate) an enemy in defeat.

It is the seed of the woman “Jesus Christ” who bruises Satan’s head, under his heel, not our feet, but we in the church are a part of Christ’s body. Genesis 3:15.

21 Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. 22 I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord. 23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother. 24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Tertius, who wrote this epistle: Tertius is the actual penman of the book of Romans, while it is Paul who told Tertius what God wanted written down.

Gaius mine host: Paul was staying with Gaius in his home in Corinth writing this epistle.

Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you: 2nd Timothy 4:20 also tells us that Erastus was abode at Corinth, so all the evidence points to this epistle being written from Corinth.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen: The book sounds like it is coming to an end here, but it isn’t.

Paul gives us another nugget to chew on that many in the body of Christ know very little about unfortunately, and the liberals all love to cast doubt about whether this portion of scripture even belongs in the book of Romans.

The oldest trick in the book, is causing people to doubt God’s word, like Satan did to Eve. Genesis 3:1-7.

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,

Him that is of power to stablish you: This is speaking about the risen and ascended Christ who gave Paul this revelation from heaven.

According to my gospel: Believers in the age of grace are stablished according to Paul’s gospel, which is the gospel that was revealed unto Paul by revelation.

The gospel that was revealed unto Paul is for Jew and Gentile alike, and it is found best described in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

And the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery: The message that Paul preached was not revealed to his prophets.

Which was kept secret since the world began: This message was a mystery up to and during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ because the gospel of the kingdom was being preached then and it was for the Jew only. Matthew 4:17-23.

1st Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world 8 Which none of the princes of the world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

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:

But now is made manifest: What Paul preached was kept secret since the world began.

It was made manifest to the world by Paul after he had received it by revelation from the ascended Christ is not in question here, all though almost all in the body of Christ are totally ignorant of this truth.

And by the scriptures of the prophets: Since the gospel that Paul preached was previously a mystery hidden from them, they did not understand its truths. Romans 1:2.

Remember first of all that verse twenty-five ends with a comma not a period. The beginning of verse twenty-six completes the thought in verse twenty-five.

The scriptures of the prophets made known that one day things would be uttered that have been kept secret since the foundation of the earth, but they did not elaborate what those things were because they themselves did not know.

Made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: They did know, however, that they would one day be made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. Romans 1:5.

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. The End

First Corinthians

Introduction

The word Corinth literally means an ornament that would adorn a place. The city of Corinth was considered as an adornment to all the other cities around it for all its beauty.

The book of First Corinthians was written around 57-59 A.D. by the Apostle Paul (the Apostle of the Gentiles) formerly known as Saul of Tarsus. Romans 11:13.

In order to understand this epistle more fully, you should first read Acts 18 to get the correct setting for this epistle.

Chapter One

Division in the Church

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

Called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ: Apostle means a sent one. Paul was sent by Jesus Christ to be the apostle of the Gentiles. 1st Timothy 2:7 & 2nd Timothy 1:11.

Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Through the will of God: Today there are many apostles appointed by men, and by denominations, but there are none called of Jesus Christ.

Christ gave unto the church first apostles, and prophets, while the church still saw through a glass darkly, but after the church age epistles were completed, they could then see face to face (clearly). 1st Corinthians 13:1-8.

The offices of apostle and prophet were no longer needed, and they were done away with along with the sign gifts that accompanied its message, and its messengers.

The two offices, and their accompanying gifts, ceased to operate when blindness in part happened to Israel sometime prior to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

Sosthenes our brother: The former Rabbi in Corinth who eventually got saved and helped the Apostle Paul there.

Acts 18:17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

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:

The church of God: This is the church that Paul started at Corinth, not a church started by members of the little flock. The church of God is a generic term used interchangeably with the church of Christ, or churches of Christ.

Sanctified in Christ Jesus: Paul says to them that are sanctified (set apart) in Christ Jesus that they are called to be saints, he does not say that they are called to be saved.

Called to be saints: This is not in the future tense, but rather in the present tense. Saved people are elected to be conformed into his image and we are called to be saints.

This speaks of the saved person's duty, it does not speak about an unconditional election or calling to be saved as some teach.

Both theirs and ours: Just who the word "theirs" is speaking about is determined by the context of what came before the word itself in the preceding verse and a half.

The word "theirs" is referring to the church of God at Corinth, and the "all everywhere that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

This is not speaking about the little flock of kingdom saints since Paul does not mention them at all in the first two verses, or anywhere else in this whole epistle for that matter.

The word "ours" is also defined by the context of the same preceding verse and a half. The only people that the word "ours" can possibly be referring to is Paul and Sosthenes.

3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;

Grace be unto you, and peace: Grace and peace are the two very familiar words that Paul opens all of his epistles with in one form or another.

Grace is mentioned because we are now in the dispensation of grace instead of being in the dispensation of the law as Israel was previously. Peace is mentioned by Paul because that is where we now find ourselves with God.

We were at enmity with God before the cross because of our sin, but God's Son has made peace for us through his death on the cross which paid the wages of our sin. Romans 6:23.

The grace of God which is given you: Paul is speaking about how God is dispensing grace in this present dispensation that the believers in Corinth were recipients of.

The apostle Paul who is our pattern today was grateful to God on the Corinthian's behalf as he was for himself because while under the law, Paul was God's number one enemy as the chief of sinners.

It was for that reason that he became the first person under the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24) to receive the long suffering of God's love as a pattern to all who would believe on Christ after him.

1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In all utterance: Speaking to others.

In all knowledge: The manifold wisdom of God that was given to Paul to give to us today.

It is Paul's desire as well as God's that every believer become enriched in all the knowledge that God has given to Paul to give to us so that we will not come behind other believers in any gift as we serve him and wait for his coming.

We have no excuse if other churches understand Christ's heavenly ministry through the apostle of the Gentiles better than we do because he has given it to all believers equally.

He wants the same things for us today as he wanted for the Corinthians back then, which is to understand the mystery truth for us today.

8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Confirm you unto the end: Paul tells them that Christ will confirm them unto the end, as he will us. We will be blameless because we are in Christ.

Confirmation is not a church ritual, or rite that can be conferred by a man or organization, but rather it originates from the God of heaven.

That ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ: The day of his appearing.

The fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ: Saved people called to be saints, and they are called unto the fellowship of his Son. Ephesians 3:8-9.

The preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery is all about fellowshiping in the mysteries revealed to Paul to give to us concerning his Son. Romans 16:25-26.

Paul takes parts of the first four chapters of this epistle to correct those who would be followers of men, before he deals with the immorality in the church, and its many doctrinal errors.

There are those today that are repeating the same mistakes as during Paul's day by attributing things to Paul that he himself never did, totally ignoring his opening remarks in the epistle to the Corinthians.

Many churches today place way too little emphasis on the doctrine and ministry of the apostle Paul.

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Ye all speak the same thing: They were supposed to think the same thing about this subject of division in the church, and they were supposed to have the same understanding as how to solve the problem.

They could solve the problem by taking heed to what Paul had to say on the subject and then they had to be willing to submit to what his judgment was.

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, 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 ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Is Christ divided: No, of course not.

Was Paul crucified for you: No again.

Were ye baptized in the name of Paul: Was anyone, anywhere, baptized in Paul's name? No.

The Corinthians were all baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Do you think that the division in this church that followed Cephas (Peter) didn't favor water baptism for the remission of sins?

They most certainly did, as he was the leader of the twelve apostles, and they were constantly telling Israel to repent and to be baptized in Jesus' name, for the remission of sins, but Peter's program to the circumcision was not the same as Paul's to the body of Christ.

What about those twelve that followed Apollos that were re-baptized by Paul in Acts 19:5. He didn't baptize them in his name. The problem in this church was one of personalities, and of whose doctrine to follow.

Some wanted to follow Peter, and the eleven, with their gospel of the kingdom message, while others wanted to stick with Paul and the mystery program that he received later.

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

I thank God that I baptized none of you: Many people will parrot what others say on this verse, and they turn around and attack Paul's own word, (our pattern), by taking this whole passage out of its context.

They start off only quoting the first part of the verse, "I thank God that I baptized none of you." They partially quote this verse to imply that Paul never baptized anyone in Corinth, he did (Crispus and Gaius).

Paul baptized between four to ten people there depending on how big Stephanas' household was)?

Crispus and Gaius: Crispus was the chief ruler of the synagogue in Corinth. Acts 18:8 above. The same Gaius is mentioned in Acts 19:29.

There is another Gaius' in the Bible as well. Why did Paul say that he thanked God that he baptized no more than he did in Corinth? Paul answers the question himself:

15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

Paul was thankful that others could not say that he baptized anyone in his own name, and thus contributing to the division in the church.

Paul gives us the only answer that we need. Remember that "many" in Corinth were baptized (Acts 18:8), they were just not baptized by Paul.

Paul was the leader, and he established the church in Corinth, and "the many" that believed and were baptized by Paul and his companions were not wrong in what they were doing.

Paul had not been told not to baptize anyone. The apostle Paul is careful to express here that Christ is not divided, and that his followers should not divide over personalities.

Today, a billion people have divided Christ and have gone after another gospel. These are followers of Peter (Cephas) today who

preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins to Israel.

We must not repeat the same mistake by elevating Paul today above what scriptures say concerning him, but rather follow his teachings as the apostle of the Gentiles. Romans 11:13.

It is Paul's office that is magnified in scripture, and not the person of Paul during this dispensation of grace.

Large denominational churches have grown by following Peter and the twelve apostles with their kingdom message which was set aside when Israel went into blindness, and they have neglected Paul's epistles, and his message for us today.

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.

And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: Stephanas is mentioned three other times in this epistle: 1st Corinthians 16:15, 17 & 24.

His household became the first fruits (first believers) in the region of Achaia (a region north of Corinth). When John was sent by God, he was sent to Israel, to baptize them as a nation for the remission of their sins.

When Christ called his disciples and sent them in Matthew 10:1-7, he sent them also to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

He told them to preach the gospel of the kingdom to none but unto the Jew only because it was to the Jew that the kingdom was promised. Matthew 4:17 & 23.

They preached, as did John, that they needed to repent and be baptized. Baptism has no part in anyone's salvation today in the dispensation of grace as Paul taught in his word.

The apostles after Christ's resurrection tarried in Jerusalem and were baptized with the Holy Ghost as promised by Christ. Acts 1:5 below.

It was Christ who baptized them with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost was what they were baptized with not by. For example:

Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Sadly, it is in this very same portion of scripture that my friends totally ignore the plea (the beseeching) by the apostle Paul to speak the same things.

They immediately go off and take the passage out of context and apply Ephesians 4:5 to it when 1 Corinthians 12:13 explains what is meant in Ephesians 4:5.

The one baptism referred to in Ephesians four and 1 Corinthians 12:13 was the baptism "by" the holy Spirit.

There was a former baptism with the holy Spirit that was practiced in the early acts period when the gospel of the kingdom was still going to the Jew only by the 12.

Christ baptized his Jewish disciples with the Holy Ghost as was promised earlier by John the Baptist. Christ was the baptizer, and he was baptizing Israel "with" the Holy Ghost.

Today we are baptized "by" the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 12:13) into one body, not "with" Him! The Holy Ghost is the baptizer.

John the Baptist did not say that the Holy Ghost would come and baptize them, but rather that Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Ghost (Those Jewish kingdom saints).

1st Corinthians 12:13 sheds more light on the meaning of Ephesians 4:5, and remember Paul and his companions were baptizing with water well after 1 Corinthians 12 was uttered.

Paul himself was not baptized with Israel's baptism of repentance, nor did he baptize others with it. That would be great confusion as he is the pattern for us today.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

When Paul uttered Ephesians 4:5 he was telling people that the baptism "with" the holy Spirit was no longer in operation because in this new dispensation of grace there is no more Jew or Gentile, but one new man.

The problem returns when they get to verse seventeen as well, but again they only like to partially quote the verse to keep it saying what they want to make it say regardless of what Paul, our pattern, intended it to say:

Christ sent me not to baptize: Verse seventeen doesn't end there, because there is a comma and not a period. It goes on to say, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Paul emphasizes "that he was sent to preach the gospel not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be of none effect."

Paul's baptizing wasn't making the cross of none effect, because he kept doing it right up until the time he was locked up in prison at almost the end of his ministry.

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.

The preaching of the cross: That the sinless Son of God died on the cross for our sins, and he was buried, and he rose from the dead the third day according to the scriptures. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

The power of God: This is the gospel (good news) of Christ:

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The preaching of the cross is the gospel of Christ, and it was not preached until after it was revealed to the apostle Paul, and he has given it to us in his epistles.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Isaiah 29:14.

Satan should have paid attention to that verse, for in it God himself prophesies the destruction of Israel's wisdom, and the world's wisdom which is from Satan himself.

Satan's wisdom could not understand the implications of a risen Saviour, and therefore it was doomed to fail.

The cross was foolishness to Satan because he didn't understand the outcome of it, and how it sealed his doom and all who would fall for his worldly wisdom.

The best Satan can offer is the wisdom of this world, while we have all the wisdom of God at our fingertips. Amen!

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

At the resurrection God did indeed make completely foolish the wisdom of this world by defeating death and hell for us.

He made Satan to look like the fool he really is by announcing to the world that a new man had been created because of the resurrection.

That new man is you and I today in the body of Christ, who will one day dwell in the heavens where Satan's minions have temporarily usurped thrones and dominions for Satan's purposes.

Those thrones will be vacated at the mid-point of the tribulation period when there is a war in heaven and Satan and his angels are cast out of the heavens for good. Revelation 12.

Satan doesn't want this mystery to be made known unto the church, which is what we are called to do. Make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which was kept secret since the foundation of the world. Ephesians 3:8-9.

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:

In the wisdom of God: The world by its own wisdom does not know or seek after God, so God uses the foolishness of preaching to save them that will believe the wisdom of God by faith.

The Jews require a sign: Israel became a nation while in Egypt with signs being shown to them from God by Moses.

The signs themselves do not produce faith, for faith comes by hearing the word of God, they were for the Jew to verify that the messenger, and the message were from God.

Israel required a sign from Christ, and he gave them one, the sign of Jonah the prophet who spent three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The Greeks seek after wisdom: The Greeks are Gentiles.

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

We preach Christ crucified: Literally, Christ's death as foretold in the Jewish scriptures. Psalm 22, Isaiah 53 & Daniel 9:24-27.

Unto the Jews a stumblingblock: They have to believe their own scriptures concerning Christ's crucifixion in Psalm 22.

Unto the Greeks foolishness: They spend their time in nothing else but to tell or to hear some new thing. Acts 17:21.

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.

Christ the power of God: The resurrection is the power of God over death.

The wisdom of God: This is how God defeated Satan by the resurrection of Christ.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

Your calling: Notice that there are not many wise called, this implies they are wise first, and then they are not later because their worldly wisdom blinds them to the truth.

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath 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, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

The foolish things of the world: People preaching the gospel. The very purpose God does what he does is to bring glory to himself. Your worldly wisdom brings you glory, and he will not share his glory with another.

God is not opposed to wisdom, but the wisdom which exalts itself against God is foolishness and the whole world sees it in the end. Satan is exposed as the father of lies that he is.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. Jeremiah 9:4.

God indeed is wise. Glory in that, instead of your accomplishments, and it will empower God's ministry in your life.

Chapter Two

The Hidden Wisdom

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 any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

There are many preachers who allow their worldly wisdom to take the power away from their messages by exalting the method of delivery over the content of the message.

Paul cast aside all his training as a Pharisee and just preached the simplicity of the gospel as he heard it from Christ, and it alone had the power to change people's lives and he saw that on a continual basis.

I determine not to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified: Some use verse two as their excuse not to study the rest of the scriptures when we are told over and over again that we should study. 2nd Timothy 2:15.

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.

In demonstration of the Spirit and of power: When Paul was with the Corinthians, he was able to demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit operating in his ministry to them. Acts 18.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

We speak wisdom among them that are perfect: The word "perfect" used by Paul here means to be spiritually mature, or complete.

We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery: The wisdom of God is a way of preaching that few preachers understand. It has to do with rightly dividing the word of truth, which is the gospel of our salvation.

Almost all false doctrines begin by someone who doesn't understand how to rightly divide scripture.

If someone takes aspects of Israel's prophecy program and blends them together with the Church's mystery program, they will almost always end up in confusion and we know who the author of that is. Satan is. 1st Corinthians 14:33.

They will read verses six through eight above and think they understand them all the while they are taking them totally out of context, and they really have no clue what they mean.

Even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory: We as believers in the dispensation of grace are a part of the mystery program that was in God's mind before the world began.

We are neither Jew nor Greek in Christ, but we are become the one new man spoken of in the book of Ephesians by the resurrection of Christ. Galatians 3:28.

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

The princes of this world: Satan and his minions (princes of this world) would have never crucified Christ if they would have understood the wisdom of God.

Since the scripture forbids princes and kings from being priests that rules out Caiaphas from being a prince. Paul was speaking about something else that was not human but angelic in nature. He was speaking of the fallen angels who are often referred to as princes. Daniel 10:13 & 20.

It is the resurrection of Christ that made it possible for believers to become that one new man whose destiny is in the heavenlies.

We will one day be there with Christ when he casts Satan and his angels out of heaven at the mid-point of the tribulation period.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Isaiah 64:4.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: These are the things that God hath prepared for them that love him. I.E., spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Ephesians 1:3.

The Spirit of God gave Paul this wisdom that had been hid in God for a little over four thousand years to give to us who love him.

This wisdom was kept hid from Satan so that he would go ahead with his plan to crucify Christ.

Satan did not understand the wisdom of God because he is only a created being and didn't realize that he was sealing his own doom by putting Christ on the cross.

The book of Ephesians informs us Christians about all of our spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

It also teaches us about the wisdom of God in chapter three where Paul tells us about the revelation of the mystery which was kept hid in God from before the foundation of the world.

Satan, because of his worldly wisdom, thought he could forever keep his thrones and dominions in the heavenlies that he usurped when he fell but God had a plan to deal with him even before he ever created him, and we are a part of that plan.

He created the nation of Israel to rule and reign here on earth one day when the devil is defeated, which is his prophecy program.

God also created the one new man (us) to rule and reign with him in heaven, which is his mystery program.

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 teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

The spirit of the world: This is sensual and devilish, and it teaches man's wisdom. We like to compare physical things with our physical minds.

The Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual: God asks us as believers to compare what he says in one portion of scripture with other scriptures in the word of God and then just believe them.

Once we do, we will begin to know the wisdom of God and we will only then begin to understand the whole picture of what God has had planned throughout the ages.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

The natural man: A lost person.

The things of the Spirit of God: They are spiritually discerned by comparing spiritual things with spiritual things. This only a saved person can do.

We have the mind of Christ: We see with the eye of faith. The natural person will not believe the supernatural because they have not seen it for themselves.

They cannot compare spiritual things with spiritual things and are easily misled by the wisdom of this world because they still are in Adam as natural men.

Chapter Three Babes in Christ

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 ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

Spiritual: A spiritually mature believer who understands the mysteries revealed unto the apostle Paul. The mysteries are the meat of the word of God.

Carnal: Those who only understand the basic historical and practical teachings of the bible are feeding on the milk of God's word.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

Divisions come because there is a devil who is our adversary. He divides us with doctrinal errors that come about when we don't understand the mystery. The name Satan literally means, the adversary. 1st Peter 5:8.

He is the author of confusion, and he is the one who divides the body by causing them to blend the mystery and prophecy programs together.

By our inability to not rightly divide our own scriptures Satan divides us to conquer us. One group takes one of Israel's eternal earthly promises and claims it as their own while another group takes two or three others.

Others try to take all of Israel's promises and the result is that everyone thinks that they are right, and envy starts, then strife, and then ultimately division happens because of their carnal approach.

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

I am of Paul: While Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, we only follow him as he followed Christ in accordance with the mystery program which Christ gave to him from heaven. 1st Corinthians 4:16, 11:1 & Philippians 3:17.

Paul did not follow Christ while he ministered to the nation of Israel under the prophecy program, he followed him according to the new program that was given to him by Christ which is for the body of Christ.

I am of Apollos: An eloquent Jew from Alexandria who eventually taught in the church in Corinth. Acts 18:24.

Are ye not carnal: Again, Paul gives the reader another rhetorical question where the answer of course is yes. It is carnal to follow a man.

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye 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 planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

The Lord has given to every man ministers who are to bring people to Christ today under the mystery program. God came up with the mystery program before the world was ever created, and he hid that plan in himself, until after the resurrection of his Son. Ephesians 3:9.

I have planted: God gave Paul the revelation of the mystery after he saved him on the Damascus Road and gave him his commission to take to the Gentile world.

Apollos watered: Apollos came along behind Paul and discipled people in Corinth.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Ye are God's husbandry: This has to do with the work of farming. God is cultivating us to build his body, the church.

Ye are God's building: The church which is Christ's body. Colossians 1:24.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me: Romans 15:15, Galatians 2:9, & Ephesians 3:2, 7-8.

As a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon: Paul laid the foundation for the church there in Corinth, and then Apollos came by and built upon that foundation.

Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon: We are to take heed not to build our churches on prophecy truths for Israel mixed in with mystery truth for the body of Christ.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery is the foundation that Paul, the wise master builder, laid that we are to build upon. Ephesians 2:20.

Romans 16:25 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,

We are not to build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ according to the prophecy program as the twelve did to Israel during those early years.

They preached Christ according to the prophecies found in the word of God while we are to show them that there is a new program that we are to preach which was given to us by Paul as he received it from Christ (the mystery program).

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 hath 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.

Gold, silver, precious stones: This is talking about building on the revelation of the mystery that Paul received from God which is the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery.

Wood, hay, and stubble: If we build upon the prophecy program, we are building on the wrong foundation and the building will crumble when it is tried by the fire.

While it is okay to teach people about the prophecy program to educate them about it, the program for today must be the primary thing that we are to teach to our people and not to confuse the two.

Many good Christians confuse the two programs because they don't see that they are to rightly divide the word of God as Paul teaches us in 2nd Timothy 2:15.

Once some of them are shown the two programs from the scriptures, they will come to understand how to rightly divide the word of truth.

For a person to build gold upon the foundation that was laid by Paul (the mystery program) they must be about making all men see the fellowship of the mystery. Ephesians 3:8-9.

Of what sort it is: Our service will be tried by fire one day.

If you are building upon the prophecy program and you do not understand the revelation of the mystery, then some of your work will not abide and you will not receive the rewards you think you have coming to you.

Notice three times the word fire is used as something that will be used to try our works of what sort they are. Notice that it says twice that it is by fire that our works will be judged.

We are never put in the fire as believers (either purgatory or hell), our works are judged by fire, and whatever does not burn away because it was done for the wrong reason, or it was simply not something that was for today, will remain, and we shall receive a reward for what is left.

Yet so as by fire: Our works are purged (judged) not us.

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

Ye are the temple of God: Our bodies are temples of the holy Spirit. 1st Corinthians 6:15-20.

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: God will destroy those who try to defile our temples. We have eternal life, and God promises not to destroy us.

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth 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, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.
Job 5:13.

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. *Psalms 94:11.*

Paul reminds us not to deceive ourselves but to become as a fool (humble ourselves in our way of thinking on this subject) so that he might make us wise.

All we have is the wisdom that Satan wants us to have if we fail to humble ourselves (the wisdom of this world).

The prophecy program concerns this world, and God's plan for it and Israel's place in that program, while the mystery program concerns the body of Christ and the spiritual blessings we have in heavenly places.

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 ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Let no man glory in men: Don't be a follower of men.

All things are yours: It doesn't matter if Paul, Apollos, or Cephas gave you something because they have nothing that originated from themselves, everything they have ever received came from God.

Chapter Four

Stewards of the Mystery

1 Let a man so account 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.

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ: When people had seen Paul, and his helpers, he wanted them to see them as servants of Christ.

Stewards of the mysteries of God: Stewards are governors over a household, like the old British governesses that were often hired by wealthy European families to care for every aspect of the home and family.

We as stewards are to take care of every aspect of the mysteries that God has entrusted to us concerning the age of grace that we now live in.

It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful: If a person does not understand the mystery program, he cannot be a faithful steward over it, but that is what is required.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: It's not a big deal to Paul what men say about him personally.

They liked Apollos preaching better because he was a better orator than Paul. Paul didn't care about this carnal judging by the Corinthians.

I judge not mine own self: Paul did not worry about their carnal judging.

I know nothing by myself: Paul received the revelation of the mystery from the risen Christ. There is coming a day when the

Judge of all the universe will judge us according to Paul's gospel. Romans 2:16.

Yet am I not hereby justified: This is not speaking of salvation here, but God is justifying Paul's actions as a steward.

Paul was specifically speaking about his stewardship of the mysteries that he received from God, and he was not worried about his day of judgment in those areas because he was faithful.

He that judgeth me is the Lord: We should not worry about what others say about us. We should be concerned about being good stewards of the mysteries of God.

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.

Until the Lord come: This is referring to the rapture and the judgment seat of Christ for the body of Christ. Romans 2:16.

The hidden things of darkness: Christ will judge the hidden things of darkness people's judging one another at the judgment seat of Christ.

And then shall every man have praise of God: People were praising one man over another, and Paul was saying we are all just servants ministering the mysteries and not worried about personalities.

6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye 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 maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

By watching and listening and obeying Paul and Apollos as examples of faithful stewards of the mysteries of God the Corinthians should have learned not to exalt themselves above others, because they (Paul and Apollos) didn't.

Whatever knowledge Paul, Apollos, or any of them had they got it from God in the first place where all truth emanates from, they didn't get it from their own intellect.

8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

Ye have reigned as kings without us: The Corinthians had the apostle Paul as their founding Pastor and Apollos as their minister afterwards.

They should have been full of the truth, and they were and for a while they reigned in that, but they started to become complacent.

9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, 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 ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

God hath set forth us apostles last: The apostles had a very hard time compared to the average believer who worked a regular job.

They were constantly on the frontlines with the enemy and because of that they had many more opportunities to run into opposition, which they did.

11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; 12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: 13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

While the one in the secular world is paid handsomely, the other makes little to nothing for doing the most important job in the world.

14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. 15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel: Again, Paul wants those whom he led to the Lord to continue to follow him as he follows Christ.

Paul wants what is best for them and he warns them to flee from those divisive ones in the church.

I beseech you, be ye followers of me: Paul begs the Corinthians to follow him as he followed the risen, ascended Christ in the mystery doctrines that Jesus gave to him from heaven. 1st Corinthians 11:1 & Philippians 3:17.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

For this cause have I sent unto Timotheus: Timothy was to teach them to remember Paul's ways of instruction in the mysteries which he received from Christ.

Who is my beloved son: Paul led Timotheus to the Lord, thus the title of son. This is Timothy.

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 ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?

Some are puffed up: This is speaking about their arrogance. Chapter 5:1-2.

But the power: The power of God would be demonstrated if some in Corinth didn't repent before Paul returned to them.

The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power: Paul says he will come to Corinth if the Lord wills and that he will not listen to those who are puffed up.

He also says that he will come with the power of God which is as a rod to those who oppose the kingdom of God.

Chapter Five

Fornication in the Church

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.

What a terrible thing to be said about a church that had been started by the apostle Paul that it was commonly reported that there was fornication in the church.

Not just the wicked case of incest, but amongst others was it also well known that they had an attitude that where sin abounds grace does much more abound. Grace does not promote sinful living.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

Taken away from among you: Removed from the church.

3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh: Paul is talking about church discipline here.

When the sign gifts were in operation during the book of Acts this type of thing could happen to a member of the church, but this is no longer possible today since the sign gifts ceased at the close of the book of Acts.

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump: Leaven is typified as sin in scripture, and allowing the open sin to remain in their assembly could cause the whole church to be affected by it.

We should not tolerate sin in our life, or in our church. As the children of Israel had to make a quick departure out of the Egypt (a type of the world) even so we should get rid of sin in our own life as well.

Christ our passover: As thousands of innocent lambs had to be sacrificed for Israel before they were to leave Egypt (the world), so was Christ (our passover) offered up for us in the body of Christ.

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.

Let us keep the feast: Paul here admonishes the Corinthians to keep themselves, and their church, pure with the sinless word of God and not to return to the sinful practices of the heathen.

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 ye needs go out of the world.

I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: This previous epistle addressed fornicators outside the church (lost people). 1st Thessalonians 4:3.

This epistle was not considered as inspired and that is why it is not in our bible. If the fornicator were someone inside the church, then the believers were to not have fellowship with that individual unless he repented.

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, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

But now I have written unto you: In this epistle Paul had to address dealing with sin in the church.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Do not ye judge them that are within: The church was not following Paul's previous instructions and Paul put them on the spot in this epistle.

Paul tells them that God will judge those outside of the church in His time, but we are to judge those inside the church by the words He has given us to judge them by.

Chapter Six

Making Proper Judgments

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

Paul was telling them that the church has the authority from God himself and his word to give sound judgment on any issue that may come the way of its members.

The problem today is that when one person doesn't like the ruling of the church they leave because God does not have the preeminence in their life.

The saints shall judge the world: Paul further elaborates to the body of Christ (saints) that they shall have the responsibility to judge the world.

We know that the twelve apostles will sit on twelve literal thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel in the kingdom reign of Christ on earth. Matthew 19:28.

Since we are to judge the world, we will most likely judge the lost in the dispensation of grace, as well as the angels.

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? 4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

We shall judge angels: We shall judge the fallen angels, and since that is a sure thing for us in the future, we ought to do that today amongst ourselves in the body of Christ.

Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church: Paul warns us not to choose a judge from amongst your midst based on their popularity, or their connections, but based on principals found in the word of God.

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 goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. 7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? 8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

Go to law: Going to court against another believer from your own Church.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Inherit the kingdom of God: Paul is not speaking about the earthly reign of Christ during the kingdom, he is referring to the heavenly kingdom.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Ye are washed: We were sinners before salvation, but now we have become saints, so we should act accordingly. We should have higher standards than that of the heathen.

Ye are justified: We are declared righteous before God.

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 for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.

All things are lawful unto me: but all things are not expedient: I could sue my brother at the court of law and get restitution, but it could do more harm than good when the lost seeing me act this way towards another believer in my assembly.

I will not be brought under the power of any: I will not be controlled by the desire for revenge to the point of hurting the local assembly for financial gain, or brought under the power of anything other than God.

Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: They go together, but God never meant for man to fornicate, or to be a drunkard.

Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. 14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. 15 Know ye 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 ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. *Genesis 2:24.*

Your bodies are the members of Christ: Our bodies are for the Lord's work, and not for fornication. Our bodies (temples) will one day be raised, and all are members of the body of Christ, and he is our head.

He which is joined to an harlot is one body: This is that same act of sexual union that takes place between a man and a woman that makes them one flesh (or married).

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit: We are to be likeminded with the Lord on these things. *Philippians 1:27.*

We should flee such things so as not to the grieve the holy Spirit of God who dwells in our temples (bodies).

He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body: To fornicate with an harlot is to sin against the union of the husband and wife bond as one flesh.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

The temple of the Holy Ghost: The dwelling place of the Holy Ghost. We can glorify God by not defiling his temple.

Ye are bought with a price: Jesus Christ purchased us with the blood he shed in our behalf. *1st Peter 1:18-19.*

Chapter Seven

Marriage

1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

The things whereof ye wrote unto me: Some in the church at Corinth wrote unto Paul for guidelines concerning marriage.

It is good for a man not to touch a woman: This is referring to unmarried men and women, because touching can lead to fornication.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

Due benevolence: The husband and wife owe mutual sexual intimacy to one another.

Defraud ye not one the other: To deprive, take away, or withhold.

That Satan tempt you not for your incontinency: Incontinency means to be unconnected with your spouse intimately.

6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath 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, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

I speak this by permission, and not of commandment: Compare this statement with verse 10 below. God did not command Paul to say this, he was permitted to add it because it is a biblical principle.

I would that all men were even as I myself: Paul could contain himself, and he instructs us if that is not possible then the obvious choice is marriage.

For it is better to marry than to burn: To burn in your lust. This is not teaching that Pastors should be single, as other verses plainly refute this.

10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart 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 his wife.

I command, yet not I, but the Lord: God, not Paul, commands the wife that she should stay with her husband, but if she cannot because of safety reasons, or he refuses to provide for her she may depart, but she is to remain unmarried.

During this time of separation, she is to remain in a state of prayer for the other spouse that God would change their heart and save them if necessary, or bring them to repentance.

Be reconciled to her husband: This is if she left him for the wrong reasons. A woman is never commanded to be reconciled to an adulterous husband in the scripture.

Some cheating spouses will intentionally use the book of Hosea here to try to force their faithful spouse to return to them.

The book of Hosea is a picture Israel cheating on God, and God taking them back. A person can do this, but they are not obligated to do so.

Put away: To divorce.

12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

To the rest speak I, not the Lord: Paul's words here are in line with what God expects of us as believers.

God never intended for a child of God to marry a lost person in the first place, and it is not permitted in his word, which is why it is not mentioned in the law what to do in this situation.

If the lost person is pleased to dwell with you then you are to stay with them, and hopefully pray and demonstrate Christ in you to them and they may one day get saved.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife: It does not say that the unbelieving husband or wife is saved from the wages of their sin because of their spouse.

The word sanctify has two meanings in scripture, one has to do with the cleaning of oneself for service while the other has to do with God sanctifying us through His Son.

Since God is not in the picture here sanctifying them through the faith of Christ, then the first type of sanctification is in view here.

For example, when someone, some group, or the whole nation of Israel were to do something for the Lord, he would often tell them to get up and sanctify themselves for what He would have them to do.

He was not telling them to save themselves, just to cleanse their camp from any idols for instance.

Else were your children unclean: The unbelieving person can live in the blessings of a sanctified home by the humility and servitude of the saved spouses' actions.

If the believing husband for instance were to leave the unbelieving wife with their children, what chance would they have of being saved? A far less chance.

Their house would be directed towards the things of this world, and it would not have anyone in it to direct it towards God's ways thus producing an un-sanctified home environment for the children to live in.

16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? 17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath

called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

So ordain I in all churches: Paul, through God, has ordained (ordered) that we are to remain (walk) in the marriage we are in within the guidelines laid out for us here and elsewhere in scripture.

We are not to be looking for reasons or ways to get out of a bad situation, but how to make it a better one.

While old testament ordinances of the law were nailed to the cross, God, through Paul gave the body of Christ many orders such as these. Colossians 2:14.

Obedience to these ordinances does not produce salvation, only faith in the finished work of Christ can save us.

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.

Is any man called being circumcised: A person cannot literally become uncircumcised once he has undergone that procedure, but what God is trying to teach us here is that we are to keep God's word concerning marriage and not try to be like the selfish lost world.

The lost run away whenever there are tough times. When you say your vows "In good times and in bad" it is stated clearly that there are not always going to be good times.

20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

A kingdom saint under the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom could not become a member of the body of Christ, they remained in the program they were saved under.

The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Peter and the eleven did not join the body of Christ once it started with Paul, they remained heirs of the promises made to their fathers. Romans 11:29.

A saint in the body of Christ today should not try to be Israel (the circumcision), but sadly this is rampant today, with people trying to put believers today back under the law given to Israel which ended soon after the cross.

21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest 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.

The Lord's freeman: While we do not have the situation of global slavery today, like they had in Paul's day, the slave could be free spiritually speaking.

The employer and employee can both gain valuable insights into how they are to work side by side as brothers while one has a position of authority over the other.

A saved employee can go a long way in bringing his coworkers to Christ, or even his employer if he uses his position in a godly fashion by doing whatever he does as unto the Lord.

23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. 24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

Ye are bought with a price: You belong to God as his servant, not some group of men, or a follower of a man. 1st Peter 1:18.

Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God: While this has other applications it is primarily focused on marriage and serving God in whatever position you currently are in.

25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

I have no commandment of the Lord: Paul is qualified to give his judgment on this matter because he had obtained mercy of the Lord. 1st Timothy 1:14-16.

Many young people take off after school and do great things for the Lord while they are single, but the moment they are married some of them are soon prevented from serving as they did in the past.

I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress: Paul, and the world, at that time were under Roman oppression, with wicked leaders in power.

The great apostle Paul himself would not be allowed to serve today as a missionary with many of the mission boards in existence because of his being single.

Paul said that it is good for a man to be a virgin so that he may serve the Lord if he is able to contain himself, of course Paul travel as part of a team that aided one another in this area.

Many are not able to contain themselves and they end up in a mess, often with another member of their church and have to step down from their position due to fornication.

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. 28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

Such shall have trouble in the flesh: Whenever two people become one flesh there will be trouble in the flesh.

It is important that they are working together for the Lord, especially in tough times like "the present distress" that the world was in at that time.

But I spare you: I exempt you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, 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 passeth away.

The time is short: Paul, and the members of the body of Christ knew that Christ could return at any moment. 1st Thessalonians 4:13-17.

Peter's group knew the Lord would return and set up his kingdom on the earth and every eye would see Christ after the seventieth week of Daniel had run its course. Daniel 9:24-27 and Revelation 1:7.

They that use this world, as not abusing it: We are not to try to get all that we can out of this present evil world. Galatians 1:4.

The fashion of this world passeth away: This present evil world as we know it is passing away, only those things which we do for Christ will last.

We are not to abuse our time spent here in this evil world, but we are to be ever looking for opportunities to serve the Lord and others so as to be redeeming the time for the days are indeed evil. Ephesians 5:16.

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 But he that is married careth 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 careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

The things that belong to the Lord: A single person is free to care/devote more to the things of the Lord because they don't have the same responsibilities as a married person does to their spouse and any children.

The things of the world: The married person has a commitment to care for their spouse's needs and it will detract from their time serving the Lord.

35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

For that which is comely: The word "comely" comes from the same Greek word as the English word "honourable." That which is fit or proper.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

Uncomely: In an unfit or improper way. Not honorably.

37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. 38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

He that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will: A father that is stedfast in his

heart, who allows his daughter to serve the Lord over his own will for her to have grandchildren does well.

He that giveth her in marriage doeth well: A family that has protected their daughter's virginity, and then gives her away as a chase bride unto her husband does well.

He that giveth her not in marriage doeth better: The father that does not give her away because she has decided for the time being to spend a time solely serving the Lord has done even better.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. Romans 7:2.

Only in the Lord: She is only allowed to marry a fellow believer.

40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

She is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: Paul again reiterates that there can be great happiness for someone who remains single for the purpose of devoting themselves full time to God.

Chapter Eight

Offending Weaker Brothers

It used to be the practice of many of those who sacrificed animals to idols to take the remaining meat and sell it to the public so as not to let good meat go to waste.

They would sell it for a higher price in these pagan communities by advertising it as special meat that had been blessed by their pagan priests for sacrifice.

1 Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. 2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. 3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him. Galatians 4:9.

We know that we all have knowledge: The Corinthians knew that there was a God, and they knew that the world had many gods, and they had idols of their god's.

Knowledge puffeth up: It produces pride, and it doesn't help others who also have knowledge of the same things.

But Charity edifieth: Charity is love in action, and it doesn't seek exaltation of self, but meeting the needs of others. See chapter thirteen.

The same is known of him: Someone who is saved. Galatians 4:9.

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.

We know that an idol is nothing in the world: In the story of Rachel stealing Laban's idols, he accuses Jacob of stealing his gods. Genesis 31:30.

For there is none other God but one: *Deuteronomy 6:4.*

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.

For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,): The use of the small case “g” in the word “gods” usually denotes in scripture a fallen angel masquerading as God to Gentiles. Genesis 3:2.

There is only one God over all who is creator and sustainer, therefore any meat that has been sacrificed to a god is a foolish waste of time and of a perfectly good animal.

Satan however wants these sacrifices to be made, because any sacrifice that ever was made that was not made unto the God of scripture was really made to him.

Today sacrifices are not to be made to God because the ultimate sacrifice was already made two thousand years ago as the lamb of God was sacrificed to take away the sins of the world once and for all.

By whom are all things: *Colossians 1:17.*

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 is defiled.

There is not in every man that knowledge: Paul says that the weaker brother has less knowledge than his more mature brother and that weaker brother may not yet know that he can eat such meat without it displeasing God.

If the weaker brother were to eat the meat while he thought it was wrong to eat, then to him it would be sin, but God tells us through Paul that there is only one God and there is no curse put upon a believer for eating such meat.

8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

Meat commendeth us not to God: Meat does not make us holy or unholy to God today.

9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

This liberty of yours: Just because you can eat something doesn't mean that you always should.

10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat 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;

Thee which hast knowledge: The believer who has knowledge of this issue is considered a stronger believer than the weak one who does not have the same knowledge.

To sit at meat: Means to be eating at that temple or to be buying meat from it. The answer of course is yes, but it can also have another effect on the weaker brother, it can cause him to be judgmental of you.

It may lead to his departing from you in a divisive fashion causing an unnecessary division in the local body of believers in that area.

11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

One thing we can learn from this chapter is that while all meat is fine to eat if it is sanctified with prayer, it is not always expedient for me to partake especially if it will cause my weaker brother to be offended. 1st Timothy 4:3-4.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Chapter Nine

Am I not an Apostle?

After Paul finishes teaching the Corinthians about eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols, he begins a lecture on his apostleship.

There is almost no debate today as to whether Paul was an apostle or not. He was pretty clear on the subject as was God when He called him on the Damascus road.

The only question we still have to settle today with some is that after two thousand years just what kind of apostle was he?

He was not an apostle to the twelve tribes of Israel because there were only twelve of them and they are all named in the scriptures with Matthias being the twelfth.

If you don't believe Matthias is the twelfth Apostle, then cut the last half of Acts chapter one out of the scriptures and any other portion you choose not to believe.

No writer of any scripture ever said Matthias was not one of the twelve in fact all eleven of the apostles agreed that Matthias was the replacement for Judas.

Did Luke, the writer of the book of Acts say the eleven made a mistake and then write a retraction for their hasty decision?

No, nothing is mentioned by Luke who was the apostle Paul's traveling companion for a good while. Acts 1:26 & 2:14.

Paul had to defend his apostleship often as he does in this chapter, but he never claims to be one of the twelve apostles to the twelve tribes of Israel because they all met a particular requirement that Paul could never meet.

They were all to have followed Christ since the baptism of John and they had to have seen the risen Christ.

Paul eventually did see the risen Christ, but he never followed Christ during his earthly ministry which was a requirement that Christ alone put upon the office of an apostle to the nation of Israel.

No one today has seen the risen Christ and they have definitely not followed Christ during his earthly ministry.

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Those who have followed Christ in his earthly ministry as Apostles will in the kingdom (the regeneration) sit on twelve thrones judging the literal twelve tribes of Israel.

Matthias was one of only two people there that day when the eleven chose Judas' replacement which met the Christ's requirements. Also, Paul never saw Christ during the forty days after he was resurrected as Acts 1:21-22 required:

Acts 1:21 *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

Peter didn't just make up those requirements as some suggest. He and the other apostles had just spent forty days with Christ learning about things pertaining unto the kingdom, not the church. Acts 1:3-5.

They acted in a timely fashion to the Lord's command and critics have been wrongly blaming him and them for two millenniums.

Paul is a unique apostle as he says so himself. He alone is the apostle of the Gentiles. No one else can claim such a thing! No one!

He makes this clear that it is his office that is unique. He is the apostle for the body of Christ today. It is through his writings that the body of Christ gets its doctrine.

1 Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

Am I not an apostle: A sent one. Paul is an apostle. Acts 13:1-4.

Am I not free: Free from the bondage of Pharisaical Judaism.

Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord: One of the requirements to be an apostle, a sent one, was that you had to have seen Jesus Christ, and be sent by him. 1st Corinthians 15:8.

Are not ye my work in the Lord: Paul started the church in Corinth on his second missionary journey. Acts 18:1.

2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

The seal of mine apostleship are ye: A seal was something recognized by its owner and all who may see it as being a legitimate form of identification.

The Corinthians were identified with Paul because unlike Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens where he only spent a very short time at (usually 3 or 4 weeks) Paul spent 18 months establishing this church.

The very same people that Paul had led to the Lord now had divisive groups in their midst that would cut his missions support and he had the right and the authority by God to call them out for it, and to also lay the biblical defense for his position.

3 Mine 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?

Mine answer to them that do examine me: Paul's apostleship was called into question by at least one faction in the Church in Corinth, most likely those that followed Cephas (Simon Peter).

Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord: Since they all needed support to conduct the mission God had given them to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel, then Paul and his companions had authority to do the same. Matthew 10:1-7.

And Cephas: Simon Peter. Paul uses these well-known facts to plead his case that they as well should be supported by the churches which they themselves have started, by the freewill offerings of the church.

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? 7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working: Barnabas and Paul had the power given to them by God to forbear working at the churches expense. Acts 13:1-3.

The answers to the three rhetorical questions in verse seven are all the same, no one does those things and expects nothing in return.

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? *Deuteronomy 25:4.*

Saith not the law the same also: The law of Moses. Paul here goes to the law of Moses to make his appeal to the church in Corinth which if you remember had its start in a synagogue and was made up of many Jews, especially in its early days.

It was not because they were still under the law that Paul went to Moses' words but because there are principles found therein that transcend any dispensation.

The principle that if an ox was working for you to give you physical bounty you were not to deny him the physical needs, he had to produce them for you.

The same principles applied to Paul and Barnabas being taken care of by those that they were laboring or had labored for.

10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. 2nd Timothy 2:6.

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? 12 If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

If we have sown unto you spiritual things: Paul had the right to be a partaker of the Corinthian's carnal things (material or financial), because he had ministered unto them spiritual things.

Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things: Paul said he didn't exercise his right to receive support from the Corinthian church so that no one would say that Paul was in it for the money.

13 Do ye 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 hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

They which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar: Paul again uses an old testament example under the law to show a principle that carries over during the dispensation of grace.

Even so hath the Lord ordained that those who minister today under grace and preach the gospel should live (be supported) of the gospel, not by the tithe but by the free will offerings of the church's members.

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.

Make my glorying void: Paul would allow no man to say he was in it for the money.

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! 17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

For necessity is laid upon me yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel: God called Paul not to follow the 12 apostles in their message, but to be the apostle of the Gentiles.

If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: Paul never said no, he just said, What wilt thou have me to do. Acts 9:6.

If against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me: Paul didn't volunteer to be the apostle of the Gentiles, he was drafted.

He was given the revelation of the mystery concerning the dispensation of the grace of God. Romans 11:13, 16:25-26 & Ephesians 3:1-10.

18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

I may make the gospel of Christ without charge: Paul wanted people to hear the gospel clearly, and not be focused on his abilities, or short comings.

That I abuse not my power in the gospel: We that preach the gospel are to preach it so that the heathen will have no excuse to point fingers at us as charlatans, but as sincere ministers of the grace of God.

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;

Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: Paul went to the Jewish Synagogues and risked his life to win his kinsman to Christ.

To them that are under the law, as under the law: Paul would live like a Pharisee to reach his fellow Pharisees. Jews 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.

Them that are without law, as without law: Paul went to the lost Gentiles in faraway lands, and he reached them in the way that Gentiles could relate to.

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.

To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: What liberties I may have in Christ, I surrender when I am trying to win a person to Christ who thinks it is a sin.

We may have to shave our heads to reach a tribe with the gospel, while in another part of the world we may have to grow a beard.

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate 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 beateth the air:

Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things: This is speaking things being done in moderation. A perfect balance.

An incorruptible: An incorruptible crown. An eternal reward that fadeth not away. 2nd Timothy 4:8.

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.

I keep under my body: Not giving into fleshly desires, and letting Christ live through us through the Spirit.

I myself should be a castaway: Paul is saying that he is not able to be used by God to win the race if he does not take off the weights he is carrying.

What good is a father to his daughter if he is stranded on an island (a castaway). We become castaways when we consume ourselves in worldly things that keep us from the spiritual things that we should be doing.

Chapter Ten

Ensamples for our Admonition

Remember that chapter ten is a continuation of the thoughts in chapter nine concerning our attitude for service.

Paul now takes his mostly Hebrew audience back to the stories of their ancestors to remind them of their successes and failures.

1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye 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;

I would not that ye should be ignorant: Paul was reminding the Corinthian Jews that their forefathers were all there with Moses, Joshua, and Caleb in the Church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) and had a good start.

All our fathers were under the cloud: Paul is speaking here specifically about his and others Jewish heritage to educate all the believers in the church in Corinth, both Jew and Gentile. 1st Corinthians 12:2.

Paul is pointing out that they (their Jewish fathers) all had the same experience, and that they all had a good start when they began following Moses, but they sinned in spite of their good beginnings.

Baptized unto Moses: This meant that they identified with Moses. They followed him because he was God's messenger.

This was a dry baptism, where none of God's people got wet, just His enemies who all drowned in the Sea. Exodus 14:16-22. Both Romans 6:2-5 and 1st Corinthians 12:13 are also both dry baptisms (no water at all) only the Spirit.

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

The same spiritual meat: The manna in the wilderness, Exodus 16:5.

The same spiritual drink: The water from a rock. Exodus 17:6.

That spiritual Rock: That Rock was Christ. Deuteronomy 32: 4 & 15.

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.

They were overthrown in the wilderness: Because of their unbelief in God's promises, and their desire for things they had back in Egypt as slaves, they didn't want to enter the promise land, so God let them die in the wilderness.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. *Exodus 32:6.*

While they all experienced the same miracles together, they did not all respond the same way. Many of them, not all, ended up displeasing God by their actions and were destroyed for it.

Paul serves as a pattern for who believe today in the body of Christ, not just in salvation by grace through faith, but in service.

The Corinthians were lusting, satisfying their flesh like before they were saved, just like Israel lusting after the food they once had as slaves.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

In one day three and twenty thousand: In Numbers 25:9 it says that 24,000 died. That is because 1,000 more died in the day/s following the plague. It is not a contradiction.

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. *Numbers 21:6.*

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. *Numbers 14:27-28.*

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

All these things happened unto them for ensamples: The them here is Israel.

They are written for our admonition: The "our" here is the Church, which is Christ's body, made up of Jews and Gentiles. We should study the old testament scriptures for our admonition.

Upon whom the ends of the world are come: The word "world" sometimes means the same thing as the word "ages," but only when the context allows it. 2nd Peter 2:6.

The same world "globe or earth" is still here, but those on it in that previous age all perished. Another example: "It's the end of the world as we know it." meaning things are different now than in a past age.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Standeth: Someone who thinks he cannot be tempted. Proverbs 16:18.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

As is common to man: Our temptations are the same ones all of mankind have had to face.

A way to escape: *Ephesians 4:21-27.*

Flee from idolatry: Do not hang around idolatry, but flee from it like Joseph did from Potiphar's wife, or you will be caught up in it.

15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.

I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say: Paul had previously asked them if there was not a wise man among them. 1st Corinthians 6:5. A wise man is someone who understands the scriptures rightly divided.

The communion

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?

The cup of blessing which we bless: When Christ was with his disciples in the upper room, he took the cup with the wine (non-fermented) and blessed it. Matthew 26:27.

The communion of the blood of Christ: We are recipients of the shed blood of Christ when we place our faith in Christ's finished work on our behalf.

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.

The bread which we break: The bread which they break goes along with the cup which they bless. It is broken to symbolize Christ's body being broken for us.

The communion of the body of Christ: If we (the church) are his body, then we are the bread which was broken.

We have communion together over the bread remembering what he did in his physical body for us the spiritual body of Christ. John 19:36 quotes Psalm 34:20 and it refers to his flesh, not his bones.

18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

Israel after the flesh: Jews who are circumcised. Romans 4:1, 2 & 12. The priests in Israel did eat from the sacrifices brought to them by the children of Israel. Exodus 29:32-33.

19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils: By knowingly partaking of meat sacrificed to devils they would be fellowshiping with devils. Paul gives the Corinthian believers advice concerning this issue in the next verses.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he? 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. 25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: 26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. Exodus 9:29 & Psalm 24:1.

In the shambles: The markets. Can I eat that meat today? Sure, I am physically able, and God will not strike me dead for it, but it would not be expedient to eat it around those who may become weak because of the liberality I have.

27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye 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

it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Exodus 9:29 & Psalm 24:1.

Asking no questions: They could eat it if they didn't ask if it was offered to an idol. They were not to eat it if it was made known to them that it was sacrificed to an idol to be a witness.

29 Conscience, I say, not thine 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 ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

That which I give thanks: All food is to be received and consumed with (prayer) thanksgiving by a believer.

We are to ask God to bless the food He has given us, because it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 1st Timothy 4:3-5.

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.

Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles: There were two classifications of lost people before the middle wall of partition came down between them, Jews, and Gentiles. Ephesians 2:14.

Nor to the church of God: This is a reference to the body of Christ. It is a reference specifically to the church of God in Corinth. 1st Corinthians 1:2. The saved person was in a class all to himself.

That they may be saved: Paul is instructing them to look for ways to help someone see Christ in them. We are not to hinder people from knowing Christ by our deeds.

Chapter Eleven

Following Paul

1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. 2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ: How did Paul follow Christ? Christ was Paul's spiritual authority over him.

Paul did not follow Christ as the twelve followed him according to the prophecy program, he followed Christ, according to the mystery program which was revealed unto him. Paul preached Jesus Christ according to the mystery:

Romans 16:25 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,

Now I praise you, brethren: See verses 11 and 17 of this same chapter where Paul says that "he praises them not" for how they were partaking of the Lord's supper.

Remember me in all things: This simply means that we are to remember what he said, or what he did in similar circumstances,

and we in the body of Christ are to do likewise. Paul is our pattern today. 1st Timothy 1:15-16.

Keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you: There are at least two ordinances that the Corinthians were to keep according to Paul, because he used the plural form of the word, not the singular.

He also said to keep them as he delivered them unto them. which meant they had been previously kept another way by others (the kingdom saints).

Paul immediately begins to talk about head coverings, and the length of hair on both men and women, not baptism here, so let's stay in context.

Baptism is not even hinted at here. What ordinances did Paul give to Churches early on that are identified in the book of Acts as ordinances? There were four of them. Acts 15 & 16 which occurs just before Paul goes to Corinth. Acts 18:1.

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.

The head of every man is Christ: This not speaking of his physical head, but the spiritual authority over him.

The head of the woman is the man: *Ephesians 5:23.*

The head of Christ is God: *John 8:29.*

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered: This first part of verse four is speaking of a man's literal head.

Dishonoureth his head: This last part of verse four is speaking about Man's spiritual authority over him, which is Christ.

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

A woman's head (spiritual authority over her) is the man (this means man she is married to).

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.

Why do the Jews today pray with their heads covered? Tradition. That doesn't make it right to deliberately disobey God's word. When we as men pray with our heads covered today, we dishonor our head which is Christ.

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 on her head because of the angels.

Power on her head: This is in reference to her hair as a covering.

Because of the angels: There are no female angels, and they serve as helpers when people pray. An angel needed to be able to

identify who was a male and who was a female to properly help them.

For a woman to pray uncovered means that she does not want to be under the covering of her husband and the angels were not able to help her as they could if she were submissive to her head.

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.

The woman is of the man: Every woman is from Adam (man).

Even so is the man also by the woman: Every man is born of a woman, but each one is from God and each one needs the other. No man or woman is an island.

13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 14 Doth 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.

Is it comely that a woman to pray unto God uncovered: Is it proper. A woman's hair is given to her for a covering for her prayer unto God.

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not: This is in sharp contrast to verse two above where Paul praised the Corinthian Church for remembering him in all things, and for keeping the ordinances as he delivered them unto them.

That ye come together not for the better, but for the worse: It would have been better for them not to have had the Lord's supper in the manner they were.

18 For first of all, when ye 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 among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

I hear that there be divisions among you: Factions, cliques, people followers, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas).

I partly believe it: These were not just personalities that people were dividing themselves from others over. There were doctrinal differences amongst them in the church in Corinth.

There must be also heresies among you: The word heresies here is related to the doctrines that were divided people in this church around personalities.

That they which are approved among you may be made manifest: Those approved of God to be teachers in Corinth.

If some claimed, they were of Cephas (Peter) then they would be pledging allegiance to Jerusalem and Israel's kingdom program given to the twelve apostles, they would have been in opposition to Paul and the mysteries revealed unto him by the risen Christ.

Paul dealt with the personality issue earlier in this book, and now he would deal with some of the doctrinal issues that would naturally follow by choosing either to follow Paul, or to follow Peter's teaching, because they were different.

Neither Peter, nor Paul's teaching were heresies in their day, but to teach some of Peter's teachings today in the dispensation of grace would be heresy for today.

The Lord's Supper

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

When ye come together therefore into one place: In the Church, not a building, but in an assembly together.

This is not to eat the Lord's supper: What they were doing was not a good depiction of what the Lord's supper was.

21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye 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.

Every one taketh before other his own supper: When the Corinthians were meeting claiming to observe the Lord's supper, they were not commemorating it at all, they were corrupting it with their leaven, their sinful and heretical behavior.

The Pastor of that Church had let things slip to the point of heresies getting in unchallenged, that were leavening the whole lump, so to speak.

Because Christ was in the upper room observing the passover meal with his disciples when he instituted the Lord's supper, many have confused them, and they have blended the two together. They are not the same thing!

However, many have the Lord's supper on this date every year because it is the anniversary of it, which is also why some churches only do the Lord's Supper once a year.

Neither Christ, nor Paul commanded us to observe it only once a year. Is a church sinning because it only observes it once a year or because it observes it every week? No!

Our only requirement was that as often as we do it, we do shew forth the Lord's death until he returns.

The problem with some of the Corinthians was that it was not a memorial meal reminding them of Christ's death anymore but had become a time of feasting and even drunkenness instead of a solemn occasion for reflection.

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 brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you: Paul now refers back to verse two of this chapter when he said to keep the ordinances as he delivered them unto them when he reminds them that he received them from the Lord.

The bread Christ tells us here represents his physical body not the spiritual body which is the church.

The church was not broken for him. His body was broken for the church. It is a miracle that through all the beating that Christ took on that day that not a bone of him was broken.

When Christ had the first Lord's supper, he did not break bread like you and I in the western world think of breaking a wafer.

He did not have a wafer, but a piece of unleavened bread that would be torn and passed around. Each of the disciples would tear off a piece of bread and would pass it on to the next person.

Christ ends the breaking and eating of the bread with the statement that we are to do this in remembrance of him. It should never be just a quiet ritual with no explanation of why we observe it today.

It should always be used to instruct the lost that Christ died for them and to remind the saint of how he has benefited from that terrible yet wonderful event which happened two thousand years ago.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

The statement about the cup of Christ being the new testament in his blood is not shocking to us as it was to those who heard him say it.

When Jesus spoke, he often said things that his disciples did not comprehend at the time he said it.

To say that that cup was the new testament in his blood had to bring each of his Jewish listeners on that day back to the comments made by Moses as he gave them the first covenant and sprinkled blood on them.

Did Jesus think he was greater than Moses? Yes, he did, and yes, he was. Here Paul tells us that however often we have the Lord's supper we are to observe it in remembrance of him until he returns.

There will be people observing the Lord's supper during the tribulation period, but it will no longer be necessary during the kingdom.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, 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 eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily: The question is who is worthy to eat the bread and to drink the cup?

Believers have been made worthy by the blood Christ shed for them. A believer has been forgiven of his guilt while a non-believer remains guilty.

People should always be warned of the qualification of faith before they are offered the opportunity to partake of the Lord's supper.

The individual has the responsibility to examine themselves to see if they should partake of the Lord's Supper.

Eateth and drinketh damnation to himself: A lost person does not discern the significance of the Lord's body because they do not have spiritual discernment.

30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep: Because people did not examine themselves, and they partook of the Lord's supper unworthily, they became weak, and sick, and many slept (died).

Is this still happening today? Are church members dying because they are taking the Lord's supper unworthily?

No, but it was definitely happening while the body of Christ was in its infancy stages, but when the church became mature and put away childish things, (the miraculous sign gifts this form of chastening was no longer used.

No more Jewish signs were necessary for the maturing church with the completed word of God.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

Paul was not finished with the Corinthian church, but God was finished with this epistle for the body of Christ. Paul could have continued on but was led of the Lord to stop writing here.

He was moved to write, and he was moved to stop. That is how the holy Spirit worked with the writers of the old testament as well as the new.

New Wine vs Wine

The term "new wine" is mentioned in the Bible in 22 times in 18 verses. It is mentioned at the first as a part of an offering commanded by God.

Proverbs 3:10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

You press grapes and grape juice burst out, which the bible calls new wine.

Isaiah 65:8 Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

Grape juice is described as the blood of the grape:

Deuteronomy 32:14 Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.

Chapter Twelve Spiritual Gifts

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were

Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

Spiritual gifts: While the church at Corinth had a very Jewish beginning in Acts chapter eighteen in the synagogue, and eventually in the house that connected to the synagogue.

The church had now become predominately Gentile, and Paul here seeks to educate them about spiritual gifts.

Just as they were once led by men to follow the spirits that were behind the dumb idols of Corinth because of their ignorance of the truth they could now be led astray by abusing the gifts that the holy Spirit had given unto the churches.

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

It is the holy Spirit of God that administers or dispenses spiritual gifts as He sees fit in the body of Christ today and if someone had claimed to be endowed with a spiritual gift there was a way that they could be tried to see if it was true.

If a person speaking of Jesus Christ claimed that he was accursed, then that was another spirit impersonating the holy Spirit of God and it was not to be believed.

Today the title of Lord means very little as compared to when Israel was back under the law. To say that Jesus is Lord meant he was God in the flesh. Demon spirits did not want to admit this.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit: God the Holy Spirit is the same Spirit in verse four.

Not everyone in the Corinthian church had the same gifts. Individuals has been equipped with different spiritual gifts for the purpose of profiting the body of Christ.

There are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord: God the Son is referred to here as the same Lord in verse five.

There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God: God the Father is referred to here as the same God in verse six.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 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 worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

The manifestation of the Spirit: In early Acts the Holy Spirit would manifest himself in believers through a variety of spiritual gifts necessary for these churches in their infancy.

This continued until the word of God (that which is perfect is come) was completed at the end of the book of Acts. 1st Corinthians 13:1-8.

To one is given by the Spirit: All of these gifts were not all given to all believers in Corinth. They were divided up individually. Notice the words “**to one**” and “**to another**” are both singular.

Each meant that only one person in that body had that gift, not all in that body. These sign gifts were given at the onset of a new message of grace to validate the message, and its messenger as coming from God.

Israel required a sign, and after Israel received their initial signs from God then God would gradually begin to take the signs away as the nation matured and were able to walk by faith and not by sight (seeing miracles). 1st Corinthians 1:22.

Moses was indeed God's spokesman to Israel but the signs he was given began to diminish and by the time Joshua was the leader of Israel the miraculous signs were no longer necessary, and they began to be taken away by God.

When Israel became mature God took away the childish signs needed by a nation in its infancy. God had also given to the new church miraculous sign gifts during its infancy until that which was perfect was come.

Spiritual gifts

The word of wisdom: The holy Spirit would impart godly wisdom to an individual on a subject related to the body of Christ that was not written about yet in the scriptures.

The word of knowledge: Some received a word of knowledge from the Spirit.

To another faith: The supernatural gift of faith believing that God was going to do something to encourage others who were doubting.

To another the gifts of healing: Paul was able to heal many right up until he arrived in Rome. Acts 28:1-8.

Paul would later have to leave Trophimus sick in Miletum, and he could not help Epaphroditus who was nigh unto death after this time because the sign gifts had vanished at that time.

To another the working of miracles: The supernatural ability to raise people from the dead.

To another prophecy: The supernatural gift of a message from God.

To another the discerning of spirits: The supernatural ability to discern if a prophesy was from God or if it was a seducing spirit with a doctrine of devils. 1st Timothy 4:1.

To another divers kinds of tongues: This was a language.

To another the interpretation of tongues: One would be able to interpret the language being spoken.

It would always be used in conjunction with the gift of tongues. Each of these gifts was given out in the past as the holy Spirit willed.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also, is Christ.

So also is Christ: He is one with the Father and the Spirit.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we

be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body: There is no water in this verse!

Notice that we are baptized into one body by the one Spirit, the holy Spirit is the one doing the baptizing, and He is not using any water anywhere here.

We were “placed into” the body of Christ the moment we trusted the gospel of 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

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?

The church is not one person, neither can a member of the body divorce themselves from their responsibility to the body because the body is all the members working together.

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath 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.

God is the one that gifted these members to fulfill a specific function in the body (the local church).

Today we still have many members in each local church, we just do not have the sign gifts in operation to help us today because we have the perfect word of God to do that.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be feebler, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour 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 honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness: Pleasant to look at, attractive.

God is the mortar (temper) that holds the body together, and it is his responsibility to ensure that no one part of the body has the preeminence over another.

It is when the individual exalts himself or another over others that God has to humble them to restore unity in the body.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular: The church is the body of Christ. He is our head, we are his body. Ephesians 5:23 & Colossians 1:18-24.

God allowed miraculous gifts and offices that helped as the word of God was being completed and they served to verify the message as being from God and the messenger as being God's servant.

First apostles: Paul, Barnabas, and Silas. Acts 14:1-4.

Secondarily prophets: These offices are listed in the order of their importance in the infancy of the body of Christ. The first two offices ceased after the signs ceased in Acts 28.

Thirdly teachers: Those who teach what they have been taught from Paul's teachings given to him for us from the risen Christ by revelation. A Pastor/Bishop is the primary teacher in the church (the body of Christ) today.

After that miracles: Notice where the miracles placed on the list. Fourth, behind three offices that communicated the word of God to people.

Helps: Those who assist the leaders.

Governments: They help the steer the church in the correct direction, they are ministers to come alongside the Bishops/Pastors.

Both titles Bishop, and Pastor, are used interchangeably as the name for the same office. Ephesians 4:11, 1st Timothy 3:1-2 & Titus 1:7.

Diversity of tongues: Notice where tongues are mentioned, last, and there are different tongues. Why? Different languages.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Paul asks seven rhetorical questions to the Corinthians and us. The answer to each is no! So why do some even today claim to have all of these gifts? They are lying and people are not calling them out on it.

Chapter Thirteen

A more excellent way

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

The tongues of men and of angels: The tongues of men are languages spoken by other men. Paul could speak both Greek and Hebrew.

Of angels: The tongues of angels are a reference to the supernatural gift of tongues that required an interpreter who had the gift of interpreting tongues. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

Charity: The word charity is translated from the Greek word Agape (often translated as love). 1st Corinthians 8:1.

Charity is found in the middle of three chapters on spiritual gifts that were in operation in the Acts period before the word of God was completed.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

The gift of prophecy: A supernatural gift given to a person for a short period of time. 1st Timothy 4:14.

And understand all mysteries: This is speaking about the mysteries revealed to the apostle Paul by the resurrected Christ. Romans 16:25-26 & Ephesians 3:8-9.

And all knowledge: The manifold wisdom of God concerning his plan for this dispensation of grace. Ephesians 3:8-10.

I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains: Paul never removed any literal mountains, nor did anyone. Matthew 17:20.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

People have and will continue to feed the hungry because of their emotions but a true heart filled with love will give them the gospel as well, and that will last for eternity.

I give my body to be burned: Rome would burn bodies on crosses to show its citizens what would happen to them if they defied Roman.

Paul gave himself to a cause that could have ended with him being burned alive for his preaching. This practice continued on for hundreds and hundreds of years.

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

True charity comes from the heart of God, for God is love personified. If we are having a troubled relationship with someone, we can fix it by exhibiting charity in our life towards these people and allow God to deal with their heart.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Charity passes from one dispensation to another, it never fails, or ceases to exist, because God is love.

Prophecies, they shall fail: The gift of prophecies, God's word says will fail (cease to happen), in this new dispensation of grace when that which is perfect is come. Verse 10 below.

The gift of prophecy was given to some in the early stage of the church's development while the apostle Paul was filling full (fulfil) the word of God concerning the dispensation given unto him. Colossians 1:25.

Tongues, they shall cease: Tongues are said to cease in and of themselves without the requirement of “that which is perfect coming” according to verses nine and ten.

The Corinthian church had its start in a synagogue, and later in the house attached to the synagogue as Paul went to the Jew first at that time. The gift of tongues were for a sign to unbelieving Jews. The Jews required a sign. 1st Corinthians 1:22.

Knowledge, it shall vanish away: This is referring to the supernatural sign gift of knowledge vanishing once it is no longer needed when everything God wanted written down was completed. Verse 10 below.

In part

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

We know in part: The word of knowledge was a temporary sign gift for the body of Christ in its infancy stage while the word of God was incomplete.

When the rest of God's revelations for the dispensation of grace were given to Paul to fulfil (complete) the word of God then the supernatural sign gifts would vanish. Colossians 1:25.

We do not “know in part” anymore, nor do we “prophesy in part” anymore because “that which is perfect (complete) is come” in God's revelations to the body of Christ in Romans through Philemon.

We prophesy in part: When 1st Corinthians was written the body of Christ did not have a complete set of instructions about how they were to conduct themselves as believers in this new dispensation.

Israel as a whole has been blinded “in part” and they will remain that way until after the rapture ends this dispensation, when God's focus will once again return to the nation of Israel. Romans 11:25.

That which is perfect is come: That which is complete. The completed revelation of the mystery, God's word for us today.

Then that which is in part shall be done away: That which is only partial at the time. The sign gifts in verse nine.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

When I became a man, I put away childish things: We today have that which is perfect (the epistles of Romans-Philemon), so we no longer require the childish sign gifts. We have moved into spiritual maturity.

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.

Now we see through a glass darkly: At the time of Paul's writing of 1st Corinthians, he had not as of yet received all the revelations that God was going to give to him, and so the sign gifts were initially necessary.

But then face to face: We can now see clearly exactly what God wants for us in the body of Christ today because God's revelation to us is perfect (complete). Colossians 1:25.

Many epistles would not be given to Paul for us for another twenty years until after Paul was arrested the final time where he

spent some of his last years writing Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Upon his brief release before his death, he penned the pastoral epistles of first Timothy and Titus and when re-imprisoned he wrote second Timothy.

These all teach the body of Christ how we are to behave ourselves in the church of God, and how the man of God is to do the work of the ministry in the church, which is Christ's body.

Paul was told by God that he would receive latter revelations, and he was waiting for them himself, so that he too would no longer know only in part. 2nd Corinthians 12:1 & 7.

Notice in verse twelve that Paul was sure that he would know God's word completely when that which is perfect was come.

He was anticipating God's further revelation to him, and he did receive it, and he was faithful to give it out to us. We don't have to be confused because we only see through a glass darkly because God's word is complete for us today, and we can see as it were face to face.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Paul concludes this great chapter with its original subject of charity, the key to helping others receive the truth.

Chapter Fourteen

An Unknown Tongue

1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. 2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

Prophesy: Speaking to the church things that edify, exhort and comfort. Verse 3.

An unknown tongue: The word “unknown” is mentioned six times in this chapter, and it is always paired with the word tongue.

When someone in Paul's day spoke in an unknown tongue Paul said they were speaking mysteries to the rest of the church because what he was saying was unknown to them, there needed to be an interpreter.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. 5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

In verse three we see someone prophesying and people being edified by it because they could understand it.

Notice how in verse four the word unknown is mentioned in italics which means it isn't in the original Greek, but it is put there for our admonition to help us understand the context of the passage.

The language was unknown by the speaker. An interpreter was often necessary for the others in the crowd who did not speak the same language as the speaker at that moment.

For greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues: It is better for the church to be edified by a message they can understand than an alleged message that they cannot.

Except he interpret: Without interpretation no one would be edified by the message in the church. Paul forbade speaking in tongues without an interpreter.

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?

By revelation: When Paul received a revelation from Christ, he shared it with the church in their own language. 2nd Corinthians 12:1-7.

If someone received a word of knowledge in those days, they were to share it in their native tongue so that all could be blessed.

The same was true for prophesying and sharing doctrine with the church. It would make no sense to receive a message from God and then speak that message in tongues and then the same person interprets it for them.

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 ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

An uncertain sound: Speaking into the air was when people gave messages in tongues without an interpreter that could not be understood by the hearers.

Then the hearer had to trust the message givers interpretation. God did not put all the gifts in one person in the church so they could be the final authority in everything.

These sign gifts are not in operation today, nor has they been since the word of God was completed after Paul's epistles were written.

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 speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. 13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. 14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

Pray that he may interpret: The word "unknown" means that language is unknown to the speaker. This does not mean it is an unknowable language.

Someone who had the gift of interpretation of tongues could come alongside and edify the church by interpreting the tongue spoken.

Why would God do this in this fashion and not just give the person a revelation in a tongue all could hear and understand?

Because the Jew required a sign that God was speaking to them, these are called sign gifts. This was important for a church which began in a Jewish Synagogue in Corinth. 1st Corinthians 1:22 & 14:22.

This speaking in an unknown tongue differed from what occurred on Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost those that heard them speak recognized their native languages (tongues). Acts 2:4-11.

If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth: Praying, singing, and blessing with the spirit were all gifts in the early church only.

These gifts ceased when that which is perfect was come (the completed word of God). 1st Corinthians 13:10. God put away the childish things of miraculous signs when the church had the word of God completely revealed to them.

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 thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

When we pray, or sing, or whatever we do in the church, it should all be done to edify the hearers.

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified 18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye 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.

I speak with tongues more than ye all: Paul spoke with tongues more than anyone, not because he was spiritually more important.

When Paul spoke to churches, he would have had someone who could interpret any unknown tongue that was given to him.

We do not have any message that Paul spoke to any congregation that the writer tells us that he received that message by an unknown tongue and then it was interpreted.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. 21 In the law it is written, With [men of] other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. *Isaiah 28:11-12.*

Be not children in understanding: Spiritual babies.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

Tongues are for a sign: It makes perfect sense here that God uses other languages as a sign to the unbelieving Jews first, and then the Gentiles as well, to help them understand the gospel in their own language.

The Jews in those days got a double dose of conviction, first from the gospel message itself, and secondly from an added

conviction found in Isaiah 28:11-12 which is quoted back in verse twenty-one of this chapter.

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 ye are mad?

Because even a lost person knows there is no need for these gifts in this situation.

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth 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. 26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

This is what goes on in carnal churches today just like it was in Corinth in Paul's day. This book was a condemnation and a correction of a very messed up church.

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.

Tongues were not allowed to be spoken in the church without an interpreter. Period! The same would apply today if tongues were for today, but they are not.

They were gifts for the church in its infancy, but when the church matured those childish gifts vanished as is testified by the 1,900 years of silence in those areas.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

Ye may all prophesy one by one: All three could take their turn giving their prophecy, while the others would judge what the prophet was saying whether it was from God or not.

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.

Let the prophets speak two or three: God is the God of order, but the Corinthian church had become totally out of order with different schisms in that body and each competing with the other for preeminence.

Let the other judge: A prophet who could discern spirits in those days would judge whether the message was from God, or from a seducing spirit. These sign gifts are not in operation still today.

The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets: Remember the gift of discerning of spirits.

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 saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Let the women keep silence in the churches: What is the context of these three chapters? Gifts, and their operation in the church. Men have the role as the spiritual leader in the churches. Women are not to be teaching men in the church.

Deborah criticized the men of Israel and told them that a woman would get the credit for doing what was supposed to be a man's job to do, and that that would bring shame to their nation. Judges 4-5.

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 to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord: God says through the apostle Paul that if they want to remain ignorant on this subject, let them. Did you see what Paul called these teachings? "The commandments of the Lord."

Covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues: When those gifts were in operation before the word of God was complete the people were to allow the gifts to operate as intended.

Once "that which is perfect has come," these gifts were no longer needed. Any alleged manifestations of these gifts being claimed today are from seducing spirits, they are not from God today.

Chapter Fifteen

The Gospel

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye 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;

I declare unto you the gospel which I have preached unto you: Paul here declares once again the gospel to the Corinthians as he did when he was with them originally, and they received it and stood for it. Acts 18.

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain: Not all that heard stood with the message because they either did not believe everything concerning Christ's death for them, which caused their belief to be in vain.

Notice that Paul says that he delivered the gospel that he received, while the twelve delivered the gospel which they had heard from Christ, there is a difference.

Paul says that Christ died for us according to the scriptures, so his death is not a mystery because it is recorded throughout the pages of prophecy, which makes it a part of Israel's prophecy program.

Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: *Isaiah 53:1-11.*

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

And that he was buried: There are three parts to the gospel found in this chapter, Christ's death, burial, and his resurrection. Daniel in chapter nine speaks of the Messiah being cut off (killed), Psalm 16:10 tells us about his burial.

Peter addressed Jews from all over the world on the day of Pentecost, and he quotes a passage from king David found in the Psalms:

Psalm 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

So even the resurrection of the dead was a part of Israel's prophecy program because we find it mentioned in prophecy.

If Christ's resurrection were something new it would not be found in the pages of prophecy, but it would have been hid in God from before the foundation of the world and would have been revealed by the apostle Paul.

Paul here is relaying a fact that could be known from reading Israel's prophecy program.

And that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: Psalm 16:10, and the story of Jonah.

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

Notice that the gospel doesn't stop with the fact that he rose again the third day, but it goes on to add that he was seen alive afterwards.

What good would a risen Christ be if no one ever saw the risen Christ? They would have gone their ways and Christianity would have died without his appearing unto his saints.

He was seen of Cephas: Christ, it says, appeared unto many, and here it records his appearance unto Cephas (Simon Peter) after his resurrection which is found in the gospel of Luke, and then he appears later unto the twelve:

Luke 24:34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

Then of the twelve: Judas was dead, so the only person that Paul could be referring to was Matthias.

Matthias saw the risen Christ on a couple of occasions. See Acts 1:26 where Luke declares Matthias as being numbered with the eleven.

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.

He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: He appeared only to believers because faith cometh by hearing (not sight).

They had the word of God in their hands, and they also had the Word of God in their midst (Jesus is the Word of God). John 1:1.

They should have recognized him by checking out his words and deeds, and compared them with what the scriptures said the Messiah would do, but they did not.

Besides, Jesus himself said that that people would not believe even if someone rose from the dead as he told the story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke sixteen.

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.

After that, he was seen of James: His half-brother, who became the Pastor of the church in Jerusalem.

Then of all the apostles: All twelve of them.

And last of all he was seen of me also: This occurred in Acts 9 on the road to Damascus.

As one born out of due time: The only thing this could mean in the physical realm, was that he was actually born late, not early, but Paul has a spiritual meaning in mind here.

The due time for Israel to be saved was when the Messiah came, and Paul didn't get saved until after the due time for Israel.

Israel will however be born again in one day at the onset of the kingdom when they recognize their true Messiah. Psalm 53:6, Isaiah 2:3 and Romans 11:26.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

I am the least of the apostles that am not meet to be called an apostle: He deemed himself not fit to be called an apostle, because he was the chief (lead) sinner against the church of God. 1st Timothy 1:15-16.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

By the grace of God I am what I am: An apostle of the Gentiles. Romans 11:13.

His grace which was bestowed upon me: Romans 12:3, 15:15, 1st Corinthians 3:10, 2nd Corinthians 6:1 & Galatians 2:9.

11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

Verse nine also goes with verse eight and helps us understand the context and meaning of Paul's comment.

He says he doesn't deserve to be called an apostle because he persecuted the kingdom church that the apostles were building, but by grace Jesus saved the chief of sinners (out of due time).

Paul would have rather been saved in due time, so that all the memories of his torturing and killing of those early believers would not be a part of his past, but he couldn't change the past, and neither can we.

We are what we are as Paul is what he is. Has the grace that has been bestowed upon you been in vain? Paul's grace wasn't, he got busy serving the Lord.

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:

Some among you: Some Corinthians had a hard time with the idea of a resurrection of the body, while others were willing to accept that Christ arose bodily, and still others only believed he rose spiritually.

Resurrection of the dead: There is a resurrection of the just, and the unjust in the bible. Acts 24:15 & 2nd Peter 2:9.

The just are resurrected to eternal life, while the unjust are resurrected to be judged and cast into the lake of fire for eternity.

14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, 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; ye are yet in your sins.

Your faith is also vain: This is what Paul meant about some having believed in vain at the beginning of this chapter.

It is an empty faith if one does not believe in an empty tomb! Christ is risen, and because he is risen as the first fruits, so we also will arise from the dead.

If there was no resurrection of Christ then there is no forgiveness of sins because the wages of sin is death, and he paid our wages for us to take away our sin.

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 firstfruits of them that slept.

They which are fallen asleep in Christ: Those who had believed in Christ and who had died would be in torment still unto this day if the resurrection were not true.

The firstfruits of them that slept: It says in verse twenty that Christ rose from the dead which means the others remained asleep or among the dead. Sleep is often used as a synonym for death in the scriptures. Deuteronomy 31:16.

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 firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

By man came death: By Adam's sin death came upon all men as we are all now born sinners.

By man came also the resurrection: The good news however is that Christ died for all mankind to make us alive one day if we are in Christ.

It is available to all who will call upon him but unfortunately all do not. Jesus Christ is the second Adam (the God man) that could reverse what the first Adam messed up.

In Adam: Sin is passed down to each human being by our forefather.

In Christ: We are all in Adam, but only those who believe the gospel are in Christ when they die.

The bible records that the graves were opened after Christ's resurrection and many bodies of the old testament saints that slept arose and appeared unto many in Jerusalem in Matthew 27:52-53.

This does not fulfill what Paul is talking about here in verse twenty-three because he qualifies that group as those that are Christ's at his coming. He hasn't come yet so their bodies are not raised yet.

What happened to the bodies of those old testament saints? Did all of the old testament saints rise because Christ was fulfilling a type of the firstfruit offering on the same day the priests were waving the firstfruit offering unto God?

Not all the saints arose on that day; only many saints around Jerusalem arose on that day."

These bodies then came to Jerusalem and appeared to many in Jerusalem, not all. So, the number was obviously small just like the wave offering was a small example of the amount fruit that was to soon be harvested.

If we die before the rapture, then the bodies of those who are dead in Christ will rise first and then those that are alive at his coming will immediately follow and we shall all be changed. The dead (those that sleep) get a head start.

Every man in his own order: God is a God of order, and this statement has led some to conclude that Paul refers to both comings of Christ instead of just his coming in the clouds at the rapture.

Christ the firstfruits: This is the first order, it happened 2,000 years ago.

They that are Christ's at his coming: This will happen at the rapture. 1st Thessalonians 4:13-17.

The order is easy to understand as we in the body of Christ are made alive and go up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and then the world goes through the time of Jacob's trouble.

After its completion believing Israel is resurrected in a one day when Christ appears and sets up his earthly kingdom. Isaiah 66:8.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Then cometh the end: Christ must rule for a thousand years before he delivers up the kingdom to God the Father. Death will still exist throughout Christ's kingdom, but it will not reign anymore.

He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet: *Psalm 110:1.*

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death: Death not a created being as Satan is but it is a consequence for our sin.

When a person dies at an hundred years of age for having rejected Christ's authority in the millennial kingdom he will be thought of as a mere child.

Death will also have an end at the end of the kingdom after Satan has been cast into the lake of fire with those who have been raised

to stand at the great white throne judgment and been found unworthy. Revelation 20:11.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 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.

Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him: Christ shall have his day very soon, and then he shall place himself back under subjection to his Father as in the past.

That God may be all in all: For four thousand years God the Father had the preeminence, then for three years the Son of God was recognized by only a handful as the Christ, but he never reigned.

Then for the last two thousand years the Holy Spirit has lived inside all those who have believed the gospel of the grace of God, while Christ sat on the right hand of the Father in heaven.

When Christ returns, he will finally reign for a thousand years before subjecting himself under God the Father that God may be all in all in eternity future.

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 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 advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

Baptized for the dead: No scripture is of any private interpretation, which simply means you cannot take an obscure passage of scripture like this one and build a doctrine from it.

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line, to establish any doctrine. Isaiah 28:10 & 13.

An explanation is found when we relate it to the subject of baptism and resurrection, however. Who are baptized today? People who have died unto Christ! Romans 6:1-11.

These are not corpses in a graveyard, but people who have died to themselves. Paul said that he dies daily.

We were dead in our trespasses and sins, but we are made alive in Christ. Those of us who were baptized into Christ (not with water) are baptized into his death.

Romans six is referring to spirit baptism not water just as verse twenty-nine refers to spirit baptism. 1st Corinthians 12:13.

I have fought with beasts at Ephesus: This is a reference to the uproar started by Demetrius the silversmith who gathered all of his workmen of like occupation and rioted against Paul. Acts 19:23-20:1.

What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not: Why should Paul have risked his life preaching to others if there was no resurrection and afterlife?

He shouldn't have if it were not true, but since it is, it was something he was willing to die for so that others may be rescued from the darkness of Satan.

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.

Awake to righteousness, and sin not: Wake up to who you are in Christ, someone who is dead to sin, and live righteously because of that. Romans 6:1-11.

35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? 36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: 37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: 38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

Quickened: To be made alive. Paul, as he often does, uses a farming illustration to prove his point. Paul relates our bodies to a seed which has been sowed in the earth.

The seed must first die before it can be made alive again with the water, soil nutrients and the sunlight, just as we must die to put off our corruptible bodies and bring forth an incorruptible body that will be immortal in the heavens.

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 differeth from another star in glory.

Celestial bodies: Heavenly bodies.

Bodies terrestrial: Earthly bodies.

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.

It is sown in corruption: The resurrection of the dead will happen once a corruptible body of a believer has died because of sin and has been buried.

It is raised in incorruption: Then after its physical death it will put on incorruption at the rapture because the person who had inhabited that body had placed their trust in the faith of Christ while they were alive.

It is sown in dishonour: We all die because of the curse of sin.

It is raised in glory: We (believers) will all live because of Christ.

It is sown in weakness: Our bodies are deteriorating because of sin.

It is raised in power: Our bodies are raised by Jesus Christ who is eternal life.

It is sown a natural body: Dust goes back to dust.

It is raised a spiritual body: This mortal puts on immortality.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. *Genesis 2:7.*

The first man Adam was made a living soul: When God breathed into him the breath of life.

The last Adam was made a quickening spirit: This is speaking of the Lord from heaven, Jesus Christ. *Romans 5:14.*

46 Howbeit 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.

The Lord from heaven: Is speaking about Christ the last Adam. Adam was made a living soul when God breathed into Adam the breath of life. The first man is dirt, while the second man is the Lord.

Christ on the other hand was made a quickening spirit. Adam was the natural man and Christ is the spiritual man that can make alive all who are in him by faith.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

We have born the image of the earthy: We already bear the image of our earthly father Adam.

We shall also bear the image of the heavenly: We shall soon bare the image of the second Adam, which is Christ, which is far better.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God: The earthy image of our sinful ancestor Adam, which we now bare, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, so it must have a new image after Christ.

It's the sin (corruption) which brought death to us that must be done away with, and incorruption must be inherited through the death of the second Adam on our behalf.

51 Behold, I shew 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.

Behold, I shew you a mystery: Paul shows the body of Christ here the mystery of the rapture of the church. The rapture is the last event of the mystery program that was revealed solely to the Apostle of the Gentiles. *Romans 11:13.*

The last trump: The last trump is not a trumpet, but a trump. This is not a person, nor an Archangel, but it is the noise that is made by the trumpet.

It is the trump of God, not the trumpets of the seven angels found in the book of the Revelation. *1st Thessalonians 4:16.*

The very next thing that happens is the prophecy program starts back up with Israel once again as the main character, and the time of Jacob's trouble begins, otherwise known as the tribulation period. *Jeremiah 30:7.*

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 thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? *Isaiah 25:8 & Hosea 13:14.*

This corruption must put on incorruption: The body of Christ (the church) has a heavenly destiny.

In order for us to dwell in the heavenlies our corruptible (decaying due to sin) bodies must be changed to incorruptible ones (immortal ones).

Christ has accomplished that for us, and we will receive that new body one day, either upon death or at the rapture of the body of Christ.

We will no longer be mortal beings, but we will put on immortality (eternal life), which we already possess as a member of the body of Christ.

Then we will experience that when our bodies go through that necessary change for us to become immortal.

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The sting of death is sin: The law gives sin its strength to hold the sinner in death, but God has given us the victory through the resurrection of Christ approximately two thousand years ago.

The strength of sin is the law: The wages of sin is death. *Ezekiel 18:4, 20 & Romans 6:23.*

The victory through our Lord Jesus Christ: Death had no hold on Jesus Christ because he had no sin! It will not hold us in the grace either who have trusted in Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Because of what Paul has told us about what God has done for us we ought to be steadfast in the truth, in believing it as well as doing it (abounding in the work of the Lord). Our labor for Christ will not be in vain.

Chapter Sixteen

The Collection

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

The collection for the saints: Notice the apostolic authority Paul held as the apostle of the Gentiles. He gave orders to the Gentile churches of Galatia, and Corinth, to support the suffering Jewish church back in Jerusalem.

As I had given order to the churches: Paul had his authority given to him by God when he placed him in the office as the apostle to the Gentiles. That office had as its main responsibility the care of all the churches.

This was an offering that the Gentiles were commanded to give because they had all been partakers of Israel's spiritual blessings, so they were to in turn minister to them in carnal things.

Upon the first day of the week: Sunday.

This was a special offering that was to be taken by the apostle Paul to the needy saints back in Jerusalem who were suffering great persecution as well as financial hardships because of the great dearth that was in the land at that time.

Paul wanted the money stored up each week when worshippers came to services so that he wouldn't have to spend unnecessary time gathering the offering once he arrived and he could expedite it to those in need easier.

As God hath prospered him: Notice Paul didn't demand this church and those of Galatian to give him a tithe. We in the body of Christ were never commanded to tithe.

3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. 4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

If it be meet that I go also: Paul wasn't sure if God would allow him to go up to Jerusalem with those that had given to the Jewish church, because whenever he showed up in Jerusalem there was always trouble there because of his zeal for his countryman.

There was also trouble there because God wanted Paul reaching the Gentiles around the world and not focusing on his friends and associates back in Jerusalem.

Paul gladly went where he did not want to go in the flesh. He would have rather stayed in Jerusalem trying to win his countryman, but that was not to be, and Paul had no problem with that. How about you?

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, yea, and winter with you, that ye 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 a while with you, if the Lord permit. 8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Paul was called to Macedonia in a vision in Acts chapter sixteen and he wanted to make full proof of his ministry there, but he needed to have the support of the churches.

Paul as you will see gave many orders to the churches and expected them to do as he said as he was the apostle of the Gentiles.

Today, we do not have any apostolic succession handed down to us from Paul (the apostle of the Gentiles) to his successor, and on and on to some modern-day apostle. Romans 11:13.

The office however lives on through the writings of the apostle of the Gentiles until that last day of this age of grace is completed at the rapture of the church.

But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost: Pentecost is the fourth of seven feasts of the Jews.

The two most momentous days on which this feast occurred were when Moses received the law on Mount Sinai (3,000 died on this day), and 50 days after Jesus' resurrection (3,000 were saved on this day). Acts 2:1 & 20:16.

For a great door and effectual is opened unto me: *2nd Corinthians 2:12 & Colossians 4:3.*

There are many adversaries: *2nd Timothy 3:11-13.*

10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. 11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

See that he may be with you without fear: They were to take care of him physically, and financially.

Let no man therefore despise him: Timotheus was a young man and for that reason he had not been given the respect he should have received by many.

This made Timotheus fearful of leading them and so Paul had to remind them of his calling and position as a servant of God. 1st Timothy 4:12.

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.

Paul was not told by God to send Apollos to Corinth, and neither was Apollos instructed by God, or an Angel, to go to Corinth at that particular time.

He did agree that he should go there eventually when what he was currently doing for the Lord was over.

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 14 Let all your things be done with charity.

Quit you like men: It means to be like men who stand fast in the faith and are strong. Paul offers a few parting words of encouragement to further direct the saints there in Corinth before his soon arrival. We ought to be encouragers as well.

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

The firstfruits of Achaia: Stephanas or Stephen was the firstfruits of that region, he was the first person saved in the region of Achaian under Paul's preaching.

16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth. 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 ye them that are such.

Submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us: Paul reminds this church to be submissive to those that God has placed over them in the ministry.

19 The churches of Asia salute you. and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss. 21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

Aquila and Priscilla: Paul's helpers who he met in Corinth. Acts 18:2, 18, 26 & Romans 16:3.

The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand: Paul had people write the majority of his epistles as the Lord dispensed them to him as mentioned in the following verses, but he always added his personal touch to the letters by writing a salutation to them.

22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. 24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Let him be Anathema Maranatha: If someone doesn't want to love the Lord after hearing the good news of his love towards mankind then let them be cursed.

The word Anathema means to be accursed or damned. This is the only time that this word is not translated. Romans 9:3.

The first epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi by Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus and Timotheus.

The End

Second Corinthians

Chapter One

The God of all Comfort

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:

An apostle of Jesus Christ: A sent one. When Paul was in Corinth originally, he showed the Corinthians his apostleship by his patience, signs, wonders, and mighty deeds as is recorded in chapter twelve of this epistle.

By the will of God: 1st Corinthians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, Colossians 1:1 & 2nd Timothy 1:1.

The church of God: A called out assembly of believers. 1st Corinthians 1:2 & 1st Timothy 3:5. The church at Jerusalem was also called a church of God. 1st Corinthians 15:9 & Galatians 1:13.

2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be to you and peace: This is the dispensation of grace, and God is not at enmity (war) with us. Paul never mentions grace and peace as coming from the holy Spirit because he is dwelling in them that are in the body of Christ.

From God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace does not come from Paul, but rather it comes from God the Father, and Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

The father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Psalm 2:7, Matthew 3:17 & Ephesians 1:3.

The Father of mercies: Real mercy originates from God, for He alone is qualified to bestow it upon whomsoever He chooses. He was merciful to us in saving us when we deserved hell. Blessed be His name.

The God of all comfort: He can comfort us in any situation we find ourselves in here on the earth concerning physical things and he can also comfort us concerning all spiritual things.

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. 2nd Corinthians 7:6 & 13.

That we may be able to comfort them which are also in any trouble: Our tribulation can bring us comfort from God, and it is also for the benefit of others around us so that they might see Christ in us during our tribulation.

We are able to comfort others when we tell them of the tribulation we went through and how God brought us through it.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

The sufferings of Christ abound in us: There were many persecutions that Paul and his helpers endured, and Paul calls those sufferings, the sufferings of Christ.

Paul filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for the body's sake, which is the church so that he could make what Christ did for us known to the world. Colossians 1:24.

So our consolation also aboundeth by Christ: If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. 2nd Timothy 2:12.

Our consolation is what we receive because we have suffered for Christ. Eternal life, rewards. Romans 15:5, 2nd Corinthians 7:7, Philippians 2:1 & 2nd Thessalonians 2:16.

6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation 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 and salvation.

Paul was not teaching that consolation and salvation may be obtained by the Corinthians at the expense of Paul being persecuted for bringing the gospel to them.

Salvation was already secured for them in the person of Christ when he suffered and died for the sins of the world, but Paul was saying to the Corinthians that there is reward (consolation) for the suffering they endured.

As Paul and Timothy ministered and were persecuted, people were saved because of their willingness to suffer persecution repeatedly. They will be rewarded for their sacrifice as will you for yours.

7 And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.

The consolation: The reward in the end. 2nd Timothy 2:12.

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: Acts 19:23.

Our trouble which came to us in Asia: The Corinthians drew strength from the testimony of Paul and Timothy that they endured the persecution at Philippi and in Ephesus (which is in Asia), and yet they came out on the other side still praising God.

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

We had the sentence of death in ourselves: Paul and Timothy came to the point that there was no way they could deliver themselves and God stepped in and delivered them. 2nd Corinthians 4.

If God can raise someone from the dead, then saving their life would be a breeze. Paul learned from this that God would be there for him to help him accomplish his will for his life.

11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

The gift bestowed upon us: The offering that was taken up.

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 in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. 13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; 14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Paul was speaking about his previous letter to them in verse thirteen and that he realized that some had received his first letter and had repented while unfortunately the obedience was only in part.

Some had not yet repented, but Paul rejoiced in those that had repented, and that they could now rejoice as they ought to in having gotten right with God and man.

In the day of the Lord Jesus: The rapture of the body of Christ.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit;

A second benefit: Paul wanted to impart more truth to the Corinthians, but the time was not ready because there was still too much going on in Corinth that needed to be corrected before they could receive something new from Paul.

There were still some babes in Christ that needed to get off the bottle spiritually speaking.

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 Judaea. 17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, and nay? 18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

And of you to be brought on my way toward you: The Corinthians were to help Paul get to Judaea financially.

That with me there should be yea, and nay: Paul spoke for God and there was no “back and forth” going on, just Paul telling them like it was about that which God expects of us. He did not say he would come based on his fleshly desire.

It was his prayer that he could go if God wanted him to go at that time because there were some that were not ready for Paul to visit yet. He truly wanted to go only when God thought it to be best not himself or someone at Corinth.

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. 20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

In him was yea: A promise from Christ to either Paul for the body of Christ is a guarantee. What God says will happen, will happen. Amen!

21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; 22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

He which stablisheth us with you in Christ: Paul talked about the Corinthians being established by God’s word in Paul’s gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery. Romans 16:25.

See also 1st Thessalonians 3:13, 2nd Thessalonians 2:17 & 3:3.

And hath anointed us: We were anointed when we were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. It means we were set apart (consecrated). 1st Corinthians 12:13.

Who hath also sealed us: Ephesians 1:13 & 4:30.

And given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts: The earnest is a down payment of the Spirit that we received when we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body. 2nd Corinthians 5:5 & Ephesians 1:14.

The rest of the payment and the best are yet to come when we step into the heavens one day.

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 ye stand.

I call God for a record upon my soul: A similar thing is said by God and Moses. Deuteronomy 30:19 & 31:28.

Dominion over your faith: Paul did not use his office as the apostle to the Gentiles to demand things of people that would provide comfort for him in his life in fact the opposite was true.

Paul didn’t want anyone to have a reason to doubt his sincerity in bringing them the gospel of the grace of God.

Helpers of your joy: Paul rejoiced that he was able to help minister unto the people of Corinth just like Christ who came to minister and not be ministered unto.

Chapter Two

Forgiving in the Person of Christ

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 maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?

Paul was sending the church in Corinth this letter in lieu of a visit for the time being because the atmosphere Paul discerned was not ready for his return.

He had hoped this epistle would show his desire for those who had not repented of their previous deeds in allowing sin to fester in the congregation and who even gloried in what they professed to be their liberality in Christ.

They would now understand that salvation does not give us the right to condone sin in our midst. These according to this epistle were Paul’s chief opponents in the church.

He had also hoped that those who had repented and who had exercised church discipline on the man who was living in open incest would now forgive that man and restore him seeing how he had repented of his gross immorality.

A judgmental attitude and an attitude of condoning any sin is sin itself. Satan is a master at using the sin in a church committed by one or a small handful of believers and allowing others to sin concerning their attitudes concerning that sin.

Those that had done the right thing in disciplining this man Paul was happy about, but then some of those same people now would not forgive the person and allow him back into the congregation once he had repented which was just as wrong.

Others thought the whole thing was a waste of time because they were under grace and acted as if they could do what they pleased, and God would not care.

Paul wanted every aspect of this sin, which turned into a multitude of sins, to be resolved biblically by all so that they may be joy in the church at Corinth again.

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.

If each party continued in their sin, then Paul would of course be sorrowful and not joyful when he returned to Corinth.

He would address each area of this problem with the word of God as his tool to bring about a healing to the seemingly insurmountable rift that had developed about a man who now was very remorseful over his sin.

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

The more Paul loved the church at Corinth the more he would care that they would make the right decisions. Paul not only loved the church at Corinth because he was the one that established it, they were like family to him.

He had the responsibility as their apostle to see that they continued in the faith and practices that were delivered unto them by him. Some in this church were acting like rebellious teenagers who want no authority in their life but themselves.

5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

I may not overcharge you all: One man's sin had turned a church upside down and Satan was gaining a stronger foothold in this church, even after the person had repented. 1st Corinthians 5:1.

Such a man: If the self-righteous crowd were to continue in their ways unchecked, then the repentant persons sorrow could lead to his departure because of his overmuch sorrow.

8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

Paul wanted the church to go to him and ask him to return to the church and to confirm that they love him in the Lord. It is one thing

to say you have forgiven someone and it is another thing to show them you have forgiven them.

10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, 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.

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: Forgiveness is a shield that deflects the wiles (devises) of Satan, so it doesn't hurt us.

A door was opened

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 into Macedonia.

Christ's gospel: The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

A door was opened unto me of the Lord: 1st Corinthians 16:9 & Colossians 4:3.

I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus: Titus told Paul that the Corinthians were remorseful after Paul's first letter to them. 2nd Corinthians 7:5-7.

14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

The savour of his knowledge: When we do the right thing in the right way God accepts our offerings and it is a sweet savor (smell) to him and to those around us who are saved or lost.

A savour of death unto death: For the lost it shows them both the love of God and eternal consequences of rebelling against his will.

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.

Many, which corrupt the word of God: Those who corrupt the word of God were those who gloried in the sin of this man early on because it justified their sins.

They used this situation to get what they wanted instead of what God intended. God's word did what was intended once it was acted upon.

Chapter Three

Able Ministers of the New Testament

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?

Do we begin again to commend ourselves: They once recognized Paul's apostleship when he first came there and began their church. Acts 18.

Epistles of commendation: Paul should not have to list his credentials to this church because he started it at God's leading, and many there knew that, but it didn't take much for Satan to lead people away from their foundation.

Paul's apostleship was questioned by some at Corinth because he was not one of the twelve apostles to the nation of Israel.

The twelve needed no epistle of commendation, but many that had been sent out to do a work from Jerusalem would often be sent with letters of commendation from the twelve verifying this person was speaking on their behalf, or with their approval.

Paul did not need a letter of commendation for Corinth because Paul was not sent out as a representative of the church in Jerusalem, but he was sent out by Christ himself as the apostle of the Gentiles. Romans 11:13.

It was Paul that had the responsibility to send out letters of commendation to churches on the behalf of those he had sent out to do a work among the Gentiles.

In many of his epistles Paul recommends a particular minister to be received by a church as being sent from him. For example:

Romans 16:1 *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.*

Timothy (Timotheus) was sent by Paul to both Corinth and Thessalonica with letters of commendation from him to them to receive him as coming from Paul. 1st Corinthians 4:17, 16:10 & Philippians 2:19.

2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

Ye are our epistle: The church at Corinth itself was Paul's letter of commendation written as Paul says in his heart which is far better than any letter that could be forged.

Paul said that his epistle (the Corinthians) was first of all known of all men, and also read of all men in that area.

Everyone knew of the church in Corinth because it was the largest of Paul's churches. Unfortunately, not everything that people knew about this church was good.

3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

God did a work through his holy Spirit in the lives of these Corinthian people in bringing them to Christ through Paul's ministry an everyone knew that it was God.

Where were the twelve? They were busy still reaching out unto none but the circumcision (Jews) and Paul it was that was given the dispensation of the grace of God to take the gospel of the grace of God to the Gentiles.

Not in tables of stone: Notice Paul's comparison of the tables of stone (the law of Moses) with the fleshy tables of the heart.

The dispensation of Grace is better than the dispensation of the law because we obey out of our heart of love instead of out of fear of not doing everything on a list written in stone.

4 And such trust have we through Christ to Godward: 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

Our sufficiency is of God: The Corinthian church itself was their letter of commendation to those who thought they needed a letter of approval from Jerusalem.

Paul was not under the authority of Jerusalem, nor did they send him, God did, and he was all they needed.

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Able ministers of the new testament: Christ died and shed his innocent blood, which was shed for all people in every dispensation.

Hebrews 9:17 *A testament is of force after men are dead: it is no strength at all while the testator liveth.*

Not of the letter: The letter of the law. In Jeremiah 31:31 God said through Jeremiah that he would make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.

Which simply means the two nations will be re-united as one nation during the kingdom, but then it goes on to say that he will write the law in their hearts.

That hasn't happened yet, and that is precisely why Peter and the other eleven apostles to the nation of Israel are not described as also being able ministers of the new testament.

They will be one day when Israel is reunited in the kingdom, and they sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel but not today. Matthew 19:28.

But of the spirit: Today the church, the body of Christ, is made able ministers of the new testament by knowing God's plan for this age.

We have to be able to rightly divide the mystery epistles given to the body of Christ from the Hebrew epistles. An able minister doesn't mix them with the new testament teachings regarding Israel's future in their kingdom.

7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

The ministration of death, written and engraven in stones: The wages of sin is death. The law was given to show that there was none righteous, no not one.

Galatians teaches us that the law (the first testament) was given because of transgressions until the seed should come.

That seed was Jesus Christ, and he is the testator that had to die fulfilling the old to usher in the new which will be far better, because it will be written in their (Israel's) hearts and not on stone.

While the testator died to redeem them that were under the law, he also died for us that would believe during the age of grace. Both groups are recipients of salvation because of his work on Calvary.

This ministration (the law) is also referred to as “the ministration of condemnation” in verse eight below.

The glory of his countenance: His face that shined with God’s glory on it.

Which glory was to be done away: Just as the glory upon Moses gradually faded away so the law would wax old and vanish away. Hebrews 8:13.

8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? 9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

The ministration of the spirit: This is also called “the ministration of righteousness” in verse nine.

10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. 11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

That which is done away: The law. The new testament is for the house of Judah, and for the house of Israel when they are united again during the kingdom. Jeremiah 31:31.

Paul teaches us today in the body of Christ that we are benefactors of the new testament as well as Israel howbeit in a different way.

We are benefitted in spiritual ways in heavenly places while Israel will be benefitted in physical ways during the kingdom.

Much more that which remaineth is glorious: What we in the body of Christ have today under grace is much more glorious than what Israel had under the law.

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

We have such hope: We have the rapture of all saints at the end of this age. Israel under the law had to look forward to the seventieth week of Daniel before their kingdom.

The promises of Jeremiah 31:31 were not made to the body of Christ. God will enable the Jew in the kingdom to keep the law that God will write on their hearts because of what transpired on the cross for them.

13 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: *Exodus 34:33.*

As Moses, which put a veil over his face: A veil is meant to conceal what is underneath. While Moses dictated the law to Israel there was no veil upon his face and the people could see the glory of the Lord upon him as he spoke.

To the end of that which is abolished: When he had finished speaking unto them, he then placed the veil on his face at that time, so the people could not see the glory of the Lord departing.

The law was abolished in Christ, remember what the leaders of Israel said when they heard Stephen preaching a message given to him by the Lord? Acts 6:15.

We don’t have to put a veil over our face when we finish telling the wonderful ministry of grace that God has given to us because it will not fade away because it is more glorious.

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

Their minds were blinded: Israel could not see the fulfillment of the law in the Messiah because they chose not to see based on their flesh’s desire to keep themselves under the law because of tradition.

For until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away: It goes on to say, “in the reading of the old testament.”

In Paul’s day the blindness of their minds was still there as they would read the old testament, but it didn’t have to be.

Which veil is done away in Christ: When a Jew today accepts Christ as their Saviour they are in Christ’s body (in Christ) and can see things they couldn’t see previously in God’s word.

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.

Even to this day, when Moses is read: the veil is upon their heart: Paul isn’t speaking to the individual Jew here, but to the nation as a whole. They have eyes that cannot see because they rejected God’s word in the past.

When it shall turn to the Lord: The “it” is a reference to Israel. There is coming a day when all of Israel will be saved and have that veil taken away at the end of the time of Jacob’s trouble just prior to the beginning of the kingdom.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

There is liberty: This is not speaking of liberty to sin, but have liberty to serve God in love from the hearts and not out of duty to the Law.

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.

From glory to glory: We do not have a veil upon our faces or on our hearts today as believers because we were never under the law in the first place.

We look at what Christ has done, and we see it as clearly as looking in a glass mirror and we move from the glory of a created being to the glory of the new creature by the Spirit of the Lord.

Chapter Four

The Light of the Glorious Gospel

1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint 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.

Having this ministry: The ministry of reconciliation. See chapter three.

Handling the word of God deceitfully: To not rightly divide the word of truth is to handle the word of God deceitfully.

Sincere people are in the ministry, and they are deceiving the people they want to help but they have been deceived by someone in their past who did not know how to rightly divide the word of truth. 2nd Timothy 2:15.

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. Verse 6.

Paul here proclaimed to the Corinthian hearers that the gospel that we are supposed to preach today, the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:14), is hidden to them that are lost.

Our gospel: He called it here "our gospel" because it was different from the kingdom gospel that was still being preached back in Israel to the circumcision. The word gospel simply means good news. Matthew 4:23.

The gospel that Paul preached was unheard of to the Jew under the law because Paul emphasized the cross as the means by which people could be saved.

Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom,

The god of this world: Satan is the god (small g) of this world as all who do not belong to Christ by being saved by believing Paul's gospel are following their father (god) the devil.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

While Paul magnifies his office and his message, he is careful never to magnify himself. Romans 11:13.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Genesis 1:1-2.

Paul takes us back to the account of creation and compares it to our receiving the gospel.

He also compares the gospel that he preaches today as a light that shines in our hearts and that shows the glory of God not on the face of Moses the law giver but an even more glorious light emanating from the face of Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

This treasure in earthen vessels: This is the gospel of grace that he and we preach today, and the "earthen vessels" are the recipients that carry that good news.

God could have chosen the angels to preach his gospel instead of fallen sinful man, but he uses the weak things of this world to confound the strong so that He gets all the glory.

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;

Paul, in his comparison of believers being similar to vessels informs us that even though we as vessels may be surrounded by

danger, we don't have to cry out to the world to save us for He is there.

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

Oh, that we would be found faithful to want to tell others of Christ's sacrificial dying on our behalf as well as his perfect life which he lived for us that we might have eternal life.

They go hand in hand, you can't have one without the other. Remember it is our bodies that are the earthen vessels that carry about the glorious gospel.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

As we suffer and make sacrifices by dying to ourselves others will see that Christ like spirit of giving for others in us and they will be attracted to the Christ who dwells in us and lives through us.

Many were risking their lives for the gospel's sake and people were receiving life because of it, eternal life.

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Psalm 116:10.

Paul quotes king David where he is praising God for his goodness in life and death, and while David is alive, he plans to make the best of it and praise the Lord.

He will not fear death while he is alive, and he will praise him in all his adversities. It wasn't silent praise, nor was it secret praise, David was public with his praise. We should be public with the gospel.

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

He which raised up the Lord Jesus: Here Paul talks about the blessed hope or rapture of the body of Christ (the church) as if he expects Christ to come in his lifetime by his use of the pronoun "us" in verse fourteen where he talks about being raised up. Romans 4:24.

Shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you: Romans 4:24 & Ephesians 5:22.

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

Paul wants us to know that through our thanksgiving towards God for his grace others will see and understand the glory of God for themselves.

Our outward man perish: Our outward body is decaying daily because of the sin nature we inherited from Adam.

The inward man is renewed day by day: It is our inner man that he renews daily through his Spirit. Ephesians 4:23 and Colossians 3:10.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment: The things we suffer in this life are but a small thing compared to the blessings of eternity.

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.

Temporal: Temporary.

Eternal: They will last forever. There are rewards for our service and suffering for the cause of Christ which will be revealed one day when faith becomes sight.

When we stand in his presence, we will clearly see the eternal investments that we have made in this life, and it will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

Chapter Five

Ambassadors of Reconciliation

1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved: Our fleshly body is decaying, and it will dissolve in death or at the rapture.

A building of God: Our resurrected body is one that is eternal that will not decay, and it will live eternally in the heavens.

Eternal in the heavens: We will have bodies designed to live eternally in the heavens which should tell you that you will not live on the earth for eternity. We can come to the earth and New Jerusalem but we have an heavenly destiny in the body of Christ. Israel has an earthly destiny and inheritance.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

For in this we groan: In this earthly house (our bodies), we ache and groan and so much more as this tabernacle (body) ages.

Our house which is from heaven: This mortal body will put on immortality.

We shall not be found naked: We will not go into eternity disembodied nor as an angel, but God has a body for us that is eternal that can survive in the presence of a holy God and move about in the heavens.

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.

Mortality might be swallowed up of life: Our body naturally wants to get its permanent dwelling place that will not have the limits of this present one.

This temporary tabernacle (physical body) will be swallowed up by our permanent house (resurrected body).

Paul taught about it in his epistles to the Romans where he referred to our body's transformation as our adoption, i.e., the redemption of our body (Romans 8:23).

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Not only has he given us a new body but God who is so gracious has also given us something right now that is a guarantee to us that he will also give unto us a new body.

God hath wrought or fashioned for us the selfsame thing that Christ himself has which is a glorious body like unto his according to Philippians 3:21.

That is the earnest of the Spirit: The word "earnest" means a down payment. We have received a down payment on the Spirit, and while we have all of him, he does not yet have all of us.

That will happen when the change happens at death, or the rapture, and then we will follow God fully without the continual resistance of the flesh pulling us toward evil.

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

At home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: To be alive in this sin cursed body means we cannot be in the presence of 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, and to be present with the Lord.

Both death and the rapture will accomplish the same thing, the acquisition of the new body not made with hands but an eternal one in the heavens.

Death means we will immediately be with the Lord in heaven. The rapture also places all of us immediately in the presence of the Lord.

The judgment seat of Christ

9 Wherefore we labour, 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 hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Wherefore we labour: We labor for the Lord because we want to be accepted by the Lord which has absolutely nothing to do with earning our salvation. He has done all that is necessary to earn our salvation.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: All believers in the body of Christ for the last 2,000 years will be judge at the same time.

That every one may receive the things done in his body: This is speaking about the things that everyone has done in Christ's body (the church). Colossians 1:24.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God;

and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

The terror of the Lord: The terror of the Lord is not going to be felt by a believer at the judgment seat of Christ, but it will be experienced for eternity by the one who dies having never accepted Christ.

Therefore, we should all be about persuading men (mankind) to be reconciled to God.

The average believer is not accepted by God in his service and will not experience an easy time at the judgment seat of Christ as he or she is called to give an account for their lack of service to the one who died for them.

Sin or salvation will not be the subject for us at the judgment seat of Christ, but it will be our service after we have been saved. People will be judged for their work as to what sort it was, and if it was profitable.

People who have promoted whatever was popular instead of recognizing Paul's ministry and patterning ours after his will suffer great loss on that day.

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. 13 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

Paul was not bragging of his spirituality but rather he told them that they and he would all stand before God at the judgment seat and that he was warning them that who put on a good show in front of others would one day be humbled.

Paul said that God is the judge whether or not he or they were sincere, and that he was only trying to get them to consider what lies ahead for those who continued in their disobedience.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

The love of Christ: Christ's love should constrain us into his service. Our love for Christ and what he did will never compare to his love for us. Romans 8:35 & Ephesians 3:19.

If one died for all then all, then were all dead: Christ died our death for us. So, we should live his life through us. In Romans 6:23 it says the wages of sin is death. Christ had no sin, yet he died for me a sinner.

So, I died with Christ, but only the sinless Christ could pay the sinners wages because he owed nothing. Death had no hold on Christ so he could resurrection himself from the dead.

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.

Too many people today who name the name of Christ and who have received God's grace have kept it to themselves and preachers are partially to blame for not crying out to their congregations to get busy serving the Lord.

They live unto themselves and not unto Christ who died for them. Live unto God it has eternal rewards!

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: We no longer know Christ according to his earthly ministry, but we know him according to his ascended ministry, which was revealed to the Apostle Paul.

Since he died for us, we as believers are all dead to the flesh, and we should walk in the Spirit, not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

In Christ: Those who are in the body of Christ by believing the gospel. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

A new creature: The one new man. No longer a Jew, or a Gentile.

Old things are passed away: The old man.

Have you quit sinning since you have gotten saved? No? Why not? Paul is not talking about you quitting all of your old sinful habits and getting new godly ones.

He is talking about who you were before you were saved (the old man), and who you are now (a new creature). You are a saint.

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

All things are of God: This is speaking of the same "all things" that have become new in the new creature found in verse seventeen above.

Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ: God reconcile us to himself while we were his enemies.

The ministry of reconciliation: You (a new creature) have been given a ministry to do in Christ's body (the church) and that is to reconcile the lost to Christ.

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

To wit: To know. Genesis 24:21. How is the one new man possible you may ask? God was in Christ, and he reconciled both Jew and Gentile unto himself by the cross.

The word of reconciliation: 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

For those of us who have put our trust in God's Son for our salvation God is no longer imputing our trespasses unto us in fact our sins were imputed unto Christ.

We have been reconciled to Him and he has given the word of reconciliation to the apostle of the Gentiles to give to us to in turn give to the world to reconcile them to God.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Ambassadors for Christ: Workers for Christ. 2nd Corinthians 6:1.

God did beseech you by us: Because of what we have received we are to go out into this world as his ambassadors and spread the

message that Christ Jesus was in the world reconciling people unto God.

Jesus took our sin, and we got his righteousness.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: God made Christ to be sin for us. Christ was sinless. Hebrews 4:15.

Paul ends verse twenty by beseeching the lost there in the church that are hearing this epistle read before the church to be reconciled to God or to be saved. He continues his plea for the lost in chapter six.

That we might be made the righteousness of God in him: Because we are in Christ's body, we have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith.

Chapter Six

The Ministers of God

1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

As workers together with God: Labourers with Christ in the ministry of reconciliation mentioned in the previous chapter. also 1st Corinthians 3:9.

Receive not the grace of God in vain: What a waste to hear of the wonderful grace of Jesus and not do anything with it (labouring for him). It is an empty selfish life lived when it is not lived for God. 1st Corinthians 15:3 & 10.

Paul had clearly explained the grace of Christ to such a point that any lost person had heard enough to be saved even though the letter up to this point had been mainly written to the saved in Corinth.

Paul knew there were lost people in their midst. Some were first time visitors, others had been there a few weeks, but some were deceiving themselves and sat in the congregation there week after week and were not saved.

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

Paul uses a prophecy for Israel (Isaiah 49:8) as a practical application for us today in the age of grace.

3 Giving no offence in any thing, 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,

In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God: Key word is "in" any situation an ambassador finds themselves in God has a way to endure it, and it is endured "by" the things mentioned in the next three verses.

Paul was beat many times and imprisoned for his faith this would have been enough to get the average minister to have quit, but the apostle Paul, he wasn't in it for the glory he was in the ministry because the love of Christ constrained him.

6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, 7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

By: While there were the setbacks mentioned in verses four and five the blessings that come from God far outweighed them.

When you see God do something that only he could do whether it was through his word or through something miraculous you can't help but get excited about serving God.

8 By honour 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 alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

As: The world sees us ambassadors as deceivers, but God knows we are telling the truth.

As unknown (nobodies), but we will be well known in eternity while the famous of yesterday will be long forgotten, as dying, but we possess eternal life, as chastened by the, but we alive in Christ.

As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing because of those who we bring to Christ and our going to be with him, as poor, yet possessing all things as joint heirs with Christ. Romans 8:17 & 2nd Corinthians 8:9.

11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. 12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. 13 Now for a recompence in the same, I speak as unto my children, be ye also enlarged.

Our mouth is open unto you: Paul and his companions held nothing back from the Corinthians, in declaring to them the truth.

Ye are not straitened in us: They were not in a poor spiritual condition because of Paul, it was because of their own willingness to listen to these false teachers who had come in and deceived them.

Be ye also enlarged: Paul wanted them to be enlarged (rich) spiritually through the word of God.

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: Saved and lost people are going in opposite directions, and we are not to unite with the lost to accomplish the things of God. 1st Corinthians 5:9-11.

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

Belial: Satan or Wickedness. Deuteronomy 13:13.

Infidel: An unbeliever, Pagan, or idolater.

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as

God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. *Exodus 29:45 & Zechariah 13:9.*

Ye are the temple of the living God: 1st Corinthians 3:16-17.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. *Isaiah 52:7-12, Hosea 10:1 & Revelation 21:7.*

Chapter Seven

Godly sorrow worketh Repentance

1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Having therefore these promises: The promises of God's being a father unto us.

2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. 3 I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you. *2nd Corinthians 6:11.*

Paul had given his all for this church, and he would even die in service to them. He wanted them to know of his love and concern for them was just as parents would be for their children.

4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. 5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.

Paul had the concern not only of the churches, but of his companions for their safety and effectiveness in proclaiming God's word because there was opposition from within (the churches) and from without.

6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

The consolation wherewith he was comforted in you: Paul tells the Corinthians that after his first letter he had worried how some of them would respond.

When Titus had come, he told Paul how many of the Corinthians had sorrowed to repentance, and that made him, and his companions rejoice.

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. 9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were

made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Paul rejoiced that the first epistle brought about godly sorrow over their own sin and then the needed repentance.

The man who was living in open sin with his stepmother was disciplined at the instruction of the apostle to them and they felt sorrow that their inaction may have caused Paul grief.

Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation: The man later repented, and Paul instructed them to receive him back into their fellowship unless he would be overtaken in grief.

The sorrow of the world is a sorrow that they were caught, but godly sorrow is a sorrow is the realization that one has grieved God and others, and it is one that leads to repentance and the forsaking of such actions in the future.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that they did the right things in this matter, and God's word did its work in this man's life.

They did not allow Satan to get a foothold in the church regarding this subject, which he would have, if Paul hadn't addressed it out of love for them.

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. 13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

Paul wanted those that they cared for to know that they had their best interests at heart and when Titus returned and told Paul of the Corinthian's response, he was overwhelmed with much joy.

14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. 15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. 16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.

Paul's confidence in the Corinthians was so strengthened by the report he received back from Titus that he could now say he had confidence in the Corinthians in all things.

They truly were making a turnaround in the church, and it was evident to Titus and now to Paul.

Chapter Eight

Grace Purpose Giving

1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed 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.

We do you to wit: To know. Paul reminded the rich Corinthians that the churches of Macedonia were giving liberally to the poor saints back in Jerusalem even though they were under severe persecution.

Paul says that they gave joyfully even though they were in deep poverty. God loves a cheerful giver.

The grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: They knew what it meant to be persecuted and their hearts and wallets were knit together with the saints there.

Macedonia is the place that God called Paul to come and minister when he wanted to head east into Asia, but God wanted Europe to hear the gospel first.

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; 4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

To their power: Their ability to give was increased by God because of their joy in doing so. They had to plead with Paul and his companions to take their offering and to give it to those suffering saints in Jerusalem.

Paul wanted to let these saints in Macedonia get out of their promise to help the church in Jerusalem because they had not foreseen the trouble that would befall them soon after they had originally promised to send relief.

They kept their commitment, and Paul was hoping their testimony would help the Corinthians to keep theirs. The Corinthians were not suffering like those of Macedonia, in fact Corinth was flourishing.

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 also.

Titus was initially used a year earlier in making the plight of the church in Jerusalem known throughout the churches in this region.

It would be he, along with others, that would return at the end of the year on the first day of the week (Sunday) to gather up the offerings for the saints.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. 8 I speak not by commandment, but by

occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

Paul tells the Corinthians to abound in their giving as they have received bountifully from the Lord in so many other areas including their finances.

Paul said others made a commitment out of love and later proved they meant what they said, and he was encouraging these saints to do the same as the poor saints in Macedonia.

Giving money does not prove that you are spiritual, but hoarding it proves the opposite.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye 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.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: He gave his life for us. One year ago, the church under Paul's leadership determined to send relief to the church in Jerusalem.

Paul reminds the rich Corinthians that Christ was also rich, and he became poor so that they might become spiritually rich. Paul wanted the church in Corinth to honor their previous commitment.

They had much, and Paul wanted them to be Christ like in their actions and make some poor people rich by them sending relief to the church in Jerusalem.

The saints in Jerusalem would have a hard time ministering to the saints there and reaching out to any new ones if others would not help.

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 ye have. 12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

Out of that which ye have: We are not to make promises out of that which we do not have.

Paul tells the Corinthians to give out of what they have, not out of what they don't have. Give what you are willing to give out of love in the area of missions.

13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye 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, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack. Exodus 16:18.

Paul assures the rich Corinthians that he is not trying to put the entire burden on them alone. He reminds them that each should give according as God has blessed them.

The shoe will one day be on the other foot and the Corinthians will be in need and other churches that are abounding then will then give to help the church there.

The church in Jerusalem, after receiving a gift from the churches amongst the Gentiles would be knit together with those that had given to them and would naturally want to give when they could to help those who had helped them.

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, 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;

God had put into Titus' heart a desire to help the Corinthians in such a way that was evident to all just as God has gifted each of us with some gift.

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 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.

This grace: It was imperative that the “grace” (bounty or offering) that was bestowed upon the church in Jerusalem arrive unmolested. With churches supplying large offerings it was necessary that many accompany the offering.

Providing for honest things: They were abstaining from the appearance of covetousness by having others involved in watching over the financial gift as stewards.

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 concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. 24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

The proof of your love: The money they had taken up.

Then the necessary preparations could be made for both the gathering to be ready, and a place of rest and refreshment could be prepared for the wayfaring strangers before they headed on to Jerusalem.

Chapter Nine

Sowing Bountifully

1 For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: 2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

It is superfluous: It was unnecessary for him to write unto them further, but Paul had reason to doubt the people of Corinth would

follow through on their pledge to give which they had made a year ago.

3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: 4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we that we say not, ye should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

Paul sent men (Titus included) to help the Corinthians gather their love offering in advance of the other men arriving as representatives from other churches so they would not be embarrassed that they hadn't even collected the offering yet that they had promised a year ago.

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.

And make up beforehand your bounty: These men would gather the offering before Paul arrived so they would not have to have an offering taken in a hurry.

6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

This letter was meant as a sermon to be read in the church at Corinth. This would take the burden off of its leadership, which was dealing with a lot of issues, and this letter, if received, would alleviate those problems.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

As he purposeth in his heart: This is what is known as grace purpose giving. It was a special offering for a specific need.

It was not an outline on how we are to support the local church on a regular basis, but principles can be had from this account that definitely apply.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 9 As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. *Psalms 112:9.*

God is able to make all grace abound toward you: God remembers those who give sacrificially when they are in need later on, and he remembers the opposite as well.

10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; 11 Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

He that ministereth seed to the sower: God is the one who administers the necessary seed to the sower, by putting a burden upon the heart of those who have to give to those that have.

If you are not a sower of what you have been given, you will not be blessed with more seed to sow.

Multiplying your seed sown: The Corinthians would also be enriched by their obedience to God moving in their hearts to be a part of the work by multiplying their blessings from Him.

God does not forget our labor of love and he rewards those that get involved in his work.

12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; 13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; 14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

The want of the saints: The Corinthians would be blessed spiritually by the saints in Jerusalem who would glorify God for their deliverance.

Their prayer for you: The poor saints in Jerusalem would remember the Corinthians favorably in their prayers, who had they not gotten involved in the relief project, the saints in Jerusalem would not have had any reason to get to know the Corinthians.

15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

His unspeakable gift: This is the gift of God of eternal life mentioned in Romans 6:23.

Chapter Ten

Paul's Boasting

1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:

When Jesus walked this earth, he was approachable, as was Paul. Little children loved him because he was truly humble.

Am bold toward you: Paul's words were meek and gentle at times, but they were also bold towards those who were in rebellion against the truth.

2 But I beseech 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.

Paul didn't want to have to be bold when he was with them, because some hadn't yet repented of their open sin. Paul was begging (beseeching) them to repent beforehand.

As if we walked according to the flesh: Some people thought Paul was walking (responding) in the flesh when they read his letters. He was telling them what he would do if they did not repent.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.

We do not war after the flesh: Paul would do his battling not in the church by gathering a big crowd behind him and kicking everyone out that didn't agree with him that would be walking in the flesh (carnal).

The weapons of our warfare: Paul would enter into the spiritual arena to do battle on his knees and though his letters that were written with the sharpest sword ever used in battle, the word of God. Paul was destined to win.

The pulling down of strong holds: These are mostly doctrinal strong holds produced from seducing spirits and the doctrines of devils.

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Casting down imaginations: Most battles for the Christian take place in the mind long before they ever get to the flesh.

And every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God: Pride and lust begin to do their work in the mind and if our thoughts are not brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ we are doomed to fail.

Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ: How can we be victorious in our daily battles? Make it a habit of asking yourself when you are tempted.

What does God's word say about this? If you don't know the answer to something, then wait awhile and find out before listening to the flesh.

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

Having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience: Paul would not shirk his responsibility as the apostle of the Gentiles and overlook something that was hurting the Churches testimony.

Your obedience is fulfilled: This had to do with the offering that was being collected for the destitute kingdom believers back in Jerusalem who were suffering immensely.

The Corinthians had agreed to give a gift, and Paul was reminding them they needed to honor their commitment to them.

7 Do ye 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.

There were those in Corinth who began to look down upon the apostle Paul, because he was not as eloquent as the intellectuals of Corinth.

Because Paul did not have their charisma, or possess a beautiful voice they began to criticize him as being out of touch, and that they knew better than Paul what they ought to do to serve God, after all they were Christians too.

They had forgotten who Paul was to the body of Christ, and he reminds them as he defends his ministry in the next verses.

8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: 9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

Our authority: Paul did not want to use his office to bully anyone around and make them do what he said because he was the apostle of grace and not law.

Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

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, such will we be also in deed when we are present.

Paul was telling the group in Corinth that thought he was bluffing about coming and setting things in order that regardless of his size and weakness he would be coming.

He would be coming to battle with every weapon the Lord would provide to him including his office as the apostle of the Gentiles.

12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

We dare not make ourselves of the number: Paul was not perfect, but he has a perfect Saviour and God's word is perfect, and Paul knew he was standing upon God's word in this instance.

Those who were comparing themselves in Corinth with other Christians and who were commending one another against the apostle Paul were not wise. They would get what was coming to them if they chose to persist in their rebellion to Paul's apostolic authority.

13 But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

Things without our measure: Paul said he was not overstressing his authority and he was not bragging in the least bit as where those he was speaking to.

They remind me of those who spoke against Moses and said you are not the only one God speaks through. The earth opened up and swallowed them straight down to hell.

14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ:

Paul would only go as far as the Lord would allow in the area of finances. As more funds would come in Paul and those in Corinth would take the message to the regions beyond Corinth.

15 Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule 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.

Not boasting of things without our measure: Paul started the church in Corinth and with every new believer that got saved after he left Paul's ministry was enlarged as well as theirs.

And with time the gospel would naturally begin to expand in those areas. Paul did not boast of the growth as coming about because of his efforts although he could.

Others were complaining because they thought Paul was taking credit for their efforts in the area. Paul was excited for the work of others in the area.

17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

Chapter Eleven

The Simplicity that is in Christ

1 Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. 2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Bear with me a little in my folly: Paul was saying, "Let me be foolish for a moment while I explain something."

Some have seen this verse and said, see the church is the bride of Christ. First of all, the term the bride of Christ is not mentioned in scripture. See all of Revelation 21.

The bride of the Lamb is, however, found there. She is identified as the city of New Jerusalem. It is a very Jewish city with the number twelve found all over it. Twelve is the number of Israel.

I have espoused you to one husband: Paul looks upon the Corinthian believers as a father looks upon a daughter who is getting ready to be married.

Paul had begotten the Corinthians through the gospel. He wants only what is best for his Corinthian children. 1st Corinthians 4:15. They were his children in the faith as Timothy was also his son in the faith. 1st Timothy 1:2.

When did their espousal take place? The moment they were saved. They became a part of Christ's body the moment they got saved.

That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ: Notice Paul carefully chose the word "as" (a similitude) to describe them. The Corinthians were "as" a chaste virgin. How did they become "as" a chaste virgin?

Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

Paul took his ministry as the apostle of the Gentiles as serious as a loving father did his to his daughter, and he used a "foolish" similitude to explain his relationship to them, and their relationship to God.

The language can sound a bit confusing at first, but remember when you trusted Christ, you became one with him (you are literally in Christ).

Paul used marriage language because it is a picture of salvation. How long are we saved for? How long is marriage supposed to last? Forever.

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. *Genesis 3.*

The simplicity that is in Christ: Salvation is simple because it is in a person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Legalists came in from Jerusalem and began to tell them how they needed more than what Paul gave them and since they came from Jerusalem many in Corinth believed them and even began to be ashamed of Paul.

4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Another Jesus: They preached the same Jesus, but in a different way. When Jesus came, he came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and not to the Gentiles. He came under the law to redeem them that were under the law.

He came and preached the gospel of the kingdom to a nation that was longing for the long-awaited kingdom to come.

We today preach Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since before the world began, but which was revealed unto Paul to give unto the body of Christ (the church).

There were those of the circumcision who were preaching Jesus Christ according to Israel's prophecy that was under the law. Galatians 4:4.

The mystery program is Jesus Christ's heavenly ministry as the head of the body of Christ while the prophecy program is preaching Jesus Christ according to Israel's earthly kingdom program.

Another spirit: Obviously this is speaking of a seducing spirit.

Another gospel: There were different gospels for the different programs. The gospel of the kingdom is associated with Israel's program, while the gospel of the grace of God is associated with the body of Christ. Galatians 2:7.

5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. 6 But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles: Paul was not behind any of the twelve not even Peter. In fact, he was given more revelations than all of them and the people of Corinth were witnesses of Paul's knowledge.

7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.

I have preached to you the gospel of God freely: Some of the people who had corrupted them with the Law also had letters commendation from Jerusalem.

They were supported by the church in Jerusalem, and they challenged Paul's apostleship because Paul wasn't on the Jerusalem payroll.

That kingdom church was now destitute, and it was relying on the Gentile churches to send relief back to Jerusalem of which Paul was leading the effort.

These deceitful workers were no longer there in Corinth, but they had done their damage and had left just as soon as they had sown enough doubt in enough people's minds in Corinth to give Paul a hard time.

Paul worked a secular job for twelve years prior to this time so that he would not be chargeable to the Corinthians, and other ones as well.

The poorest of churches supported Paul financially while the richest churches never even thought about helping him.

I robbed other churches: This should have floored them in Corinth to be told something they should have seen all along.

Paul knew that this church was a carnal church and to add to it the responsibility to support its founder would just add to their problems. He willingly suffered for them; the deed was never reciprocated back to Paul by them.

9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable 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 unto you, and so will I keep myself.

When I was present with you and wanted: Paul had great needs while he was ministering to these saints, but he did not make any demands of those new believers in Corinth because he didn't want them to think he was in it for the money.

All the while, the more spiritually mature church in Macedonia continually gave to the apostle Paul's needs even though they were a poor church and Corinth was a very wealthy church.

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. 11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. 12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

The very same people who claimed they came from God and that Paul was not with them became dependent upon Paul and the Gentile churches that he established for their very survival.

Paul cared enough to not allow this church to defile itself with this false teaching concerning the law's position in the church in this age of grace, and the Gentiles requirements concerning it. They were not under the law, and they never were. Romans 6:14-15.

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.

False apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ: They transformed themselves into apostles. An apostle was a sent one. They sent themselves.

These false apostles from Jerusalem claimed that Paul was a false apostle because he was not sent out from them, nor supported by them. Paul points out that it is they who were the ones preaching the wrong message to the wrong people.

They were not preaching it to the lost sheep of the house of Israel as they were supposed to still be doing while Israel's kingdom hopes were still being offered, they were taking their message of law out to the Gentiles where it didn't belong.

Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light: He can change.

His ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness: Seducing spirits with doctrines of devils. 1st Timothy 4:1.

16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. 17 That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. 18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

Paul's hand was forced here in that he now had to parade his credentials before them because of these troublemakers attacking his apostleship and he called it foolishness.

19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. 20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. 21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, I speak foolishly, I am bold also.

Paul was explaining to the Corinthian hearers that all the things that these Judaizers were claiming as their credentials to be their teachers, that he had them beat in every area.

Then he tells them that if he were to come there bragging of his credentials it would be foolish and then using them to run someone else down would be a reproach to God and his work.

22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

Paul's sufferings

23 Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

Paul is saying it is useless for people to spend time bragging about what they had done for the cause of Christ in their life. Their emphasis should have been put on what Christ has done through them.

Since they were successful in leading folks away from the simplicity that Paul taught them about in Christ, he now would have to list his credentials which were his sufferings.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 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.

Paul lists, against his will, all the sufferings he endured, not all of his building projects, baptisms, and church attendance.

28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? 30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. 31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

Besides all that Paul daily had the care of all the churches that he had started on his mind and heart, just as he was pleading for the Corinthians he also pleaded for many others.

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.

Paul recalled how that when he had just begun to minister God miraculously delivered him from the hands of his enemies when he could do nothing himself.

God blinded the eyes of these soldiers while at the same time gave discernment to God's people as to how to get Paul out of there with his life.

Paul gloried in his weakness of hiding in a basket because God in his strength chose a foolish basket to deliver him. Acts 9:23-25.

Chapter Twelve

The Messenger of Satan

1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: Paul had at least three visions of the risen Lord in which he had receive revelations of the Lord according to scripture. It is stated here that there were more visions and revelations to come.

There was the time of his calling on the road to Damascus, as well as the time when he was in the temple in Jerusalem and was told to get out of Jerusalem in a vision because the Jews would not hear him.

Paul wanted to stay in Jerusalem and convince his own people and he thought he was the best person for the job because he had recently been the church's greatest enemy, but God knew better.

The third time was while he was imprisoned where he received further revelations concerning the mystery program.

These are called his prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon). These could have all been received at different times.

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth; such an one caught up to the third heaven.

I knew a man in Christ: The man was “in Christ”. Both kingdom saints and grace saints were both “in Christ”. Just in a different way. Kingdom saints were to abide “in” Christ. We are in his body, the church.

Above fourteen years ago: The timing is important here, so find out where Paul was, what he was doing, and with whom he was and you can narrow down the list of who it may have been, but scripture narrows it down to only one person I believe.

Whether in the body, I cannot tell: or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth: Paul is stating that he doesn’t know if this person was in their physical body or caught up in a vision.

Such an one caught up to the third heaven: The third heaven is a reference to that which is beyond both the first (earth’s atmosphere) and second heaven (outer space).

The third heaven is the place where the throne of God is and where we as believers go to at the moment of death.

3 And I knew such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth; 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: Paul repeats himself in back-to-back verses like in Romans 6:14 & 15 because what he is saying is important for us to understand.

He was caught up into paradise: Paradise is where the kingdom saints went when they died. Since paradise was now in heaven, hell could enlarge itself. Isaiah 5:14.

John is the only person according to the scriptures that the Paul knew who fits the description perfectly. Paradise is mentioned only two other times in scripture, and paradise is referred to here as being somewhere in the third heaven.

Paul, as a member of the body of Christ would not go to paradise when he died, but to the presence of the Lord in heaven.

5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory: Twice Paul says he will not glory except in his infirmities or (weaknesses) (V:9) so the very words of Paul himself prove to us that he is not speaking of himself, but of another, if words have any meaning at all.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

It is a natural thing for our flesh to want to glory in itself or to receive glory from others but all that is foolish when God is the one deserving the glory.

Paul was right in correcting any errors these people were spreading concerning his office as the apostle of the Gentiles.

Because of the natural tendency to glory in the flesh when you do something that will be seen by the public, Paul wanted to make sure they did not start to exalt him instead of God.

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 me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

The abundance of the revelations: All the mysteries concerning the body of Christ that were revealed to him.

A thorn in the flesh: God allowed Satan to send a messenger to buffet him that was comparable to a thorn in the flesh.

Many people key on the word flesh, and totally ignore the word “messenger” which denotes personality, and the being that this messenger was sent by Satan.

Three times Paul has had to deal with this problem at Corinth that exalted itself against Paul and his ministry even challenging Paul’s authority there as an apostle.

The messenger of Satan to buffet me: The obvious conclusion is that Satan sent one of his ministering spirits to thwart the work of Paul in the area.

These spirits are behind all the deception preached in every false organization that masquerades as a Church of God.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Was it a physical ailment such as his eyes? That is very possible. Was it something like a satanically lead opposition in the church at Corinth? That is also possible.

But whatever it was doesn’t really matter because the only thing that matters is that God’s grace is sufficient to get us through anything we face in life, and it can also humble us if we need it.

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.

Here we see Paul combining physical infirmities alongside of reproaches and persecutions among other things as things that God can use to keep us humble.

11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

I ought to have been commended of you: Paul tells them the position of honor he should have had in their eyes and hearts had they been obedient to God as their apostle.

Because they were not obedient to God, they naturally would not be obedient to someone who would remind them of their sins.

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

The signs of an apostle: Paul spoke in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:18), he raised a man from the dead, he cast out devils from those that were possessed, and he healed many people in his early ministry.

13 For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.

Paul reminds the rich Corinthian that while he was there, he didn't require them to financially support him which they should have, and he regrets not having them do so.

They now felt no obligation to help the church in Jerusalem by sending them what they had originally promised. Paul felt partially to blame for that.

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.

I seek not yours, but you: Paul knew some of his opposition would claim Paul was in the ministry for the money as a way to undermine his authority.

Paul took that excuse away from them by telling them in advance that he wanted nothing from them but their obedience to God.

He wanted to give to those who were acting like disobedient children towards him instead of receiving from them.

The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children: Paul was their father in the faith having begotten them through the gospel. 1st Corinthians 4:15.

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

This is true in many areas of life. The food that is good for us many do not like. The medicines that will make us well often taste sickening.

The words we need to hear sometimes never get uttered and when they are on rare occasions they are rarely followed.

16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

17 Did I make a gain 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?

Being crafty, I caught you with guile: Paul asks the Corinthians to think back to what Paul had done for the church and to ask themselves, was Paul and his assistants trying to get gain for themselves while they were here?

19 Again, think ye that we excuse 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 ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

The people needed to business with God and Paul had a calling from God to see that they were reconciled to God. Paul truly loved these people, even ones who despised him.

21 And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

Here is the root cause of their opposition to Paul. They had followed the world's example of lasciviousness and had refused to repent of it, so they began to attack the only person who would stand up against their sin, Paul.

Chapter Thirteen

Examine yourselves

1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. *Deuteronomy 19:15.*

This is the third time I am coming to you: Here Paul quotes an old testament precept where Moses was instructing the children of Israel. Christ also quoted this same verse in Matthew 18:16 with regard to judgment in the kingdom.

Nothing is said about Paul's second visit to Corinth, but it doesn't appear to have swayed the rebellious to repent and Paul was hoping they would get right with God and one another before he came.

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 other, that, if I come again, I will not spare:

I will not spare: The guilty thought Paul was unable to do anything to them. The people of Corinth were challenging Paul because when they saw him last, they saw the frail frame of a man and somehow thought he would be afraid of their numbers.

3 Since ye 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 liveth 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.

Ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me: While Paul was weak in the flesh, he reminds them that Christ was also weak in the flesh when he was crucified, but he was able to accomplish great things through his weakness.

He was crucified through weakness: His flesh was human, and it was weak.

He liveth by the power of God: He lives today by the power of God in the resurrection.

5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own

selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: Paul was genuinely concerned for these people in the church because they saw no need of repentance for their deeds and even gloried in their rebellion and mocked the apostle of the Gentiles.

Jesus Christ is in you: All saved people who have believed the gospel of the grace of God have Christ living inside them. Colossians 1:27.

Except ye be reprobates: A religious unbeliever who is still in his sin.

6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. 7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye 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 ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection.

Your perfection: Paul wanted the believers in the church to be spiritually complete, or mature.

10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

Paul did not want to be sharp with them and do more damage than good. When you write a letter there is more time to think and to choose your words more carefully.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Be perfect: The word “perfect” means to be spiritually mature.

12 Greet one another with an holy kiss. 13 All the saints salute 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.

Greet one another with an holy kiss: Paul is the only one who says this in scripture, and he does four times. Romans 16:16, 1st Corinthians 16:20 & 1st Thessalonians 5:26.

The communion of the Holy Ghost: All believers have the Holy Ghost residing in them, so they have that in common and it is a strong unifying factor.

The second epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.

Philippi was the city where Paul and his companions in the ministry were shamefully entreated.

The End

Galatians

Introduction

Many commentaries on Galatians have been written with the phrase "another gospel" as their theme, but I would like to use as my theme "the grace of Christ" which was left by many in Galatia for another gospel.

Authorship

Paul is the author of Galatians. He has left us a token in each of his epistles. He even says he writes the salutation himself, while allowing others to pen his words as he dictates to them.

2nd Thessalonians 3:17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

Date of Writing

Galatians is considered by many as Paul's earliest epistle written around 47-50 A.D. It was written sometime after the Jerusalem council which occurred in 46 A.D. (Acts 15).

It fits that Paul wrote it around the time mentioned in Acts 16. The Jerusalem council discussed whether Gentiles should keep the law, which is the subject of the book of Galatians. This is not a coincidence.

It would have been earlier rather than later because the Galatians were so soon removed from the gospel of Christ. Galatians 1:6.

Soon after Paul's first missionary journey, and his trip to Jerusalem is when he would have written to the Galatian churches that he established while on his first visit.

Copies would have been made to distribute to all of these churches, probably at the church in Antioch of Syria.

Chapter One

The grace of Christ

1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

Paul: The very first word in every one of Paul's epistles (Romans through Philemon) is the same, Paul. Hebrews begins its first verse with the word God.

An apostle: Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles (the uncircumcision) Romans 11:13. This meant that he was called by God to that position, and that he was sent by him to the Gentiles.

Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Not of men, neither by men: Men appointed Matthias. Jesus Christ called Saul of Tarsus immediately after he left the land of Israel to be the apostle of the Gentiles.

Saul was not called to be an apostle like the twelve were to the nation of Israel. Jesus walked up to each one of them and said, "Come and follow me." They all have an earthly destiny in the kingdom promised to them in the prophets.

But by Jesus Christ, and God the Father: Jesus Christ called Saul of Tarsus from heaven (Acts 9:4), as he, and all of us in the body of Christ have a heavenly destiny, which had been kept secret since the world began.

Who raised him from the dead: Seventeen times from Acts 2:24 to 1st Peter 1:21 God's word says that God raised Jesus from the dead.

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

All the brethren which are with me: Judas (Barsabas) and Silas. Acts 15:22.

Unto the churches of Galatia: Paul writes this early epistle to all the churches in the region/country of Galatia, not to a single church, person, or city. Acts 16:6, 18:23 & 1st Corinthians 16:1.

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.

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace do not come from Paul, they are from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

This statement is found at the beginning of each of Paul's 13 epistles. It is not found in Hebrews, because Paul did not write Hebrews.

Who gave himself for our sins: 1st John 2:2 & 4:10.

1st Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

That he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to his will: It is God's will that he gave himself for our sins, so that we could be delivered from this present evil world.

This is speaking about God's will to rapture his body to be with him in heavenly places as we are not appointed unto the wrath in the time of Jacob's trouble, Israel is. 1st Corinthians 15:51-58, 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18 & 5:9.

6 I marvel that ye 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.

Ye are so soon removed from him that called you: Paul was the one that called them into the grace of Christ by preaching it to them, and their believing it.

The grace of Christ: The gospel that was given to Paul, that he also called his, or my gospel: See Acts 13:38-39, 20:24, Romans 2:16, 16:25, 1st Timothy 1:11 & 2nd Timothy 2:8.

Another gospel: 7 Which is not another: The gospel the Galatians were preaching then was not another gospel (it was not good news at all), because it could not save anyone.

2nd Corinthians 11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Some that trouble you: They were following after teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem, preaching another gospel that was perverting the simple gospel of grace (the grace of Christ).

These are the “false brethren” mentioned in chapter two that were brought in to spy out their liberty that they had in Christ. See Galatians 2:4. Notice what Paul had to say concerning these false brethren:

Galatians 5:12 *I would that they were even cut off that trouble you.*

They are the same ones mentioned by James, the Lord’s brother, at the Jerusalem Council as those who were subverting your souls: Galatians 5:10.

Acts 15:24 *Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:*

The gospel of Christ: Paul used two different Greek words to say the word “another” in English, that are not the same. The two different gospels were going to two different groups, and they were not the same gospel.

For example, I could say, “Give me another apple.” Which means another apple of the same kind, or I could say, give me another gospel, which means one of a different kind.

The gospel of Christ is also called the grace of Christ in verse six, so as to differentiate it from the gospel of the kingdom which was preached by the twelve apostles to Israel.

The gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24) is faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

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.

An angel from heaven: Satan today has sent out his seducing spirits with their doctrines of devils to deceive the world into believing another gospel:

1st Timothy 4:1 *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

2nd Corinthians 11:14 *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

Ephesians 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Let him be accursed: To make sure the churches of Galatia understood the importance of this Paul repeats himself and ends each statement with a curse thus signifying its importance to its readers to adhere to its tenants.

The word accursed in the Greek, is the word Anathema, which means to be cut off, damned. Galatians 5:10-12 & 1st Corinthians 16:22.

Anyone preaching that someone must be circumcised, and keep the law is subverting the souls of their hearers, and Paul says let them be accursed.

The servant of Christ: Paul appealed to the Galatian Churches not to please those men by preaching what they were preaching, but to please God by preaching the grace of Christ which Paul delivered unto them.

2nd Corinthians 11:12 *But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, 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.*

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

Certify: The word certify is used five times in scripture, it is another way of saying” make known.” 2nd Samuel 15:28, Ezra 4:16, 5:10 & 7:24.

The gospel that was preached of me is not after man: The gospel that Paul preached did not come from Peter, or any other man. His gospel was revealed to him first:

1st Corinthians 15:1 *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye 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: Daniel 9:24-25, Psalm 16:10 & Isaiah 25:8.*

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul did not receive a letter from the twelve detailing the gospel he was to preach, nor did the twelve teach Paul his gospel. Paul received it, and was taught it directly by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

But by the revelation of Jesus Christ: The gospel that Paul received was by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and it is found in the old testament scriptures, but the mystery that was kept secret since the world began that was associated with the gospel, was only revealed to the apostle Paul.

Romans 16:25 *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,*

Paul received the truths in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Christ revealed it to him, and what he received was according to the old testament scriptures.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

My conversation in time past: Before he was saved during the previous dispensation, while the gospel of the kingdom was being preached.

In the Jews religion: In Judaism as a Pharisee:

Philippians 3:4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 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.

Beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: Paul persecuted the church of prophecy, (the kingdom church), that was offering the kingdom to the nation of Israel.

Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

The church of God was made up of the twelve apostles, and all of those who believed in Israel that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. To waste something is to make it of no use.

They were also called the little flock in Luke 12:32 that would inherit the kingdom. There were no Gentiles in this group before Cornelius' household. Matthew 16:16, Acts 10 & 11.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

Who separated me from my mother's womb: When you are separated from something, you are also separated unto something else.

Romans 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,)

Acts 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

And called me by his grace: *Ephesians 2:8-9.*

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; 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.

To reveal his Son in me: This was different from how Jesus will be revealed when he returns to Israel at the end of the Tribulation Period.

This is Jesus Christ being revealed in the apostle of the Gentiles. Sadly, many Gentiles today have not even heard that Paul is their apostle, and that God has revealed many mysteries unto him concerning the body of Christ.

I might preach him among the heathen: Damascus was in the land of the heathen, (the non-circumcised Gentiles).

Paul went immediately into heathen lands, but it wasn't until Acts 13 that he was separated from the work in the Church at Antioch of Syria.

I conferred not with flesh and blood: Paul makes it very clear that he didn't confer with any man about what he was to preach among the heathen.

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: Neither did he confer with any of those who were apostles before him concerning the gospel that he preached.

They were not anywhere near where he was for the next three years anyway.

Arabia: Paul conferred with Christ while he was in Arabia as the second half of verse seventeen says, "but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."

Paul didn't see any of the twelve in Arabia, or in Damascus during those three years. Paul's time in Arabia occurred in the middle of Acts 9:19 when Paul returned to Damascus and began preaching there:

Acts 9:19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. (Paul spends time in Arabia and returns to Damascus here). *Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at 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.

After three years: This was three years from his being saved on the road to Damascus.

I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter: Paul went to see Peter on this visit to tell Peter what had happened to him during the past three years.

Acts 9:19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. 23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. 26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

After this the brethren brought Paul down from Jerusalem to Caesarea. Peter went down to Joppa after meeting with Paul, and he soon was told by God to go to Caesarea to meet a Gentile named Cornelius. Acts 9:30-43 & Acts 10-11.

James the Lord's brother: James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem. The other apostles were all in hiding which explains why Paul didn't see any of them while he was there with the exception of Peter.

Neither James, nor Barnabas, were part of the twelve apostles to the nation of Israel, however. Barnabas is called an apostle in Acts 14:4 after the church in Antioch sent him and Paul out on their mission. The word Apostle means, a sent one.

Acts 9 says that Paul saw the Apostles, but he only met with Peter, and James.

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 Judaea which were in Christ: 23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. 24 And they glorified God in me.

I lie not: Paul wanted the Galatians to know the truth straight from him, that no one but God taught him his gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, just like all in the little flock did, but that was not the message that he preached as the gospel.

When Paul first heard from Christ is was after his death, burial, and resurrection. He even said earlier in this chapter that God called him by his grace. V:15.

The Churches of Judaea which were in Christ: These were kingdom churches in Israel which he had not persecuted before his conversion.

A kingdom saint was in Christ in a different way than a person is in the body of Christ today. Christ is our head; we are the body.

The Jew in the kingdom program had to abide in the vine in the kingdom program, they were the branches, and Jesus was the vine. John 15:1-7.

In the vine, and in the body are two different ways for two different groups to be "in Christ." Things that are different are not the same.

Preacheth the faith which once he destroyed: It does not say that Paul preached the gospel of the kingdom to them. "Scholars" will tell you that lie.

Paul preached that Jesus was the Christ prophesied in the Hebrew scriptures. In that sense it was the faith which he once destroyed.

Both the gospel of the kingdom, and the gospel of the grace of God had faith in Jesus as part of their belief system, but they were not the same in every aspect. The gospel of the kingdom declared:

Acts 2:29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

The gospel of grace declares:

2nd Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

Chapter Two

Two gospels

1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

Then fourteen years after: (51 A.D.) This either means fourteen years after Paul's last trip to Jerusalem, or fourteen years after Paul's conversion, and his receiving revelations from him in Arabia. Acts 15:1-35.

I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas: He was a kingdom saint, and the uncle of John Mark (Marcus) Colossians 4:10.

Acts 4:36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

And took Titus with me also: Titus is first found in 2nd Corinthians 2:13 as Paul's partner and fellow helper with the Corinthians, and he would later have a pastoral epistle written to him by Paul, called the epistle of Titus.

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.

I went up by revelation: Paul was sent to Jerusalem by revelation from God. God told him to go so that he could straighten Jerusalem out about the gospel that he preached among the Gentiles.

If it were the same gospel there would have been no need for Paul to have had a revelation given to tell him about what he is preaching, because it would have been the same thing that the twelve were preaching, but it wasn't.

That gospel which I preach among the Gentiles: Paul wouldn't have had to communicate that gospel if it were the same gospel, it wasn't. There would have been no need for the trip.

Them which are of reputation: Paul met privately with the apostles, and James the Lord's brother, so that his trip would not be a waist.

If the circumcision (the lost religious Jews, not the saved kingdom saints) found out they were meeting together with Paul, they would have opposed Paul's being there.

In 1st Corinthians 9:17, 2nd Corinthians 5:19 & Ephesians 3:2 Paul says that the gospel that he was preaching was committed unto him by God, just like his apostleship was committed unto him, and the dispensation of grace was committed unto him. These things were not said of anyone else. See also Romans 3:2.

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.

Neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: He was a Gentile believer from Greece, who didn't want to get circumcised, because he didn't have to be.

False brethren: They wanted everyone to be circumcised amongst the Gentile churches, and to live like the Jews did under the law. Paul did not go along with these false brethren.

He would not allow the churches to become infiltrated with the "another gospel," and allow them to destroy the churches from the inside, so he fought for the truth at every turn.

That they might bring us into bondage: The bondage of the law.

6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

These who seemed to be somewhat: They are the "them which are of reputation" in verse two above.

In conference added nothing to me: The twelve Apostles and leaders didn't teach Paul anything that he didn't already know. In fact, it was the other way around.

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 effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

But contrariwise: Paul, added to their understanding the will of God concerning the Gentiles from that time on.

The gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me: This gospel (Paul's) was for the uncircumcision. It was committed unto Paul. See Romans 3:2 and 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

Paul went to Jews as well, because in God's eyes all Jews who were not believers in Christ were uncircumcised in their hearts and therefore, they were considered heathen.

The gospel of the circumcision: This gospel was for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It was committed unto Peter and the eleven. It was previously called the gospel of the Kingdom in Matthew 4:23, 9:35 & 24:14.

The apostleship of the circumcision: Peter was the leader of the kingdom apostles.

The same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles: Paul was given the office of the apostle of the Gentiles:

Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

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.

James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars: This is James the Lord's brother (James the brother of John was killed in Acts 12), Cephas, which is another name of Peter (John 1:42), and John, the son of Zebedee.

The grace that was given unto me: Romans 12:3, 6, 15:15, 1st Corinthians 3:10, Ephesians 3:2 & 8.

The right hands of fellowship: This was a symbolic hand shake, like what you would see in news conferences at peace deals between the leaders of opposite countries.

That we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision: They then perceived that Paul and Barnabas were to go to the heathen/Gentiles, and that they would restrict themselves to the circumcision, which were Jews.

The heathen also would include uncircumcised Jews, and Jews that were not keeping the law.

10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. 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.

Antioch: This is the place where Barnabas brought Paul to (Acts 11:25), and where believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).

This is where the Holy Ghost separated Paul and Barnabas for the work God had called them unto Acts 13:1-4. Paul would return to the church in Antioch after each of his apostolic journeys.

I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed: Peter's eating with Gentiles in Caesarea got him called out by James and others back in Jerusalem.

Peter, even though he had a vision from God, still feared having to give an answer to those back in Jerusalem. Peter was far from being infallible as some errantly teach.

He withdrew and separated himself: This is the meaning of the words, dissembled, and dissimulation.

Fearing them which were of the circumcision: They were members of the little flock who were saved by the gospel of the kingdom message. They were all still zealous of the law:

Acts 21:20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

Peter was there finding out what was going on with Paul and the Gentile believers, so he could report back to the church back in Jerusalem.

Peter did not receive the revelations that Paul had received, he was told them by Paul later on to educate those in Jerusalem as to what God was doing with the Gentiles.

By this act, Paul asserts his distinction from the ministry of the circumcision in Jerusalem, which was being carried out by the twelve apostles to Jews.

While Paul went to the Jew first, there was a big difference in that, and what the twelve were doing.

If you had wondered about Paul's authority and separate apostleship from the twelve before, this incident should remove any doubt from your mind that Paul was not answerable to Peter, nor to the church in Jerusalem.

God was doing something totally different with Paul, separate from what the twelve were doing back in Israel.

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 thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Peter gets straightened out here by the apostle of the Gentiles, whom God had given the doctrines of grace to dispense to the mostly Gentile church. Romans 11:13.

They walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel: Those circumcision visitors from Jerusalem were trying to impose law and kingdom teachings on the Gentile church.

We can see that Peter, and the eleven were not receiving revelations concerning these matters. Paul had to educate them numerous times. The phrase "the truth of the gospel" is used only one other time back in verse five.

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 be justified.

Jews by nature: This is speaking about being born Jewish.

Paul reminds Peter here that the believing Jews know that they are not justified by the works of the law. Two different types of faith are found in these verses.

We have believed in Jesus Christ: This is the Galatians faith in Christ in verse 16c, and the faith of Jesus Christ is found in 16b. They are not the same thing. Things that are different are not the same.

The faith of Jesus Christ: Has nothing to do with your faith! The faith of Jesus Christ is his faith. Romans 3:22 & Galatians 3:22-25.

For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified: This message is contrary to what James writes in his epistle to the twelve tribes scattered abroad:

James 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out

another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

It is different because the authors and audiences are different. Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, and Peter and James are ministers of the circumcision.

The book of James is not written to us in the body of Christ, it is written to Jewish kingdom saints.

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.

We ourselves also are found sinners: Paul tells Peter that he would be a sinner if he tried to get Gentiles to do the things under the law that have now been destroyed under grace.

If I build again the things which I destroyed: Paul would be trying to build again the things which he destroyed after he was saved by grace, and thus be a sinner and false teacher himself.

Remember in chapter one Paul's own warning that if he, or an angel preached any other gospel, let him be accursed?

Paul knew that Peter was more afraid of the circumcision than he was of God at the moment, and Paul straightened him out. The middle wall of partition was taken down, and Satan was trying to put it up again in the body of Christ.

He is still attempting this today with doctrines of devils that attempt to put Christians under the law. The Messianic movement is guilty of this today, as are many other groups.

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 liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God: Since I have broken the law, and the wages of my sin is death, I am a dead man, in need of regeneration. Romans 6:23.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: All who have trusted the gospel were crucified with Christ. We are also buried with Christ. Romans 6:4.

The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God: This is the same faith as "the faith of Jesus Christ" mentioned above, it is not by our faith, that we live the life we now live, but by Christ's faith.

This may be the first time you have ever seen the statement "the faith of Jesus Christ" in the scripture, but this is not the only time it is mentioned, it is mentioned many other times.

Most modern translations change these verses to say "faith in Jesus Christ" instead of the faith of Jesus Christ. There is a big difference. Things that are different are not the same.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

I do not frustrate the grace of God: We today are saved by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross.

Peter was confusing people in Antioch by his actions, because he fully did not understand what God was doing yet through Paul amongst the Gentiles, but it became very clear afterwards.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Chapter Three

The hearing of faith

1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

Who hath bewitched you: To bewitch someone, is to astonish them in some way to deceive them. Acts 8:9-11.

That ye should not obey the truth: They were bewitched into thinking the gospel was not enough to save them. They thought they needed the works of the law as well. See Romans 10:16-17, Galatians 2:3-5, 14, Ephesians 1:13 and Colossians 1:5.

Peter was not obeying it in chapter two, and Paul called him out for it, and the false brethren were not obeying the truth of what was delivered to the apostle Paul either.

Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you: Paul preached Christ crucified from the law and the prophets giving the people of Galatia the evidence that they needed to verify that Jesus was who Paul said he was.

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Received ye the Spirit: The holy Spirit. They believed the gospel, and received the Spirit of God. Then he placed them into the body of Christ. See 1st Corinthians 12:13.

The works of the law: This phrase occurs 5 times. See Romans 9:30-33, Galatians 2:16, and 3 times in this chapter.

They did not receive the holy Spirit because they were keeping the sabbath, or by being circumcised, or baptized with water.

By the hearing of faith: See Romans 10:16-17.

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

Having begun in the Spirit: Receiving the holy Spirit, they knew by experience, was a result of trusting the gospel alone for their salvation, not by keeping the law.

Are ye now made perfect by the flesh: Can the flesh make perfect (complete) what the holy Spirit started? No.

Have ye suffered so many things in vain: Paul knew of the many times that the believers in the region of Galatia had suffered for the message of grace, and if they were to depart from that message then all their suffering for the cross would be in vain.

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you: This is a reference to Paul on his first visit

to them as the sign gifts were still in operation at that time (pre-Acts 28 time period).

Doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith: Paul didn't circumcise anyone so they could get cured of their leprosy.

Paul couldn't perform a miracle because he kept the Sabbath day, or because he ate only kosher food. Miracles were solely a result of the hearing of faith.

Paul didn't ever tell someone to keep the sabbath day so they would be filled with the Spirit, and start speaking in tongues.

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness:

Genesis 15:4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham: The Galatian believers were children of Abraham through faith in the gospel of the grace of God. It was not the same gospel.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham:

The scripture, foreseeing: The scriptures do not speak of the Gentiles coming to God through faith, but what they do foresee (not foretell) is that Abraham believed God at his word, and he was accounted righteous without the law, as Gentiles would also be one day.

How can the scripture foresee that God would justify the heathen through faith? Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate in human flesh. See Genesis 12:3, and John 1:1 and 14.

The Son of God foresaw that his Father would justify the heathen (Gentiles) by faith, and he preached the good news unto Abraham.

Preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed: We are children of Abraham by faith, but we have not become Jews, or spiritual Jews, entitled to their promises as many teach.

We are heirs by faith to a singular promise seen in the next chapter. See Genesis 12:3, 26: 4 & Titus 3:7.

They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham: We are blessed because of our faith in the One who was in Abraham, that was to bless all nations with salvation (Jesus).

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

For it is written: See *Deuteronomy 27:26*. Notice how this verse differs from *Deuteronomy the See Joshua 8:31*

As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: The curse of the law. See *Nehemiah 10:29 & Daniel 9:11*.

The old testament ends with the word “curse” for those who will not heed its warning during the great and dreadful day of the LORD (the tribulation period) found in its last two verses:

Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

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.

Habakkuk 2:4 & Romans 1:17.

Acts 13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

The just shall live by faith: Whose faith? The faith of Jesus Christ. *Galatians 2:16-20*. The Jewish believers in Galatia were no longer under their former schoolmaster, but they could now belong to Christ through faith alone.

Notice the difference in the wording of verse eleven, and the wording of *Habakkuk 2:4*. They are different. It is not your faith today that you live by.

Habakkuk 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. *Leviticus 18:2-5*.

No one could be justified by the works of the law.

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: *Deuteronomy 21:22-23*. Paul said it differently than Moses did.

The curse of the law: The curse mentioned in verse ten of this chapter and *Daniel 9:11* is upon whoever it is that thinks that they can merit their salvation by their works.

Those that say that Christ saved them, but they must work to maintain their salvation do not have a saving faith. It must be Christ alone. When faith came it did not show up carrying a suitcase full of laws to keep.

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.

The blessing of Abraham: This is the blessing of being saved as a Gentile because of Christ's work on the cross on our behalf. Abraham was not a Jew.

The promise of the Spirit: (Singular) We received the Spirit through faith, not through the laying on of hands. We are placed into the body of Christ by the Spirit the moment we believe.

1st Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

A man's covenant: The law did not disannul the Abrahamic covenant that promised a seed to bless the nations. Notice here that promises (plural) are made with Abraham's genetic seed.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

The promises: (Plural). A innumerable seed, an eternal land, an eternal kingdom on the earth...

Romans 9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

Thy seed: The seed is Christ. Now that the seed has come, the Gentiles can be blessed by faith. We Gentiles who believe are recipients of the single promise of receiving the Spirit through faith. *Titus 3:7*.

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. 18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

The inheritance: The law served its purpose to convince those under it that they were indeed sinners like the Gentiles, and that they needed the Saviour it pointed to.

The law did not disannul (render void) the promise made to Abraham that the Gentiles would receive the Spirit by faith, apart from the law.

19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. *1st Timothy 2:5*.

It was added: It was added to the promise.

The seed should come: Christ would be the one that would bless all the Gentiles by faith.

It was ordained by angels: The law was ordained (approved) by angels, and given to Israel.

Acts 7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

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, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded

all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

The law was to help a self-righteous nation by convincing many in Israel that they were sinners just like the Gentiles, and that they needed a Saviour.

The promise by faith of Jesus Christ: Paul is first talking about the faith in Jesus Christ. It is Jesus' faith. Our faith is mentioned at the end of the verse with the words, "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.

Before faith came: Israel was kept under the law.

The faith: The faith is mentioned again, and it is the faith of Jesus Christ here, not your faith. People of all ages had faith, but not all of them had the faith of Jesus Christ.

The law was our schoolmaster: To point Israel to Christ, so they could be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye 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.

A schoolmaster: The law was Israel's schoolmaster to point them to Christ. We as Gentiles are not under or the law, and we never have been, the Jews are no longer under it either. Romans 6:14.

Baptized into Christ: This has nothing to do with water baptism. It is when the holy Spirit places a new believer into the body of Christ the moment they believe the gospel. 1st Corinthians 12:13 & 15:1-4.

When people get baptized by water, they do not put on Christ. There is no supernatural event that takes place during a water baptism ceremony.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

There is neither Jew nor Greek: Today in the body of Christ we are all the same one new man, in the world the distinctions remain. Ephesians 2:15.

There are three classifications of people today, Gentiles, Jews, and the one new man spoken of in detail in the book of Ephesians.

The one new man has a heavenly destiny, where the Jew in the old testament had an earthly destiny with their Messiah during the kingdom.

Heirs according to the promise: Gentile believers today are heirs to the promise! Not all the promises that belong to Israel, but the promise singular.

This is the first promise that God promised unto Abraham in Genesis twelve. I will bless them that bless thee. We have received the blessing of the faith of Jesus Christ. Galatians 2:16 & 3:14.

Chapter Four

The fulness of time

1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

The heir: When Israel was in its infancy as a nation, it was considered as a child, and it was kept under the law of the father (the law of Moses).

The time appointed of the father: This time appointed of the father is mentioned in verse four as "the fulness of time." Until then Israel was under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father that the seed should come.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

When we were children: This is speaking of Israel under the bondage of the law.

The elements of the world: Ordinances of the law.

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.

The fulness of time was come: This was at a time appointed of the Father that God sent forth his Son.

Made of a woman: Speaks of the virgin birth of Christ.

Made under the law: Jesus was the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) that was promised, that came under the law. Jesus did not come under the dispensation of grace. Our dispensation did not start in a manger in Bethlehem. It started on the road to Damascus. Acts 9.

To redeem them that were under the law: Israel was the ones under the law. That is why the gospel of the kingdom went only to the Jew. Christ had to redeem Israel first, while they were under the law, so he had to be born under the law.

We don't learn about Jesus giving himself a ransom for all of the world until Paul first reveals it to us as part of the dispensation of grace.

Then faith could be ushered in because the promised seed had come, and he had perfectly fulfilled the requirements of the law. Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles was the due time testifier: 1st Corinthians 15:8.

The adoption of sons: After Israel had her chance to be redeemed under the law then grace could be offered to the Gentiles by faith.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Now the servant who had Israel as her future lord in verse one has become equal with the son (Israel), and they two now both become one new creature in the body of Christ.

We do not become joint heirs with Israel and obtain her earthly promises, we become joint heirs in heavenly places with all Jews who also put their faith in Christ in this age.

The believing Jew today has a different destiny (heaven) than did the believing Jew under the law. They had an earthly destiny prior to the cross, but after it, those who believe in Christ have a joint destiny with us in the heavenlies.

8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Verse eight is speaking of us Gentiles, and more specifically, to the gentile believers in Galatia that have been misled by the Judaizers in their midst. How could a Gentile, or a Jew, want to be under the law?

I think the biggest problem was not that they wanted to be under the law, but rather that they were being misled by others thinking that they had to be under the law to be saved.

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. 12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.

Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years: These Galatians were acting as if they were Jews, and believing that they had to because of these false teachers sneaking in and perverting the pure gospel of grace. Deuteronomy 16:13.

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. 14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. 15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

Infirmity of the flesh: Paul states that when he came to Galatia, he had an infirmity of the flesh which probably had to do with his eyes, (Verse 15) but they still received him as an angel of God.

Things later changed, and they had fallen away from Paul's message which they had received so eagerly before, and were now going after teachers of the law.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? 17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. 18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

Paul was literally saying to them that they believed him while he was with them, and now they believed someone else because of their zeal. Zeal without the right knowledge rightly applied is very dangerous.

Paul wanted their zeal for the truths he had delivered to these saints' years ago to still be with them today, and not just while he was there to be their backbone.

An allegory

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; for I stand in doubt of you.

I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you: Paul, and his team, no doubt led many of these people in Galatia to the Lord, and that would make them his children in the faith.

Now Paul's says that he is, like a woman travailing in birth, all over again for them until they get it right, and Christ is formed in them (until they are spiritually mature).

21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? 22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. Genesis 16:15 & Genesis 21:2.

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

One by a bondmaid: Hagar, who was a servant (Bondwoman) was not free, and she serves as an allegory that we will look at in a moment.

The other by a freewoman: Sarah on the other hand represent a free woman who was justified by a promise of righteousness by faith alone.

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

The one from Sinai: The one covenant from mount Sinai is Agar (Hagar), she was Abraham's bondmaid which he picked up while out of the will of God when visiting Egypt instead of remaining in the promised land.

Mount Sinai is of course the place where Moses would receive the law and give it to the people, but here we also see that the law is connected with Hagar who was Sarah's bondmaid.

The law was a bondage for those under it, (like Agar was a servant to Sarah). Agar's work was never done. This covenant always left its servants longing for rest (the kingdom), liberty and deliverance. Israel was in bondage to the law until faith came.

They were under tutors and governors until faith came. They were kept under the law until faith came. The freewoman (Sarah) is connected with Jerusalem, which is above, is free because of the promise which was believed on by Abraham by faith.

27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Isaiah 54:1-2.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the

flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

The children of promise: Isaac was the child of promise.

He that was born after the flesh: Ishmael who is type of bondage to the law, who persecutes the child of promise.

Him that was born after the Spirit: As Isaac is a type of believer who is persecuted by those under bondage. He is free under grace.

The two previous illustrations are now brought into this allegory, the flesh, and the Spirit, and they are connected to these two women, and these two covenants.

As Ishmael persecuted Isaac, so also do the legalists (the children of the flesh) persecute those who are saved by grace through faith, and they attempt to bring us who are born after the Spirit into the bondage of the law.

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. *Genesis 21:10.*

Cast out the bondwoman and her son: Paul's solution to the problem is to cast out the legalist in the Galatian churches who sought to enslave the free, because they are not heirs if they reject the free gift of God, for their works.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Children of the bondwoman: Bondage to the law.

The free: (The freewoman) Here Paul includes the Galatians, himself, and all who are saved by grace through faith as members of the body of Christ, with the descendants of Isaac as the children of the free(woman).

He is telling the churches of Galatia and everywhere to cast out the law, because the law represents the bondage that Israel was under, and they are all free in grace.

Chapter Five

Called unto liberty

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

The yoke of bondage: The is reference to being put under the Law. Liberty has absolutely nothing to do with a license to sin, anyone with such a notion is as deceived as the person who thinks they must add works to faith. Romans 8:15.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye 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; ye are fallen from grace.

If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing: If you are trusting in your circumcision, other works of the law, then you are not trusting in what Christ did for you.

Christ is become of no effect unto you: To say I am justified by keeping the law is to say I don't need Christ's death on my behalf, Christ is become of no effect unto you.

Fallen from grace: Paul is saying that the Galatians that were saved by grace through faith, and who were now teaching that you need to be justified by the law, they have fallen from the teaching of grace.

He is not saying they lost their salvation, because grace means grace, if you could earn salvation, or lose it, then it was never grace in the first place.

Eternal security is a grace age doctrine, and it was not taught to Israel under the law, nor was it taught during the time when gospels were happening. It is not a doctrine for the tribulation period. It is specifically for us today.

The vast majority of people who believe that a person can lose their salvation get their doctrinal support for that in the gospels, or in books that concern Israel going through the tribulation (Hebrews-Revelation).

The Pauline epistles is where we get church age doctrine from, not the gospels, not Acts, or Hebrews through Revelation, they are the Hebrew epistles written to the Hebrews (Acts is a transitional book).

Churches can fall from teaching grace, and they can begin teaching the works of the law as necessary for salvation, but an individual in today's dispensation of grace can never lose their salvation.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Through the Spirit: Not through the works of the law.

The hope of righteousness: See Romans 5:15-20. Part of that gift is that the righteous wait to be raptured which is called the blessed hope. See Acts 23:6, 24:15, and 26:6.

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? 8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. 9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Ye did run well: You stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made you free.

This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you: This teaching (doctrine) you now believe in did not come from God.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump: Paul here admonishes these Galatian believers to cast off this bondage which hindered their walk, and begin to run again in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump: See Matthew 16:11, Luke 12:1, 13:21, 1st Corinthians 5:6-8. * This teaching was similar to the leaven of the pharisees.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

He that troubleth you shall bear his judgment: These seem like harsh words but consider the consequences of misleading someone who then dies without Christ and spends an eternity in hell because of these deceivers. Paul had the innocent hearer's eternity in mind when he said this.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

The offence of the cross: See Isaiah 8:14 and Hosea 5:15.

I would that they were even cut off which trouble you: Paul said that he wished the troublemaker were dead than for him to leave a trail of eternal death behind him wherever he goes with his heresy.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Called unto liberty: Liberty frees you up to be a blessing to others instead of always being worried about whether you have done enough to please God.

An occasion to the flesh: Just because you are eternally secure, it does not give you the right to sin.

Romans 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?

Stay busy running the race well, so you are too busy to be bothered by fleshly temptations.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. Leviticus 19:18.

A person trying to keep the law, will tend to develop a self-righteous attitude, which can lead to other things that will eventually cause strife and division, which will lead to hatred and separation.

These are not the intent of the law, but a person that is not led by the Spirit, who doesn't become humbled by the law, will naturally turn towards these tendencies.

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Walk in the Spirit: The flesh will not lead you to do anything after the Spirit, and the opposite is also true.

The lust of the flesh: These lead to the works of the flesh.

So, it is important that a believer ask himself if what they are thinking of doing is a work of the flesh, or of the Spirit, and then follow the Spirit. If we are acting in accordance with the flesh, then we need to cease and desist.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they

which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

The works of the flesh: A saved person can do all of the things that a lost person can do when they are led by the flesh.

These are the things that our flesh naturally wants to do, but when the Spirit is present as it is in the believer, we have the power to have victory over the flesh.

They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God: This is not the kingdom of heaven, which is one specific time period contained inside the kingdom of God which is eternal.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The fruit of the Spirit: If we are actively showing (walking in) love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance we cannot be simultaneously doing works of the flesh.

The main way to walk in the Spirit today, is to be involved in reaching people for Christ with the gospel, and making all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. **See Ephesians 3:8-10.**

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.

Crucified the flesh: We die to our flesh. Paul said he died daily. 1st Corinthians 15:31.

Walk in the Spirit: All believers live in the Spirit, but all do not yield to its leading.

Yielding to the Spirit that lives in us, and letting Christ live through us as we put into practice the fruits of the Spirit. That is walking. It takes a conscious effort to get up and walk. It is hard work walking in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

We should exhibit these fruits of the Spirit in our lives, but we can also refuse to walk in the Spirit and thus fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Desirous of vain glory: Short term glory, worldly glory. What do you desire, for those you know to know Christ by your walking in in the Spirit around them?

Provoking one another: To vain glory. (a wasted life).

Envyng one another: Who do you envy? Someone climbing the corporate ladder? Or someone who is walking in the Spirit helping to bring people to Christ and making them see what is the fellowship of the mystery.

Chapter Six

A new creature

1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Overtaken in a fault: The Greek word for fault is only translated one other time as the word "faults" in James 5:16. It is usually translated as sins, transgressions, or offences.

The word is translated as “fall” in Romans 11:11-12 concerning Israel’s fall from being the channel of blessing (salvation) to the Gentiles.

Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one: This is exactly what the apostle Paul is doing here with the believers in Galatia that have been overtaken in a doctrinal fault.

Paul, being their spiritual father, sought to restore these believers to doctrinal truth because they had fallen from the teaching of grace, and were teaching justification by the law. Galatians 5:4.

1st Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

The spirit of meekness: This phrase is only mentioned one other time in scripture. See 1st Corinthians 4:21.

2 Bear ye 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 deceiveth himself.

The law of Christ: This is bearing one another’s burdens. Christ bore the burden of our sins for us.

4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

Let every man prove his own work: We can cut corners in our Christian life, but other believers can help us stay on track. Romans 7:25.

For every man shall bear his own burden: It is helpful when another believer helps us with our struggles every once in a while.

6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth: The word communicate here literally means to pay the teacher.

Do not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. When we do, we sow good seed back to the one who sowed it, for us to grow by. Deuteronomy 25:4, 1st Corinthians 9:9 and 1st Timothy 5:18.

We shall not only reap blessings here on earth, but treasures shall be laid up in heaven for us as well. The teacher of the word should be provided for by the students that receive from him.

Communicate unto him that teacheth: See Philippians 4:15.

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: See 2nd Corinthians 9:6. Chapters 8 and 9 are all about sowing financially in God’s work.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Soweth to his flesh: This is when a believer buys lots of toys for fleshly fun which can corrupt them, instead of storing up spiritual things.

Soweth to the Spirit: This is when a believer finds out what God is doing in this dispensation and soweth towards that instead of buying more toys for his flesh which waxes old and corrupts. Buy dispensational books and give them to others instead.

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

When do we have a church that can meet the needs of its children? When the members don’t faint, in well doing.

Why do people leave churches often? They get weary in well doing. They want immediate gratification. “They didn’t have anything for the kids at our previous church.” That’s sad, what ministry did you work in?”

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

As we have therefore opportunity: We have opportunities to do good, but do we act on them while they are with us? We don’t have enough grace assemblies, because we don’t invest in the ones we have.

11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

Compare this with what the author of Hebrews says about the size of that letter (a much larger one). This is just another proof verse that tells you that Paul did not write the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 13:22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

What does Paul mean by verse eleven? He is practicing what he preached. He is sewing God’s word to the churches of Galatia, whether he gets a shekel from them or not.

12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

A fair shew in the flesh: An outward physical act, like circumcision, or baptism done for show, something to boast/glorify about.

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

Glory in your flesh: Glorifying in outward acts that can be seen of men have no spiritual benefit. The Jews boasted of their circumcisions, while Christians today boast of baptisms. Paul was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel. 1st Corinthians 1:17.

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

The world is crucified unto me: The world was dead to Paul, and he was dead to the world.

Under the law circumcision availed much, but under grace circumcision is unnecessary, and it can even be dangerous spiritually speaking if one places even part of their faith in it for their salvation.

And I unto the world: Paul let Christ live through him by giving up his own desires.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

In Christ Jesus: You are placed into Christ the moment you believe the gospel. 1st Corinthians 12:13, and 15:1-4.

A new creature: The new creature is the result of Christ's death on the cross which unites both Jews and Gentiles into one new body which has an heavenly destiny that will rule and reign from there after Satan has been cast down. Ephesians 2:15 and Revelation 12:8-9.

2nd Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy: A rule? That sounds like law to some. If you reap, you will sow, that is also a rule.

If we sow into the future in different areas mentioned in this epistle we will reap. If we neglect them, we will reap what we sow.

The Israel of God: They were the Jews in the first century that were circumcised in their hearts, who believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Matthew 16:16.

They were the twelve apostles, and the believing remnant, a.k.a. the little flock of Luke 12:32. There is no Israel of God today, there will be once again in the tribulation period, however.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus: As the Galatian believers suffered trouble for following Christ, so much the more did Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles.

2nd Corinthians 11:23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 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.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. To the Galatians written from Rome.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit: That is when we say the things of mine are not my own, they are on loan to me to sow back into this world to reconcile people to God.

The End

Ephesians

Introduction

Of all of Paul's epistles, there is none so packed full of divine revelation as is the book of Ephesians. Truths are introduced in its pages that are still unknown by many in the body of Christ today, because they have been taught to spiritualize them away.

When asked what the theme of the book of Ephesians is, many well-meaning individuals will reply, wives submit to your husbands, or children obey your parents.

Some will say it is about the church, and while all three of these are subjects contained in the book of Ephesians none of these are actually the theme of this great epistle.

The theme actually permeates throughout the whole book of Ephesians, and it is one of the best kept secrets in the world.

Satan doesn't want the body of Christ to be enlightened as to its content, which would make him look more foolish, and we would be much more dangerous as adversaries to him.

The theme of Ephesians is something that was a very foreign concept to the Jewish people under the Mosaic covenant as they looked forward to a day when the saints would be resurrected to rule and reign on the earth.

Ephesians, however, tells of believers, Jews, and Gentiles alike, in one body, in a dispensation, not of law, but of grace, whose recipients have an heavenly destiny, instead of an earthly one.

Ephesians informs us in the body of Christ of all of our spiritual blessings that are stored up for us in heavenly places. Many of the truths that are found in this epistle, cannot be found in any other portion of scripture.

Authorship

The apostle Paul is the author of Ephesians, and Tychicus was Paul's penman as Paul's eyesight was weakened at this later time of his ministry, but God's grace was sufficient in Paul's infirmities.

Date of writing

Ephesians is one of Paul's four Prison epistles, written after the book of Acts was completed, when Paul spent two years in Rome under house arrest. It was written mostly to a Gentile audience, but it was intended for all who have trusted in Christ's finished work.

Paul would later be released from his house arrest for a short time after writing this epistle, and then he would be imprisoned again back in Rome where he would eventually be put to death. The book was written around 62 A.D.

We find Paul visiting Ephesus briefly at the end of his second apostolic journey as he is returning to Jerusalem for a Jewish feast day. Acts 18:18-21. Paul later returned to Ephesus for three years (Acts 19:1-41).

At the end of Paul's third apostolic journey, he stopped at Miletus and from there he sent for the elders of the Ephesian church to meet with him. Acts 20:13-38.

Chapter One

In Heavenly Places

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:

Paul: Paul was formerly known as Saul of Tarsus. His Roman name appears as the first word in all thirteen of his epistles, Romans through Philemon, which all appear one after the other in the bible. They are followed by the Hebrew epistles of Hebrews through Revelation.

Since Paul was the last person to have seen the risen Christ, it makes sense that we should consider why that was, by looking at what God had to say to Paul that he didn't say to the twelve while he was with them. 1st Corinthians 15:8.

The twelve did this very thing at the Jerusalem Council in Acts chapter 15 when they recognized God's calling on Paul to be the apostle of the Gentiles. Galatians 2:1-9.

1 Corinthians 15:8 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 to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God: Paul was chosen by the will of God to be the apostle of the Gentiles.

Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

He was not God's choice to replace Judas as the twelfth apostle. The twelve were all apostles to the nation of Israel, and there were two qualifications that they had to meet that Paul could not.

They had to have been with Jesus all the time since the baptism of John the Baptist, and they had to have been an eyewitness of his resurrection. Acts 1:21-22.

To the saints: Saints are people who have believed the gospel that Christ had died for their sins, was buried, and he rose again the third day. Nowhere in scripture are people made saints by a council vote, or decree.

2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be to you, and peace: In this dispensation of grace, we are at peace with God because of what Jesus did for us by the cross. Grace and peace come to us, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, not from Paul.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: The word "blessed" in the Greek is the same word we get the word Eulogy from. We, as believers, are to speak well of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All spiritual blessings: Saints today receive spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Whereas Israel was blessed with physical blessings if they were obedient to their covenant. Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

Why? Because this earth is their home in eternity. It's not ours. Our home is in heavenly places. Matthew 5:5.

In heavenly places: When believers die today, we go immediately to be with the Lord in heavenly places. Ephesians 1:20, 2:6 & 3:10.

When a believing Israelite died in times past, they went into the heart of the earth (Abraham's Bosom, A.K.A. Paradise) to await the resurrection.

The word "places" is in italics, and is supplied by the translators to help us complete the thought, and to differentiate between the other times the word heavenly is used.

For example: Heavenly things, heavenly country, heavenly Jerusalem, heavenly Father, heavenly host, heavenly gift, heavenly calling, heavenly kingdom, and a heavenly vision.

In Christ Jesus: In the body of Christ.

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Chosen us in him before the foundation of the world: We were not chosen for salvation, and others chosen for damnation. We were chosen to be holy and without blame before him before the foundation of the world.

In him: We are in him (Christ) by faith, and we are holy and without blame because when he who knew no sin, became sin for us, we were made the righteousness of God in him. 2nd Corinthians 5:21.

We are placed into the body of Christ (in him) by the holy Spirit the moment we believe the gospel. Romans 6:3, 1st Corinthians 12:13 & 15:1-4.

5 Having predestinated 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 hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children: Predestinated means the same thing as to ordain beforehand (foreordain). It does not say we are predestined unto salvation, but unto the adoption of children.

The adoption of children: God has predestined that all who believe by faith in his Son's death, burial, and resurrection alone for our salvation would receive the adoption of children.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, is God's elect servant (Isaiah 42:1). We who have believed by faith become members of the body of Christ. We are in Christ.

Accepted in the beloved: Those who are "in the beloved" are in Christ, and therefore we are accepted by God because of what Christ did for us. Jesus Christ is the beloved.

God further foreordains us unto sonship. Sonship refers to maturity and equal rights in the family. The central passage on sonship is Galatians 4:1-7. Our adoption is through Jesus Christ unto the Father, according to the good pleasure of his will.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

In whom: In Christ. We who are in Christ, are in him by placing our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins: We obtained redemption through Christ's blood. Redemption is defined as the forgiveness of sins.

Our blood is tainted due to sin, but Christ's blood is not, because he was not born a sinner, nor did he ever sin. Isaiah 7:14 & Hebrews 4:15.

Hebrews 9:22 and without shedding of blood is no remission.

God purchased us (members of the church, which is his body) with his own blood.

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The mystery of his will

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known us: The "us" in these verses are the members of the church, which is his body. Colossians 1:24.

The mystery of his will: This is about God willing that we (the church, which is his body) would one day dwell with him in heavenly places.

This mystery had been hid to all previous generations under the law, and before, so that we might fulfill his will for us in the heavenly places throughout all eternity. 1st Corinthians 2:7-8.

Dispensation

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:

The dispensation of the fullness of times: This refers to the time in the future when the body of Christ (those in heaven) and Israel (those on earth) gather together in one to accomplish God's will for each throughout all eternity.

This is the first of four times the word dispensation is mentioned in the bible and all four are by the apostle Paul.

This word is missing in most bibles today. It is taken out by those opposed to dispensationalism. The other three occurrences are 1st Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 3:2 & Colossians 1:25.

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

We have obtained an inheritance: Eternal life is not our inheritance, that is a gift of God's grace, but we (those who have believed in Christ) are predestined to be to the praise of his glory.

The body of Christ is predestined to bring, and to give God praise in the heavens, while Israel is predestinated to bring, and to give praise to God throughout all eternity on the earth.

Remember that when you inherit something that it once belonged to someone else. Who could we inherit something from in heavenly places who would then, in turn, be disinherited?

Positions in heavenly places that will one day be vacated very violently when Michael and his angels make war with the dragon, and his angels. They will be cast down from those heavenly places at the mid-point of the tribulation period. Revelation 12:7-10.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of

our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The word of truth: It is the gospel of your salvation, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. 1st Corinthians 15:4.

The word of truth is also mentioned in Psalm 119:43, 2nd Corinthians 6:7, 2nd Timothy 2:15, James 1:18, and it is not the gospel of our salvation in any of those verses. It relates to all of the word of God in these four verses.

Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise: The sealing with the holy Spirit is the earnest (down payment) of our inheritance of what we shall have when our vile bodies put on immortality.

Then our new bodies will be able to move about in the heavenly places for all eternity. All three members of the godhead are involved in these opening fourteen verses.

The redemption of the purchased possession: That is our bodies which will be redeemed on the day of our death, or at the rapture of the body of Christ if we live that long.

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:

The spirit of wisdom and revelation: We are to pray for believers that they will receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

The more they study to shew themselves approved unto God a workman, the more wisdom and revelation they will have in the knowledge of him. 1st Corinthians 1:17-2:13.

In the knowledge of him: The spirit of wisdom and revelation comes from humbling ourselves to God's word (wisdom) concerning his plan, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1st Corinthians 2:13.

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened: Verse 18 is a continuation of verse 17, so without the spirit of wisdom a person can never have their eyes of understanding enlightened.

We must first see something, or hear something, before we can understand it. God is speaking about our understanding his word on a deeper level.

What is the hope of his calling: God wants us to know the hope of his calling for us in his plan.

Those who do not understand the hope of his calling will wonder around thinking they are spiritual Israel, and they will be confused doctrinally, and be divided.

His calling for us is to be a part of Christ's body which will live and function with him one day in heavenly places according to the good pleasure of his will. Ephesians 1:8-9.

The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints: God will give to the saints the reward of the inheritance at the judgment seat of Christ.

There is an inheritance (Ephesians 1:11 & 14), and there is the reward of the inheritance. They are different. 1st Corinthians 3:9-15.

The reward of the inheritance is regarding what you knew of the mystery, and what you did with that truth. Are you building on its foundation gold, silver, precious stones, or wood, hay, and stubble? Share right division with your friends and family with tracts and books, and your words.

Colossians 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

The exceeding greatness of his power: We who believe the gospel of grace, and understand the mystery of God's will, can understand all the spiritual blessings afforded to us because of the resurrection of Christ.

The working of his mighty power: This also speaks about the power of the resurrection of Christ.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

And set him at his own right hand: The highest position of honour, with angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto him. 1st Peter 3:22.

In the heavenly places: Ephesians is the only place in the scriptures where the phrase "heavenly places" is found. 1:3 & 2:6.

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:

Principality, power, might, and dominion: These are governmental positions in heaven, and on earth. Colossians 1:16.

And every name that is named: Those who are under the positions mentioned above in v:21.

In that which is to come: The new world to come. Hebrews 2:5 & 6:5.

22 And hath 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 filleth all in all.

The head: Jesus Christ is the head of the body of Christ, which is his church.

The Church, which is his body: This is not the church in the wilderness, nor the church in Jerusalem, they were both prophesied churches:

Acts 7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

The church, which is Christ body was a mystery, kept hid from Satan, and his princes from before the foundation of the world, so that they would go through with the crucifixion.

The crucifixion helped create the one new man, which is also known as the body of Christ, which is neither Jew nor Greek. The phrase the one new man is introduced in the next chapter. Ephesians 2:15.

The fulness of him that filleth all in all: The church is his body, and we fill up the body of Christ in heavenly places.

Chapter Two

The One New Man

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

And you: The first word “and” is a conjunction linking chapter one with chapter two. The “you” mentioned is found back in the final verses of chapter one.

Paul is speaking to the church, the body of Christ. You and ye in the King James Bible are plural, while thee and thine are singular.

Hath he quickened: (Made alive) The words are in italics because they are supplied by the translators to give a fuller understanding of what is being addressed.

The translators didn’t take liberties with the word of God because those words in italics are found in verse five below, and they help you understand what is being said by Paul.

Dead in trespasses and sins: The people in the body of Christ were previously dead spiritually speaking, and they were quickened (made alive) when they believed the gospel. Colossians 2:13.

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The pronoun “ye” denotes a group of at least two, and the word “we” further clarifies that the “you” spoken about in verse one, is not one individual, but a group of people who make up the church in Ephesus.

In time past: This is the period of time before the dispensation known as the “but now” time period. The period that is to follow is known as “the ages to come”. Verses 7 & 13.

The course of this world: This is the direction which Satan has set for this world to walk in rebellion to God’s course.

The prince of the power of the air: The devil. The devil is the spirit working in the lives of the lost people to follow the course he has set for the world through any and all means possible.

The children of disobedience: The lost.

A personal application can also be made to the individual and his life before coming to Christ, but it is only a small part of what is being taught here.

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the

desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

In times past: Verses 2 & 13.

Children of wrath: Those going to hell for their unbelief.

Even when we were dead in sins: God didn’t wait until we cleaned up our lives, but instead he made us alive (quickened) by the gospel, for by grace ye are saved through faith.

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

The ages to come: After the rapture, the dispensation of grace will be over, and the world will be in the next age that is to come. The tribulation period will last seven years, followed by the kingdom age that will last a thousand years.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

By grace are ye saved through faith: By grace (God’s) through faith (God’s also). It is the faith of Jesus Christ that saves us not our own faith.

We simply put our weak faith (belief or trust) in the perfect faith of Christ, and he saves us through his faith (the faith of Jesus Christ).

And “that” not of yourselves: That what? That faith. Your faith is not what is being talked about here, it is the faith of Christ. Galatians 2:16.

It is the gift of God: The faith of Jesus Christ is a gift to all who simply believe in his death, burial, and resurrection.

Not of works: lest any man should boast: Salvation is apart from any work or works. It is the work of Christ on the cross that has redeemed us. We have nothing to boast about.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are his workmanship: God created the one new man to be his workmanship. The body of Christ is what God is building today.

Paul is our pattern today, and he is our wise masterbuilder (1st Corinthians 3:10) dispensing to us the pattern that we are to use to build the body of Christ his way. 1st Timothy 1:15 & 16.

Created in Christ Jesus unto good works: God has chosen all who believe the gospel to be placed in Christ by the holy Spirit and all that are in Him are to do good works.

Before ordained: God’s word says that all believers were ordained before to walk in good works. What are good works? They are doing what God is doing in this present dispensation.

11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called

Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

Gentiles in the flesh: Those who were not circumcised.

Uncircumcision: Gentiles.

The Circumcision in the flesh made by hands: Jews.

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel: Foreigners to the nation of Israel. Non-citizens.

The covenants of promise: The covenants that God made with Israel.

But now: The dispensation of grace. Ephesians 3:2. Those who are in Christ have a new status than what they had before their salvation when they were far off without Christ.

We are made nigh (near), by the blood of Christ, when we are saved by grace through faith in the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:28 & 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

He is our peace: Jesus Christ.

Who had made both one: Gentiles had no hope on their own outside of the nation of Israel prior to the cross, they had to submit to the fact that salvation was of the Jew, and then be circumcised as a proselyte, plus keep the law of Moses. John 4:22.

But not anymore! Gentiles and Jews both come to God the same way today by faith alone, apart from the works of the law. Ephesians 2:8-9.

The middle wall of partition: This is not a literal physical wall made with hands, but a wall set up in God's word, separating circumcised from the uncircumcised. It began with Abraham. Genesis 17:10-27.

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

The enmity: There was division (partition) between those in a covenant relationship with God (Israel), and those who were not (the Gentiles).

The law of commandments: The law of Moses.

Twain: An old English way of saying two.

One new man: The one new man was made in Christ by bringing both Jew and Gentile together into one new man (the body of Christ).

So making peace: Christ allowed there to be peace between the circumcision and the uncircumcision, and between God and the uncircumcision, because they were no longer separated by the law of commandments, but united in Christ.

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Reconcile both unto God: To bring both into a right relationship with God.

One body: The body of Christ is made up of all who are saved, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. They all have a heavenly destiny, whereas Israel, when they were under the law, had an earthly destiny.

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Preached peace to you: Peace with God through the gospel. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

Them which were afar off: Gentiles.

Them that were nigh: Israel. Deuteronomy 6:7.

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Fellow citizens: Through Christ today both Jews and Gentiles have access unto the Father by the holy Spirit which we receive the moment we believe the gospel. 1st Corinthians 12:13 & 15:1-4.

The household of God: Saints from every age are in the household of God. The body of Christ and Israel are both in the kingdom of God, but we have different destinies. We will bring glory to God in the heavenly places, while Israel does the same on the earth in the kingdom.

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

The foundation: That which the house is built upon.

The apostles and prophets: Paul and Barnabas were Apostles for the body of Christ, and the church had other prophets in its infancy before the word of God was complete. Acts 14: 4 & 14, 1st Corinthians 12:28-29, 14:29-32, Ephesians 3:5 & 4:11.

The chief corner stone: The chief corner stone is the stone on which all the foundation is based. 1st Corinthians 3:11.

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

An habitation of God: The body of Christ is made up of Jews and Gentiles which are the one new man in verse 10. They make up the building that was fitly framed together through the work of the Spirit.

Chapter Three

The Manifold Wisdom of God

1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

The prisoner of Jesus Christ: Paul was Jesus Christ's prisoner in Rome for us Gentiles. It was here that he wrote the four prison epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Paul preached to all who would come in unto him, and many in Caesar's own household became believers. Acts 28:30-31 & Philippians 4:22.

The dispensation of the grace of God: The current dispensation was given unto us in the body of Christ by Christ, through Paul to reveal to the world. It did not come from the twelve apostles to Israel.

The word "dispensation" has been removed from many newer versions of the bible, because they are opposed to the dispensational method of bible study.

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ).

The mystery: Paul received a revelation from God concerning the mystery, called the mystery of Christ in verse four.

The mystery is a program or series of mysteries given by revelation to the apostle of the Gentiles to give to the body of Christ today.

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;

This mystery was kept secret since the world began, but it was made manifest to Paul for us, and later what Paul was teaching was revealed to the apostles and prophets by the holy Spirit.

His holy apostles and prophets: Paul spake plainly to the twelve apostles in Acts 15 at the Jerusalem Council (Galatians 2), so this was not a reference to them.

The holy Spirit revealed to the apostles and prophets of the body of Christ in its infancy that what Paul was revealing was true. Once the word of God was complete these offices ceased. Ephesians 4:11-12.

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

We have not replaced Israel today. Paul is talking about a new body, that both believing Jews and Gentiles are one in, which is called the one new man.

The Gentiles should be fellowheirs: We are both Heirs of the promise of the Spirit, not heirs of Israel's promises.

Of the same body: Believing Gentiles are of the same body as believing Jews. The body of Christ.

Partakers of his promise in Christ: Promise singular, not promises plural that belong to Israel. All can be saved today apart from the law of Moses, by believing 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;

The gift of the grace of God: Paul could not be forgiven under the law of his blasphemy against God, but he was given the gift of grace when God began a new dispensation with him, the dispensation of the grace of God. Verse 2 above.

1st Timothy 1:11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. 12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath 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 for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Less than the least of all saints: Paul called himself this because he persecuted the Church of God (The Jewish kingdom church). Acts 8:1 & 1st Timothy 1:11-16.

The unsearchable riches of Christ: The mysteries that have been kept hidden from the foundation of the world.

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery: Paul's ministry was twofold, to share the gospel of grace which was committed to his trust.

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery concerning Jews and Gentiles in the one new man (the body of Christ).

Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God: The mystery was hid from Satan and the other princes of this world so they would go through with the crucifixion:

1st Corinthians 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 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.

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,

Part of our purpose as the church today is to make known the mystery that was hid in God from before the foundation of the world.

That mystery was that God was forming the one new man after Israel's fall, whereby believing Jews and Gentiles could be a part of one body, by faith. The body of Christ.

The manifold wisdom of God: 1st Corinthians 2:6-8 speak about the manifold wisdom of God that was hid in God from the beginning of the world.

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

The eternal purpose: God's plan to reclaim the heavens from Satan and his minions for all eternity.

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

By the faith of him: The faith of Jesus Christ. Galatians 2:16.

13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. 14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

The whole family in heaven and earth: This is synonymous with the household of God mentioned earlier in Ephesians 2:19.

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;

The inner man: The one new man after trusting in Christ.

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Many today are not grounded in the mysteries revealed to Paul, because Satan has been successful in keeping this mystery a secret.

This is the same secret that was kept from him for four thousand years, is sadly still a secret to many members of the body of Christ today.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Chapter Four A Perfect Man

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The prisoner of the Lord: Paul pleads with the body of Christ to be Christ like while he is incarcerated.

Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called: We have a vocation as a member of the body of Christ. We are not to sit, but to serve the body. We are to be active in making all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye 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.

One body: The body of Christ. Colossians 1:24.

One Spirit: The holy Spirit.

One hope of your calling: The blessed hope. The rapture. 1st Corinthians 15:51-54 & 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18.

One Lord: The Lord Jesus Christ. This title is used 68 times by Paul in his thirteen epistles.

One faith: The faith of Jesus Christ. Galatians 2:16.

One baptism: Paul is speaking about being baptized by the Holy Ghost, not being baptized with water, or with the Holy Ghost like believing Israel was in the gospels and early Acts period.

1st Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, 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.) Psalm 68:18.

He led captivity captive: Many believe this happened when he ascended up on high at his resurrection, when there was a great earthquake. Matthew 27:51-53.

The graves were opened (Luke 24:2) and the bodies of many saints arose after the resurrection and appeared to many in Jerusalem. Who was it that was held captive at that time and who did he give gifts to at that time?

Because we know that the prophecy program is not the mystery program concerning the body of Christ, we know that David was not revealing any part of the mystery concerning the body of Christ in Psalm 68:18 to Israel.

All of the mystery program was kept a secret, hid in God, until it was gradually revealed to the apostle Paul beginning one year after Jesus's resurrection. Romans 16:25 & 1st Corinthians 2:8.

David was referring to the captives in Paradise that were in the heart of the earth. Christ told the thief on the cross that he would be there with him later that day. Luke 23:43.

Paul is telling us of Christ's glorious triumph over the devil and his angels as he led captivity (the saints who had died before the resurrection) captive in Paradise to their new abode in heaven. 2nd Corinthians 12:4 & Revelation 2:7.

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Just as Christ led captivity captive and gave gifts unto those old testament saints that were taken into the paradise of God in heaven.

He also gave gifts for a while unto the body of Christ during its infancy to take it to full maturity. 1st Corinthians 12:1-4.

When the word of God was completed then that which was in part (the sign gifts) were done away with. This is why Paul was not able to heal people at the end of his ministry.

The mature believer had their childish gifts taken away because they were no longer needed, nor are they in operation anymore.

Apostles: Sent ones. Ephesians 2:20, 3:5.

Prophets: Barnabas and Saul were prophets Acts 13:1, 1st Corinthians 12:28-29 & 14:29-32.

Evangelists: 2nd Timothy 4:5.

Pastors and teachers: Notice the order of the gifts given. Paul tells us that God gave the body first apostles and prophets, which is because the word of God was not complete.

Then the permanent offices are given which are evangelists, pastors and teachers and they are given to the body for a specific reason, to edify it. Acts 13:1 & 1st Corinthians 12:28.

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

The perfecting of the saints: The word perfecting means to make one mature or complete.

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

The unity of the faith: The Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and teachers were given to the body of Christ to bring members of the body into the unity of the faith while we didn't have a completed bible.

They only saw through a glass darkly. It wasn't until Paul wrote 2nd Timothy that the body of Christ had the complete word of God at their disposal.

Today there are no more new Apostles and Prophets for the body of Christ with new revelations coming out because the word of God is complete.

So those supernatural sign gifts that were in part while the church didn't have a completed canon of scripture have been done away with because that which is perfect (complete) is come.

We now have the completed word of God!

1st Corinthians 13:8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 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.

The knowledge of the Son of God: *Ephesians 1:17-23.*

Unto a perfect man: A fully mature believer who understands all the doctrines that were dispensed to the apostle Paul for the body of Christ today. V:12 above.

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning

craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; *1st Timothy 4:1-16.*

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 supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

When all parts of the body of Christ are functioning properly with Christ as the head then the body can receive what each part needs to continue the work God has for us.

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 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, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

It is clear from this portion of scripture that the book is written with the Gentiles in mind.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye 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 ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The old man: Is crucified with Christ. He was the servant of sin. Romans 6:6 & Colossians 3:9.

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind: 2nd Corinthians 4:16 & Colossians 3:10.

The new man: He is dead to sin. He is the servant of God, and he is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Colossians 3:10.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye 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 labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

We can be angry over sin, and its consequences, because that is part of our sin nature, but because we have been redeemed, the new man is not to react out of anger.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the

hearers. **30** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Sealed unto the day of redemption: The one new man is sealed unto the day of redemption. As a member of the body of Christ we have eternal security. Romans 8:23 & Ephesians 1:14.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: **32** And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christs sake hath forgiven you.

With all malice: Wickedness or carnality (the deeds of the flesh), sinful activities.

Chapter Five A Great Mystery

1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; **2** And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

A sweetsmelling savour: A sacrifice that was acceptable unto God. Genesis 8:21 & Exodus 29:18.

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; **4** Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. **5** For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. **6** Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Let no man deceive you with vain words: Empty words.

The wrath of God: This is speaking about God's ultimate wrath in hell.

1st Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

The children of disobedience: This is a reference to lost people. Ephesians 2:2 & Colossians 3:6.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. **8** For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye 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.

The fruit of the Spirit: Things that the Spirit of God produces.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, *23* Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

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-

ed are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. **14** Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. *Psalms 44:22-26.*

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, **16** Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. **17** Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

The will of the Lord: God's eternal purpose for the body of Christ today.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; 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;

Be filled with the Spirit: This is accomplished by practicing verses nineteen through the end of the epistle.

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. **22** Wives, submit 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 saviour of the body.

Christ is the head of the church: The church is a body; whose head is Christ. The head is where all direction comes from for the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. **25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; **26** That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

That he might sanctify and cleanse it: Set it apart for his use.

With the washing of water by the word: The word of God can cleanse the worldly thinking out of our minds.

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.

Holy and without blemish: The words blemish, and blame are the same Greek words. Ephesians 1:4.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. **29** For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth 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. **32** This is a great

mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

They two shall be one flesh: The church is literally Christ's body, it is made up of Jew and Gentile in one body, just like a husband and wife are one body with one head.

This is a great mystery: The church is a great mystery. The Gentile in times past had to be a proselyte to Judaism to have salvation. Now both Jew and Gentile are one in Christ by faith.

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.

God took something that was familiar (marriage) to explain a new mystery known as the body of Christ. It isn't introduced here, nor did it begin here as some teach, but it is further explained here.

Chapter Six

Put on the whole Armour of God

1 Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Which is the first commandment with promise: The promise is found in verse three. Exodus 20:12 & Colossians 3:20.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Provoke not your children to wrath: To anger. Colossians 3:21.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; 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 doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh: This reference would be synonymous with employer/employee relationships today; however, this scripture is referring to actual slavery here. Colossians 3:22.

Israel was in slavery to Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, plus they also were permitted to have servants, or to become servants only to pay off debts. Israel was never allowed by God to have slaves like what went on in the United States.

Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord: This is speaking about receiving a reward at the judgment seat of Christ. 1st Corinthians 3:17, 9:1 4 & 2nd Corinthians 5:10.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Your Master also is in heaven: The word master here is capitalized, meaning deity. We must learn to treat all as if they were Christ himself, and not Lord over people with threats of being fired.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye 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.

The wiles of the devil: The word wiles is speaking about the devil's methods. The Greek word is the word Methodiah. Putting on the whole armour of God is synonymous with putting on the new man from Ephesians 4:24.

Principalities: Archangels. Romans 8:38.

The Greek word for principalities is "Arche." A prince is second only to the King. Satan is called the Prince of the power of the air. Ephesians 2:2, 1st Thessalonians 4:16 & Revelation 12:7.

Powers: The superhuman forces of Satan. Fallen angels. Romans 8:38 & Revelation 12:7.

The rulers of the darkness of this world: Satan is called the prince of the power of the air. Ephesians 2:2 & Revelation 12:7.

Spiritual wickedness: Fallen angelic beings that actively oppose God.

High places: Celestial, or heavenly places. Ephesians 1:3, 20, 2:6, 3:10 & Revelation 12:7.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

Having your loins girt about with truth: By telling the truth you are putting on the new man and are standing and withstanding the devil's assault on your life.

Having on the breastplate of righteousness: We have Christ's righteousness given to us at salvation.

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Isaiah 52:7 & Romans 10:15.

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Taking the shield of faith: These pieces of armour are for us to wield here in this life on a daily basis.

Take the helmet of salvation: Take your faith in the finished work of Christ with you.

The sword of the Spirit: God defines this for us. It is the word of God.

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication 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: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

That utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly: A supernatural boldness from God to help Paul speak God's word.

To make known the mystery of the gospel: That God was creating the one new man that is neither Jew nor Greek, and both would be a part of the same body by faith alone. Romans 16:25 & Galatians 3:28.

It is still a mystery to many today because those who know it are not putting on the armour of God and getting in the battle.

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: 22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

Tychicus: He was from Asia (modern Turkey). Acts 20:4. He also reported on Paul's state to the church in Colosse. Colossians 4:7. He was sent to Ephesus by Paul again when he was re-arrested. 2nd Timothy 4:12 & Titus 3:12.

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.

The End

Philippians

Introduction

The City of Philippi was named after Alexander the Great's Father Philip. Paul went there during his second Apostolic journey.

It is more accurate to call their journeys exactly what they were, Apostolic Journeys, because they were carried out by apostles.

This does not mean that our mission work today should carry the same title because we are not apostles, because the office of apostle was for the early church, and not for us today.

In order to fully understand the book of Philippians the reader must understand it in its proper context. Paul writes Philippians long after his initial visit to the region.

Paul had no intentions of going to Philippi until God used the Macedonian Call to get his attention as he originally desired to enter deeper into Asia and Bithynia but was forbidden by God. Read Acts 16 before reading Philippians.

Chapter One

Christ magnified in my body

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

Paul and Timotheus: Paul begins this epistle with his name as its first word, as he does in all of his epistles. Timotheus was from Lystra, who Paul had circumcised because all the Jews in that area knew his father was a Greek. Acts 16:3

The claim of Paul's apostleship is missing from this epistle, because the Philippians knew Paul from the very first day that the gospel had come to them.

It is an epistle about being a servant of Jesus Christ, so defending his authority would be out of place in such a letter.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus: The epistle was written to all the saints in Philippi. It is also for all of us in the body of Christ. All who are in Christ are saints, if you are saved today, you are called a saint by God.

With the bishops and deacons: The title of bishop is a scriptural title, which many have quit using because of those who have misused the title during the dark ages.

We should not abandon scriptural titles given to the body of Christ by God. Notice here there are bishops at the church in Philippi, which is because they needed more help due to their size. The same was true of deacons.

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace are what we have received from God today.

God is dispensing grace to us instead of wrath because of what Christ did for us on the cross. He hath taken away the enmity between God and us. Notice that it is God who dispenses grace and peace, not Paul.

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;

Making request with joy: The words joy, rejoice, rejoiced, and rejoicing appear sixteen times in this short epistle.

From the first day until now: This a reference that the original church members in Philippi would remember when Paul met them at the riverside in Acts 16:12.

Lydia, a Jew, was the first convert in Philippi, and soon after there was the Philippian Jailor with his family, all Gentiles.

Then the young maiden who was formerly possessed with a spirit of divination got saved. This was the first group of people in Europe to hear and believe the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:28.

The Philippians fellowshipped in the (singular) gospel from the first day in Acts 16:12 until now (when they had received this letter many years later.

Paul never preached two or three gospels as some teach. After Paul had arrived in Rome in Acts 28. The Philippians were still fellowshipping in the same gospel that Paul preached when he first came to Philippi in Acts 16.

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

A good work in you: The same work which was begun in them in Acts 16, he was still performing, and Christ will continue it until the end of this dispensation.

The day of Jesus Christ: This is the rapture of the Church. Upon that day this corruptible body will put on incorruption, and this mortal will put on immortality.

Christ's work in us will be complete on that day. We will have our new bodies that will enable us to sit in the heavenlies with him. 1st Corinthians 15:53.

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

Paul is writing this epistle while he is in Jail in Rome (Acts 28). He mentions the gospel that he was preaching back in Acts 16, and he makes no distinctions from the gospel he is still preaching after Acts 28. They are the same.

The defense and confirmation of the gospel: They helped Paul defend the confirm the gospel by their prayer and financial support while he was in prison, and by continuing the work started there in Philippi.

No other letter had been written to the Philippians telling them of another gospel that they should now be preaching as hyper dispensationalists teach.

Ye are all partakers of my grace: 2nd Corinthians 1:7.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

In the bowels of Jesus Christ: Paul longed after the Philippians in his inner-most being. Your love will abound for others as you receive more knowledge from God's word.

In knowledge and in all judgment: The more knowledge of God's word you have, the easier it is to judge whether things are good or bad.

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye 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.

Ye may approve things that are excellent: This phrase is used in Romans 2:18 regarding the law.

A Jew should have approved the things that are excellent concerning the law, just like a believer today should approve the things Paul has taught to the body of Christ. They are excellent.

The fruits of righteousness: Sin is the opposite of righteousness. Fruit is synonymous with what we do. We should produce the fruits of love and joy.

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

The things which happened unto me: Paul was beaten, shipwrecked, and imprisoned for the furtherance of the gospel. Paul's testimony emboldened many to speak the word without fear.

My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace: It was noticed and received by those in Caesar's own household (the palace). Philippians 4:22.

15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

I am set for the defense of the gospel: Paul's desire was that believers would preach Christ out of love, allowing his testimony for the defense of the gospel to motivate them to serve God. Philippians 1:8.

Paul was not moved by those things, and instead he gloried in the fact that more people were being reached with the gospel because of his bonds.

18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

In pretence, or in truth: Paul was able to find something to rejoice about in any situation he found himself in. He did not focus on his circumstances; he focused on how Christ could be magnified in his circumstances.

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

This shall turn to my salvation: Paul is speaking of his deliverance from prison. The words deliverance and salvation are often used interchangeably.

20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

Christ shall be magnified in my body: Whether Paul was allowed to live and continue to serve Christ, or by his death, it was his desire to live, and die in such a way that Christ would be magnified in his body.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

For me to live is Christ: Christ is to live through us, so the longer we live, the more he can live through us.

To die is gain: To Paul, to die is a selfish thing, because it is merely gain for himself. It is an eternal release from the brief sufferings of this world, but Paul's concern was for others, not himself.

22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 23 For I am in a strait betwixt 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.

Paul wanted the Philippians to abound even more than they were. If by his living it would produce more fruits of righteousness, then Paul would choose to endure more hardships so others could be blessed.

27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; *Ephesians 4:1-6.*

The gospel of Christ: Since the gospel of the grace of God is mentioned as being preached by Paul in Acts 20:24 then we can be sure that this gospel of Christ which is mentioned sometime after Paul's imprisonment is the same gospel.

The epistle to the Philippians is God's gift to the body of Christ today to help us to be the kind of ambassadors that God wants us to be while we are at home in the body.

With one mind: We are to exemplify the oneness that is in the Godhead in our churches and in our families.

The faith of the gospel: 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 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 ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

An evident token of perdition: Our adversaries think if we are persecuted, we must deserve what we are getting. When we are vocal about our faith, we will see opposition to the extent of our zeal.

Chapter Two The Mind of Christ

1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Paul begins here to direct his attention to a problem in the Philippian church which if not dealt with, he knew would eventually fester and divide this great church.

The problem had to do with two women in the church named Euodias and Syntyche, who are mentioned by name in chapter four, but part of their problem with one another is the source of Paul's dealings here in chapter two.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

This was most likely the root of the problem between these two ladies who had done many things for the Lord in the past but now had gotten sidetracked by the devil through the instrument of pride.

Paul reminds us that we are to esteem others better than ourselves and the only way that we can do that is to esteem Christ, and his calling for us, as better than anything that we can devise.

In order to have joy, or to get it back in our lives, you must place Jesus first, others second, and yourselves last. This will help you rejoice when you have lost our joy due to your own circumstances.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

This is one of the primary places where Satan gets a foothold in a believer's life, or in a church.

People then lose their joy because of self-centeredness and begin to focus on building themselves up by climbing upon the backs of others instead of offering someone else a hand in what they need or are trying to do for the Lord.

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 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 as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

We are to have the mindset that Christ had to be able to humble ourselves regardless of what position we may have obtained in this life and be willing to become servants to reach our fellow man as Christ did.

Christ Jesus was fully God, and fully man at the same time at the incarnation when God took humanity upon himself.

He even went so far as to pay the ultimate sacrifice for man, when he took our place for us and paid the wages of our sin on the cross. Not just any death, but the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath 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; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The angels, both fallen and not, will bow with all the saved, and the lost of every age, before our Lord and Master Jesus Christ one day, there will be no exceptions.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Work out you own salvation with fear and trembling: The salvation that is inside each believer must be worked out, not worked for.

This has nothing to do with ones meriting their own salvation. It has to do with doing God's good pleasure, or his will for us in our lives. We should be about making all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery.

There was a problem in the church between two women and they needed to work it out in order to have "deliverance" from that situation.

To be divisive in the body of Christ is something that should never happen because it causes greater problems in the body. To be unified in one task, God's will, is to do as these verses say, and is the responsibility of each assembly.

God does not wink at the problem causers, but says they should work it out in fear and trembling. This means they should work it out quickly before God decides to work it out himself without them.

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Shine as lights in the world: How can we be shining lights in the world when we are promoting ourselves at the expense of others, this is contrary to the ministry of Christ as laid out in the last five verses?

One of the mysteries revealed to the apostle Paul is that of the hypostatic union, or that of Christ becoming a man.

He is the perfect example of what humility is by what Paul has just recorded about his devotion to his father's plan in his humbling himself even to the point of going to the cross.

We can only begin to understand how to live and act as a Christian when we are willing to give of ourselves for others as Christ did for us. There would have been no quarrel in the church of Philippi if everyone followed the example of Christ.

Holding for the word of life: Is to continually present the gospel to other people, and to defend it when attacked.

In the day of Christ: When all that is done for Christ in the body will be judged, and the doers receive their rewards.

17 Yea, 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 ye joy, and rejoice with me. 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.

If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith: The church at Philippi was not unique in the fact that they had problems due to pride.

Paul states that just about every minister he can think of had the same problem they were experiencing, and that Timothy was the best one who would be able to help them at this present time with their most important issues.

With Timothy it was just natural for him to help the church in Philippi because he was not concerned for his place in the church or what amount of power he had in the church.

Timothy was genuinely concerned about doing the Lord's work and resolving whatever issues were there that were keeping this church from having the joy it once knew when it was gladly serving the Lord.

Timothy also loved the people dearly as he was with Paul in Acts 16 when the church started, so he had a strong connection with them all and wanted what was best for them.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath 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 was waiting to see how his trial would go in Rome, so he could not go to Philippi himself because he was a prisoner for our sakes.

Instead of pouting about his own circumstances he was busy about the work of the Lord. He was practicing what he preached.

Timothy was uniquely qualified to help this first church of Europe because he was half Jewish and half Gentile which is a mini picture of the church the body of Christ.

Jews and Gentiles in one body. That was Timothy. God knew what he was doing in having Timothy go there.

The Example of Epaphroditus

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in

labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. 27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

Epaphroditus was named after the Greek god Aphrodite, a god of lust and immorality. His parents named him such because of their devotion to this pagan god which was no god but rather a demon masquerading as a deity.

When Epaphroditus was saved he no doubt had a huge break from his past way of life and had to suffer much from everyone he knew but he like Paul considered all that but dung that he may win Christ.

This love for Christ so moved the Philippian church and Paul that when he was sick and nigh unto death that they sorrowed greatly for him.

His visit, Paul knew, would help to get them heading in the right direction because he truly was a bright light shining in the dark world.

When this epistle was written, Paul's Acts ministry had passed. God was now giving his final revelations to the body of Christ, the church, through Paul.

These final revelations filled up and perfected or made complete, the word of God for this dispensation. Those epistles were Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, and I and II Timothy and Titus.

They (Paul's final epistles) were what Paul was talking about in 1st Corinthians when he said, "When that which was perfect is come then that which is in part (the sign gifts) would be done away".

Paul could not heal himself, Timothy, or Epaphroditus because the gifts given to the church in its infancy were no longer required once they had a completed revelation for this age.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. 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 unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

By Paul sending Epaphroditus, he knew that they would get excited and refocus on the things of God which would bring about rejoicing or new joy in their life.

This in turn would bring great joy to the apostle Paul because when the church had joy, they would be serving the Lord and that is what truly pleased the Lord.

We must follow the examples that Paul has given us here to resolve issues in our churches today and not give in to the flesh, for it is only Satan and his minions who rejoice when we continue on without joy.

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. 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Beware of dogs: The Religious. Psalm 22:16.

Beware of the concision: Those who mutilate the flesh, who have confidence in their flesh (that they are the descendants of Abraham).

We are the circumcision: Paul is writing to the one new man that is circumcised in the heart, and not in the flesh. There is neither Jew nor Greek today in the body of Christ, we are all one.

Outside the body of Christ however the distinction remains leaving the world with three separate, and distinct classes of people.

Two of which remain are natural men (both lost Jews and lost Gentiles) which cannot understand the things of the Spirit, and the one that remains is a spiritual man who can discern spiritual things.

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 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.

Circumcised the eighth day: Leviticus 12:3 & Acts 7:8.

Paul, it is said, was the best Christian who ever lived, and that is true, but prior to his conversion he was one of the most righteous Jews to ever to have lived.

In God's eyes he was the chief of sinners, the leader of the rebellion against God and his church in Jerusalem. That is what Paul meant when he said he was the chief of sinners, not that he was a moral reprobate.

He was leading, as a chief, the nation of Israel in a war against the Jewish church headquartered in Jerusalem.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

All those things meant something in the eyes of those he associated with at that time, but as far as eternity goes, they were nothing and would not gain him access to heaven.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Paul tells us to know Christ we must not put any faith in our deeds for they are nothing but a stumbling block to receiving the righteousness of 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:

The faith of Christ: Paul says that our righteousness is not through the law, nor is it through our faith in Christ, but rather through the faith of Christ. It is his faith that Paul is referring to, not ours.

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

Our faith in him is weak at times, his faith is perfect continually. We obtain our righteousness through the faith of Christ.

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

The power of his resurrection: Paul tells us that it is through faith that we may know him and experience the power of his resurrection.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, and they that come to him must come to him by faith. You cannot know Christ or experience the power of his resurrection through the law, but only through faith.

The fellowship of his sufferings: We know Christ better when we have gone through suffering for the same cause(s) that Christ suffered.

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

The resurrection of the dead: Here it sounds to the superficial reader that Paul hopes he will get to heaven, but Paul is not saying anything of the sort.

This problem occurs because people don't associate verse eleven with its context as the end of a thought that began in verse eight. It is all one sentence, or one thought if you will.

Paul had attained the power of Christ's resurrection but he nor we have yet attained unto the resurrection of the dead. You have to be dead first in order to be resurrected.

Paul is speaking here of attaining Christ likeness in all of his ways which Philippians tells its readers we are to strive for in this life.

Until this mortal puts on immortality at the resurrection of the dead it is impossible while we remain in these mortal bodies.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: The word perfect here means a finished product. Paul had not finished his course yet.

That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ: Paul was apprehended of Christ, and he wants to apprehend everything he was apprehended for to teach it to us.

Paul continues the thought and declares he has not yet attained his new resurrected body that is free from the effects of sin. He is

following or trying to conform his actions to be as close to what they will be like in heaven as he humanly can.

Paul says he was not already "perfect" which means complete or a finished project, it does not mean sinless perfection. Jesus himself was mentioned as being made perfect through his sufferings in Hebrews 2:10.

Jesus was the sinless Son of God, but he was made perfect, or complete through his sufferings. You are not a finished product yet because God is not finished with you.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul clearly states that he has not reached that final state (apprehended) and neither has anyone else on this side of the grave, or the rapture.

He has however decided to know Christ better by forgetting the failures of the past and striving towards the things of God that are before us.

Paul is not pressing towards the mark to earn the prize of a sinless body, he is pressing towards holiness so that he may be more like Christ in this corrupt world and thus be a better witness, not so that he may merit salvation.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

As many as be perfect, be thus minded: Our state is what is being mentioned here by Paul, not our standing. We are perfect in our state if we have by faith received the faith of Christ.

Our state is made perfect because it is through Jesus Christ that we have obtained it and not through any work of the law. If Paul could not merit salvation by his adherence to the law, then no one could.

The only thing Paul was lacking, and we are lacking today is our death or the rapture so that we can receive the inheritance of our faith completely. We are being made perfect (not sinless) a completed project; we are not one yet until we leave this world.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. 17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. 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 earthly things.)

Let us mind the same thing: Paul tells the Philippians to follow him (meaning his teachings received from heaven) and the example of his new life in Christ.

Not only that but he tells them that they are to mark those who walk contrary to Paul and Timothy because they are the enemies of the cross, because they are putting the emphasis on keeping the

law to obtain righteousness and are making void the work of the cross.

We are to concentrate on things above such as the fate of a man's soul and not upon the things of this earth that we may enjoy or possess.

The end of the life of a believer who is earthly minded will be someone who comes to God with empty hands. They have nothing to show for their life here.

The end of a life for a lost man is far worse, for while he has nothing to bring to offer the Saviour, he also has no Saviour to keep him from eternal damnation.

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, 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.

For our conversation is in heaven: In this verse Paul shows believers how we are to behave ourselves in this world. We are to have our conversation in heaven.

What that means is that our speech is to be different, seasoned with the salt of God's word if you will, so that others will be drawn unto Christ by us.

Verse twenty-one sums up the whole chapter. It says that Christ will change our bodies, so they will be like his. His thoughts will be our thoughts one day and we will never have another sinful thought pass through our mind.

Not only will the kingdoms of this world be subject unto him but also the hearts of all mankind will be subject unto him as well.

Chapter Four

Rejoice in the Lord always

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

Paul had joy from his converts in that area and he could rejoice by just remembering those faithful saints there in Philippi.

Those you win to Christ will be your crowns that you can one day lay down at your Saviours feet, but until then, they serve as your joy.

When you lead someone to Christ, or you disciple them, you are storing up joy that can be accessed by simply meditating on them.

If you have nothing to joy about then the remedy is simple; get some fruit (converts) to meditate on for when times get tough.

2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord: These two women who once helped Paul build the church, now were helping to divide it because of their disagreement on some secondary personal issues.

They needed to be refocused on the original task they had when they were working with Paul.

With other my fellowlabourers whose names are in the book of life: Most people just read over that and don't ask themselves who he is speaking of. Their names are not so important but who they are is.

They are Jewish kingdom saints from Jerusalem most likely. They understood Paul's message, and saw the diminishing of Israel, and were helping Paul with his program.

Like Barnabas, John Mark, Luke, all kingdom saints. Remember all of Israel's advantages were gone by this time because the Acts period is now over. Not in Acts 16 but at the time Philippians is written.

4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

The words joy and rejoice are used three times in the first four verses and twenty times throughout the epistle.

The word joy needs no explanation but how to have it does. There are times when you have no joy, but we are still commanded to rejoice by God's word. Verse four tells us that in order to have joy we must rejoice in the Lord.

When we meditate on the things of God, we refuel our joy thus fulfilling the command to rejoice. You cannot help but be joyful after meditating on what God has done for you eternally.

The problem lies when we focus on our earthly conditions, we tend to lose our joy especially if we see someone else doing better than us when we ourselves are serving the Lord.

Just saying "praise the Lord" will not fill our joy tank up, but when we meditate on the things above, we keep our joy tank full, and we are even able to help give someone else joy by talking to them about the Lord.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

All men is a reference to both the saved and the lost. Christians will be strengthened seeing other Christians walking how they ought to walk. Some Christians are like a roller coaster, high and then low, high then low.

What about that would attract a lost person to Christ? Nothing! That is exactly how a lost person is built to act in his flesh because he is of the flesh.

We who are in the Spirit are to walk after the Spirit, so we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

The Lord is at hand: The Lord is coming soon is another way of saying this in modern English.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The peace of God: This is not the same as our peace with God. The former is when we trust in God's plan in every area of our life knowing that he is in control, while peace with God is when you accept God's free gift of eternal life.

You were as a lost person at war with God until you accepted his Son and then something better than a cease fire is declared, peace!

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 ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Those things, which ye have both learned, and receive, and heard, and seen in me do: Paul admonishes us today in the body of Christ to do what we have either seen him do, heard from him verbally, or learned from him in written form.

It is then that we will have the God of peace with us. Paul did what we are to do. Most who know how to rightly divide the word of truth do very little in the area of replicating the actions of the apostle Paul.

He started multiple churches, and the gospel went throughout all the known world in just fifteen to twenty years while many of us do what we have learned from the apostle Paul.

If Paul is your apostle, and you really follow him then follow more than his doctrine. Follow his example, and do what he did (make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery).

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

Paul was taken care of by the Philippian church on more than one occasion for which he was eternally grateful. When we have opportunity to give to others, especially in the ministry, do we remember them and give?

The Philippian church was the church that Paul mentioned in second Corinthians that was in deep poverty, but it still gave sacrificially to Paul and to the church in Jerusalem.

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, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me: Paul was not naming and claiming that he could move a literal mountain, or declaring a marriage will be restored.

He was stating that he can do all things that are in accordance with God's will for his life through the power of Christ. Jesus is the Christ, not a good luck charm or a Buddha whose belly we can rub to get his favour.

Paul was able to accomplish God's will for his life even though no one for a while communicated with him financially, not even the Philippians. God subsidizes what he authorizes.

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

Ye did communicate with my affliction: When Paul mentions that the Philippians communicated to him it is a reference to their sending to him financial aid to help in his ministry.

Paul was just being real with this church and very grateful for their assistance. You do well when you support God's workers in the ministry.

15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

In the beginning of the gospel: This was not the beginning of a new gospel being preached beginning with them. He didn't preach one gospel in Turkey, and cross over into Europe and preach another one there as some teach.

While it is obvious that the context here is that Paul is commending the Philippians for their giving, in doing so he further gives a better understanding of just when that was.

The Philippian church had its beginning in Acts 16 and that was just a few years after Paul had begun preaching the gospel of the grace of God which was different from what the twelve had been preaching (the gospel of the kingdom) back in Israel.

16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

Ye sent once and again unto my necessity: The Philippians sent Paul support while he was ministering in Thessalonica.

Fruit that may abound to your account: What we give is seed that turns to fruit, or sustenance to the receiver, and it is a plus in our account with God which will not go unrewarded at the judgment seat of Christ.

God keeps records of what we give to our local churches, and missions.

18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent

from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

An odour of a sweet smell: When you bless God's servants the very God of Heaven receives an offering from you that relates to the good temple offerings of the past. They were and are received by God. Genesis 8:12.

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.

God will supply all our needs, not all our wants.

21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. 22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The church in Philippi, because it had such a close relationship with the apostle Paul, had grown close to those that currently lived in Rome.

Even while in jail in Rome, Paul had reached into the very heart of the empire having influenced people in Caesar's very own house to trust in Christ. You never know just who you will reach and from where.

As Paul often does, he ends his letter with "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all", because this is the age of grace and Paul is the chief propagator of the grace message.

Surely the grace of our Lord will be with us if we put into practice the principles taught in this epistle. Paul's epistles are filled with words of wisdom on how to live down here from day to day.

The End

Colossians

Introduction

The epistle to the Colossians is one of the four epistles written by the apostle Paul while he was under house arrest in Rome.

The others are Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon. Paul was essentially imprisoned by the Jews for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

Israel understood that they would teach the Gentiles the gospel of the kingdom when Israel was ruling and reigning during its kingdom and not when Israel was in the fallen position that it found itself in after they had rejected their Messiah.

Paul was instructed that God was ushering in a new dispensation of grace during Israel's fall to reach the Gentiles in spite of Israel.

This did not set well with the traditional hardline Jew and was confusing to those Jewish believers still under the kingdom program.

The epistle was written around 61 A.D.

The four prison epistles reveal later revelations that the apostle of the Gentiles received which need to be understood in their context so that you can see the development of new doctrinal revelations for the body of Christ.

The truths found in these four epistles were not known to the twelve apostles until after Paul had revealed them to the body of Christ and they were never preached by the twelve to the nation of Israel.

The City of Colosse

Colosse was located in the region of Phrygia, Asia, modern day Turkey. During Paul's ministry Colosse was predominately Gentile, but there was a community of Jews living there. Colossians 2:13.

The churches in Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse all got their start during the three years Paul was in Ephesus on his third missionary journey, (Acts 19:10).

Epaphras was the man who founded the church in Colosse (Colossians 1:5-7). The book of Acts never mentions Paul as ever having gone to Colosse.

Epaphras was a native of Colosse (Colossians 4:12) and was probably converted to Christ while visiting Ephesus during Paul's stay there. He then returned to his city and began the church.

Paul's letter to the Colossian church was a preventive letter to combat the mixture of Jewish legalism and Greek philosophy that was creeping its way into the church's doctrine.

To many Greeks, Jesus was not enough, salvation must be Christ plus secret knowledge. This false teaching is prevalent today in many different forms adding to grace and rendering grace useless. It is all of grace and none of us.

Chapter One

Having the Preeminence

The book of Colossians is a thesis on the knowledge of who Christ is and what we should do with that knowledge, for it is in Christ alone that all fullness dwells and Christ should have preeminence in our lives.

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, 2 To the saints and

faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

An apostle of Jesus Christ: by the will of God and not of his own will nor of the will of man. Paul was called to be the apostle of the Gentiles while on the road to Damascus in Acts chapter nine.

He was not the replacement for Judas, Matthias was. Judas was an apostle to the nation of Israel along with the other eleven, while Paul was expressly distinguished as the apostle of the Gentiles.

The twelve apostles were promised to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, not the Gentiles. Matthew 19:28.

The saints and faithful brethren in Christ: Paul writes to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse which should tell you right away that while all that are in Christ are saints, but not all saints are faithful brethren all of the time.

To be in Christ means primarily that we are in his body, the church, of which he is the head.

Ephesians 4:15 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 supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Grace be unto you, and peace: The grace and peace is given unto those in Colosse, as well as unto all believers in this present dispensation not by Paul, but by God the Father, and his Son.

It is given to all who believe the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:24 & 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

Ephesians 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

Colossians 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

Peace is also given by God to all who trust in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Peace is now the situation the world finds itself in thanks to Christ making peace for us with God by his giving of himself on the cross on our behalf.

Had Christ not given himself for us there would be no peace between us and God, only enmity (war). Before a person is saved, they are at war with God. Ephesians 2:14-17.

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 ye have to all the saints,

The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: In verse two we learned that God is our Father if we believe the gospel of the grace of God. Here we read (not for the first time) that God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is that Father/Son relationship that we shall study beginning in verse twelve of this chapter to better understand about this relationship. Lord means master, and Christ means the anointed one. Acts 4:27 & 10:38.

It does not take long for lovers of Christ to start sharing that love with those around them but if knowledge does not accompany that love it will become twisted and misdirected.

Your faith in Christ Jesus: The Colossians faith in the death of Christ for their sins, his burial, and his resurrection (1st Corinthians 15:1-4). The faith of Christ which is totally different.

The love which ye have to all the saints: They heard that the saints of Colosse were busy trying to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which is mentioned in Ephesians:

Ephesians 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

The hope which is laid up for you in heaven: We as the body of Christ have a heavenly hope, whereas Israel which was under the law had an earthly hope in the kingdom. Colossians 1:27.

Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

The word of truth: Paul mentions that the Colossians had heard the word of the truth previously when they heard the gospel.

Now he is writing to these believers to establish them in the faith so that they might bring forth fruit in their own lives and ultimately bring forth new fruit.

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

There are other gospels in the bible, which are true, but they won't save anyone today. For instance, the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:17-23) will not save anyone today.

Today a person must believe that Christ died for their sins according to the scriptures, was buried, and rose again from the dead according to the scriptures in order to be saved.

6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

In all the world: This is speaking about the gospel that Paul preached, and its going into all the world, not the gospel of the kingdom that will be preached in all the world in the tribulation period. Matthew 24:14.

The truth of the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24) will produce fruits in a believer's life and those around them.

The grace of God in truth: Acts 20:24 & Ephesians 3:2.

7 As ye 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.

Epaphras our dear fellow servant: It should be the desire of every minister of the gospel to want to see the fruit that God has given them to grow just as Paul, Timotheus and Epaphras all wanted for these believers in Colosse. Ephesians 3:7.

A faithful minister of Christ: The word minister is the Greek word "Diakonos," which is where we get the word "deacon" transliterated from.

It means a servant. The deacon's number one qualification is found in 1st Timothy:

1st Timothy 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

Deacons today have no idea what that qualification means, because their pastor has no idea what it means, because their denomination has no idea what that means.

They may take a stab at saying what they think it means, but if they do not understand the distinctive ministry of Paul, they do not have a clue as to its' meaning.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: Wanting that for them was not enough, they prayed always that they might be filled with the knowledge of his will.

Do you pray the same for your converts or those you disciple? You should. It is one thing to be saved and it is another thing totally to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Being saved without any knowledge of his will can be dangerous and being saved with only a little spiritual knowledge can lead to many problems.

Every cult and denomination today are built on large percentages of truth along with differing percentages of error.

That is because they are not filled with the knowledge of his will and they do not possess all wisdom and spiritual understanding largely because they were not prayed for as Paul did, nor were they properly disciplined. Paul wanted to make sure that was not the case here.

The average Christian today is filled with a knowledge of this world but does not understand the plan of God for the ages which is clearly laid out for them in the Bible and especially in Paul's epistles.

Guess which epistles most people are ignorant of? Paul's! That is because Satan wants them to be ignorant of what will be the most helpful to them.

In Paul's epistles you have the most complete understanding of the will of God that you will ever find and that is the knowledge of his prophecy program concerning Israel, and his mystery program concerning the church.

God does not just want you to know about it, but he wants you to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Wisdom: This is not the kind of wisdom found in Exodus 28:3 and 31:6 given to Bezaleel and Aholiab to work on the instruments in the Tabernacle. This is the wisdom found in Paul's writings:

1st Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Spiritual understanding: *Ephesians 5:17.*

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing: If you are not filled with the knowledge of God's will, you will not be able to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, nor be fruitful in every good work.

For example, if I only knew half of God's plan for the ages and I was a teacher of God's word I would only be able to prepare people halfway to serve the Lord. I could not be as fruitful in every good work and therefore I could not fully please the Lord in all that I have taught.

Where do we find out how to walk worthy in the Lord today? This walk is described in detail in the whole second half of Ephesians, from Ephesians 4:1 all the way to the end of the epistle.

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

1st Thessalonians 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Being fruitful in every good work: 2nd Corinthians 9:8, Philippians 1:6, 2nd Thessalonians 2:17, 1st Timothy 3:1, 2nd Timothy 2:21 & Titus 3:1.

Increasing in the knowledge of God: If you have gotten to the point of not having learned anything new from the scriptures in a while it is not the fault of God or the scriptures.

The scriptures are an unending supply of knowledge about God, his plans for us and how he expects us to accomplish his plans.

When you start seeing stories about God's dealings with the nation of Israel or the body of Christ as just history and you can no longer see the practical and spiritual applications for us today.

You simply need to dig a little deeper and start searching for truths as a gold miner searches for gold because it's there.

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

Please do not go on to the next verse in Colossians before you read the second half of the book of Ephesians, or else you will not remember how to walk worthy in the lord.

Our instructions from Paul on how to walk worthy are found in Ephesians 4-6.

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Giving thanks to the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers: Once again God the Father is mentioned by Paul in relationship to us believers. We should also be giving thanks to God the Father for making us meet (fit).

We were made fit because he became our Father when we by faith believed the gospel, and because we believed we have an inheritance from our Father.

When we believed the gospel, the holy Spirit baptized us into Christ, his Son, and we are now a part of the body of Christ, with Christ being the head of that body.

1st Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

The inheritance of the saints in light: The Colossians were some of the initial recipients of an inheritance given to them from God.

We are now made partakers with them of that inheritance because we are in Christ (God's Son) alongside them.

They have gone before us and are enjoying these things today in heavenly places. This inheritance does not speak of any earthly promises that were promised to the nation of Israel. It refers to our spiritual blessings in heavenly places that will be enjoyed by us as the body of Christ.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard the glory that God has prepared for us when we are finally together with him and the most amazing part of that is that we are not worthy to receive these blessings, but he has made us fit to receive them.

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness: We as believers have been delivered from the power of darkness, which means we are delivered from Satan, from hell and from the flesh.

We unfortunately still have to battle until this corrupted body puts on incorruption at the rapture. Luke 22:53 & Acts 26:18

Satan is a power as defined in See Ephesians 2:2 where Satan is called the prince of the power of the air. 1 Corinthians 15:24.

Ephesians 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Colossians 2:10.

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

And hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: When we were delivered from these things, we were also translated into something far better than we understand or enjoy at this present time. The kingdom of his dear Son.

We were translated out of Adam, our first ancestor, who was a living soul, and into Christ, the last Adam, who is a quickening spirit. 1st Corinthians 15:45.

1st Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

This is both a present, and a future translation, for while we cannot now presently see him, we shall one day when we put off this vile body.

We are translated into our section of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of his dear Son, into heavenly places.

Kingdom saints will be resurrected into their section of the kingdom of his dear Son when they reign with Christ on the earth for a thousand years.

We shall be translated into his presence as he rules and reigns in the heavenlies. This is not speaking about ruling and reigning with him on earth, for the earth is not our (the body of Christ) eternal destiny, it is Israel's. Psalm 37:11 & Matthew 5:5.

Israel that lived under the Law and those that live after the church age during the tribulation period will live under the law again and all of these saints have an earthly destiny during the kingdom, but we under grace have a heavenly destiny.

There is a difference. That is a part of understanding the knowledge of his will with all spiritual understanding that we just read about a few verses ago.

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

In whom we have redemption: We are bought back (redeemed) from our slavery to the sin nature that we received when we were conceived in our mother's womb as sinners.

This all came about because of the actions of our first parents in the garden when death passed upon all men. This redemption is not to be confused with the redemption of the body that occurs at the rapture:

Romans 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Ephesians 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

The Blood of Christ

Through his blood: The instrument that God used to redeem us was the only acceptable instrument that could be used.

It was the only thing that the righteousness of God would accept the sinless blood of a lamb without spot or blemish that flowed from Jesus veins there on Calvary. Jesus is the lamb of God, which took away the sins of the world.

Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Romans 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

In the sister book of Ephesians says the exact same thing to the saints in Ephesus, but he ends it with a few more important words that we should see here as well:

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

The riches of his grace are obviously strongly connected to the word grace in the dispensation of grace. What are some of those riches?

Romans 9:23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Romans 11:12 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?

Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

Ephesians 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:8 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;

Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:27 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:

Colossians 2:2 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;

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

The forgiveness of sins: This is so much better than what Israel enjoyed under the law of Moses where they had the remission of sins. When cancer goes into remission, it can come back and kill someone.

Forgiveness is total and complete, while remission is only temporary. Israel had to come every year on the day of atonement and have their sins atoned for, for another year.

We have the total and complete forgiveness of sin the moment we trust the gospel.

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

The image of the invisible God: What does God look like?

When God created Adam, he created him in his image, but Christ is the perfect image of God because we are not all powerful, or all knowing, so we cannot be a perfect image as Christ is. Genesis 1:26.

The first man Adam was created in the image of God, but he fell. We are created in the image of our earthly father Adam.

We need to get out of Adam as human beings, and get into Christ, the last Adam, so that we too will have God as our Father, because we are in Christ, his Son.

Genesis 5:3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:

The phrase the invisible God is used five times in scripture and four of them are by the apostle Paul. Romans 1:20, 1st Timothy 1:17 & Hebrews 11:27. What does Jesus look like? He looks like his Father.

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

John 14:7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Hebrews 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The firstborn of every creature: Since we could not go to God, he came to us in the person of his Son. He did not show all his glory, but he was fully God and fully man at the same time. As Christ said to Philip, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father John 14:9.

Paul also says in Romans that we are to be conformed to the image of his Son, and then he mentions something that is also related, which is his being the firstborn of every creature, or many brethren as he says in Romans:

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

That he might be the firstborn of every creature: This does not mean that Jesus is the first being created by God the father, who then proceeded to create every other creature.

In order to understand what the first born of every creature means we must first learn what the bible teach us about “the firstborn”?

In Genesis 25:29-34 we have the story of Esau (the firstborn), and Jacob. Esau, if you remember, sold his birthright to Jacob, because for a bowl of pottage.

Jacob then tricked his father Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing that belonged to the firstborn, and that blessing was a double portion from what his other brother would inherit. Genesis 27:19-37.

Jacob’s firstborn lost the birthright of the firstborn by disqualifying himself in going in unto his Father Jacob’s concubine:

Genesis 35:22 And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

His right of the firstborn was then given to Joseph, who received a double portion, and he was blessed by God the Father as well.

Jacob blessed Joseph’s two sons and they would become two tribes in Israel instead of the just the one tribe of Joseph but not for a while yet. Genesis 48:1-22 & 49:1-4.

That was not the blessing of the firstborn being bestowed upon Reuben. Now listen to the blessing Jacob gave to Joseph, whose two sons had already been blessed by Jacob. Genesis 49:22-26.

The tribe of Joseph would become the tribe of Ephraim and the tribe of Manasseh would inherit Levi’s twelfth of the land as they would get the Lord as their inheritance.

Now that we understand better the right of the firstborn, we can begin to understand the phrase, the firstborn of every creature.

The bible records that Adam was the son of God by creation, just as angels are called sons of God because God brought them forth.

God gave Adam dominion over the earth, and he as a son of God lost it to another son of God, Lucifer who beguiled Eve, just like Jacob did to Isaac and “stole” his birthright.

Didn’t Adam actually willing give up his birthright by partaking of the forbidden fruit? He did, just like Esau, he sold his birthright for a bite of food. Genesis 3.

Both Esau and Rueben gave up their birthright as the firstborn of their father, and Adam did so as well when he sold dominion over earth to Satan for a taste of the forbidden fruit, and Satan became the god of this world. Matthew 4:8-9.

Jesus defeated Satan by the cross, and bought back what Adam lost in the fall when he rose from the dead, and became the last Adam, a quickening spirit, who won not only the earth back from Satan’s grasp, but the heavens as well.

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:

For by him were all things created: Lucifer was created by the Son of God and Satan hates to be reminded of that.

Remember that scripture teaches that God created the heaven and earth and if Colossians is correct, which it is, then Jesus is God.

This is a truth that Satan does not want us to know. Those who believe that Satan is more powerful than Jesus Christ do not believe nor understand the divinity of Christ.

That are in heaven, and that are in earth: Jesus Christ is the Creator of everything, everywhere.

Visible: Our earthly magistrates, principalities and powers are ordained of God.

Invisible: The principalities and powers in high places are not visible to us.

Thrones: The seat of power. Christ is seated at the right hand of power. We are raised up, and hath mad us to sit together with him in heavenly places in Christ.

Ephesians 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

Ephesians 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Dominions: The word dominion means to rule over. Kings and Presidents here on the earth (the visible) and angels, Cherubim, and Seraphim etc. in the heavens (invisible).

Principalities and powers: Sometimes when we don’t know what something is, we can find out what it is not and go from there.

Notice from the below verses that the principalities are mentioned with powers, so that tells us they are not powers, and they are not angels:

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Ephesians 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

We know that principalities and powers operate in heavenly places, they are also in high places:

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

From this verse we know that both principalities and powers wrestle/oppose us here on this earth. We know also that they are associated with being rulers of the darkness of this world.

We are to wrestle with these principalities and powers in the supernatural realm with the weapons of our warfare found in Ephesians 6:

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye 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 armour of God, that ye 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, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, 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 and supplication for all saints;

Gabriel (an angel) spoke with Daniel about giving him the answer concerning the questions he was seeking God's word for.

It took him 21 days to get to Daniel with his answer because he was being withstood by principalities and powers in high places (spiritual wickedness, rulers of the darkness) who did not want the message to get through to Daniel.

We are not Israel fighting over a specific piece of real-estate that God has given us, we are the body of Christ, our citizenship is in heaven.

We are to contend with these forces of evil on our knees, and with our mouths sharing the mystery (the manifold wisdom of God. Prayer and Share is our battle cry! Ephesians 6.

Christ defeated his enemies:

Colossians 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

From this verse we learn that these principalities and powers were spoiled (had their power taken away from them) by Christ. What about down here? What does Paul tell Titus to tell the people he is leading?

We are to be good citizens:

Titus 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, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

And for him: All things were created for God's Son, but most of those things were lost in the fall.

God will put all things under him in the kingdom, and he shall have all glory, and power and dominion, even in the government at that time. What about now? Romans 13:1-7.

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

He is before all things: He did not have a beginning.

And by him all things consist: Since God has already established Christ's eternity he now moves on to a new subject, his sustaining power. He holds everything together by his might. You and I are literally held together by God.

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.

He is the head of the body, the church: The body of Christ is not a reference to his physical body, but it is a reference to his spiritual body which is the collection of all the saved believers.

We are placed into his body upon our salvation experience. He is Israel's King, and our (the body of Christ's) Head.

The beginning, the firstborn from the dead: The firstborn from the dead means he was the first from the dead to be resurrected to eternal life, never to die again.

Every Jew understood the resurrection of the dead when all believers would be resurrected at the same time to enter into their kingdom of rest, to live forever. Jesus was resurrected from the dead, not with them at a future date.

That in all things he might have the preeminence: Who is to have preeminence? The firstborn who didn't mar his inheritance.

Jesus was tempted in all points as we are yet without sin. Reuben, Esau, and Adam all sinned. Christ knew no sin and became sin for us.

19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

In him should all fullness dwell: Christ in his pre-incarnate state as the eternal Son of God and even now as a man his Father was pleased that in his past role as redeemer of mankind all fullness should also continue to dwell in him.

He did not give up any part of his deity to become a man; he was both fully man and fully God at the same time.

Prior to his incarnation (the taking on of human flesh) he was only fully God. Today Christ is a man, and he will continue to be a man, but he is also the Godman.

20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Having made peace through the blood of his cross: The righteousness of God could never make peace with the unrighteous works of our flesh because they are the exact opposite of all that God is (pure holiness).

The only way we could be reconciled to God was if God himself in the form of man became sin for us and then died in our place as our payment for sin.

So, when Christ shed his perfect blood for us imperfect beings, the eternal life that was in him could be applied to us. The life is in the blood.

Without our earthly blood we would die immediately and without Christ shedding his perfect blood we could never have eternal life.

We were at war with God because of our sin but Christ made peace between us and his Father by his perfect blood.

By him to reconcile all things unto himself: The “all things” here speak of the positions of authority in both realms.

Things in earth: All the powers on the earth at the beginning of the kingdom will be brought under the authority of Christ’s rule:

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Things in heaven: All the powers in the heavens at the midpoint of the tribulation period will be brought under Christ’s rule:

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works: Here Paul first speaks of the physical body of Christ, and his crucifixion and then the spiritual body (the church) of which he is head.

It was for us he died to transfer his righteousness to us so that we might stand before his Father one day.

Yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death:

To present you holy: We are given the righteousness of Christ upon our faith in him. And when we are before him for eternity, we will be before him in holiness, that is not of us, but of him.

Unblameable: Since we have Christ’s righteousness no one can lay anything to our charge.

Romans 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.

Unproveable: This word in English is used only once in Paul’s epistles, but the Greek word for it is used four other times and it is translated these times as the word blameless.

In his sight: He doesn’t see our past because we are a part of his body upon our belief in the gospel of our salvation.

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope: Paul is speaking collectively to the saints that are in Colosse and not to an individual about losing one’s salvation. Notice Paul refers to them as enemies (plural) not an enemy (singular).

It is easy, and it happens all too often that a church does not continue in the faith and moves away from the hope that Paul has already mentioned and becomes unsettled in its teaching in its later years.

It is a spiritual impossibility for an individual who is saved by grace to have that salvation taken away by God or else it would not be called grace.

It is highly probable however that many churches will quit teaching that salvation is solely by grace through faith as it happens all the time.

The hope of the Gospel: Is heaven. Colossians 1:27.

The gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven: Paul did not give the gospel personally to every human being under heaven, but he established churches, and trained men to go where he could not go, and they did.

Whereof I Paul am made a minister: Ephesians 3:6-7.

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:

My sufferings for you: Did Paul suffer for those in Colosse whom he had never met? Absolutely.

Paul suffered for every saint that is a part of the body of Christ for the past 2,000 years in the beatings, stoning’s shipwrecks and imprisonments associated with getting the gospel to the world so that we could become a part of Christ’s body.

Philippians 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 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 unto his death;

And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ: This did not mean that there was any merit to be attained for you and me by Paul’s suffering (i.e., we were not healed by Paul’s stripes).

This is proven in the following verses that state it was all of Christ, and none of us.

The afflictions of Christ: Since we are his body, and he is our head, we will suffer when we take a stand for the message delivered to us by Paul, that was first delivered to him by the risen Christ.

For his body's sake, which is the church: This has to do with Paul's suffering that he faced for the church, which is Christ's body.

As Paul received an abundance of revelations for the Church he was often met with stiff opposition, even persecution from those without, and sadly from within the body of Christ because of these new teachings.

Paul suffered, and later even died for the truth, but it is only Christ's death for us that could have any redemptive power.

Paul is just speaking about suffering for the body of Christ. He was the first member of the body of Christ, and he suffered to bring others into that same body.

2nd Corinthians 11:23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 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.

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

Whereof I am made a minister: Paul didn't volunteer to be an Apostle, nor did he seek it. He was made a minister according to a whole new program of grace. 1st Corinthians 9:16-17.

According to the dispensation of God which is given me for you: If you are a bible believer, then you are a dispensationalist.

You may have heard the term used negatively in the past by some confused person but just ask yourself, "Does God require blood sacrifices today?" No, of course not! That was during a previous dispensation than what we live in today.

Paul tells us throughout his writings that it was through him (Paul) that God instructs us in the body of Christ as to the doctrines for this dispensation of grace.

This present dispensation was given to Paul to give to us! I did not write verse 25, God did.

To fulfil the word of God: God is not saying here that Paul was fulfilling scripture, but rather that he was to fulfil the word of God.

He was to fill it full or to complete the cannon of scripture by adding those revelations that God had given to him to give to us.

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations: The main teaching that Paul instructs us about in his writings according to verse 26 is the mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest. Romans 16:25.

But now is made manifest to his saints:

Romans 16:25 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,...

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:

The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: God first made known to Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, the mystery and he in turn committed that to us and we have the same responsibility today to make it known to all men today.

Christ in you: To say "Christ in you" to a Gentile prior to the kingdom was something that many of the Jews could not and would not receive because that was to happen only after Israel had risen to the prominent spot among the nations.

God however had a mystery program that he had been keeping hidden from the devil since before the foundation of the world that was ushered in in spite of Israel and her rejection of her King and kingdom.

She will have another chance during the time of Jacob's trouble to receive her King.

The hope of glory: The hope is not something that we wish for, but it is something that is ours, and it is waiting for us to possess at the appropriate time.

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Teaching every man in all wisdom: In order to present someone perfect in Christ we must as Paul, preach Christ according to the revelation of the mystery and warn every one of the devil's attempts to keep the mystery a mystery.

We must do that with the wisdom of God and not the wisdom of this world. The wisdom of God is his mystery program which shows the world how smart he both is and was in defeating the wisdom of this world (Satan's wisdom).

Since Satan is the god of this world, the world's wisdom comes from him and it will fail the world in the end, but God's wisdom never will.

I also labour, striving according to his working: Paul was not being boastful in verse 29 but truthful when he stated that Christ was working in him mightily.

If we were to have the full understanding of the revelations that Christ had given to Paul, we would spend more of our time serving Christ properly and allowing him to work mightily through us as he did through Paul.

If we spend our whole life laboring for God but not understanding his mystery program for the church, we are not striving according to his working or how he would have us to labour.

If we build on Israel's prophecy program and not on the church's mystery program, we will have a lot of our works burn up as wood, hay, and stubble.

I did this very thing for many years before I got ahold of how to rightly divide the word of truth and began to see the mystery program given to us by God through the apostle Paul.

Chapter Two

The Hidden treasures

1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

What great conflict I have for you: The Greek word that Paul uses here is "Agone" which is where we get the word Agony and agonize.

Do you agonize for the salvation and edification of people you have never seen to be saved, and come unto a knowledge of the truth? Paul did.

Paul's desire was to see the believers of Colosse and Laodicea, especially those who had never seen him before.

It can only be compared to the love grandparents have for a faraway daughter and son-in-law who have had new children, and something has kept them from being able to see their new grandchildren.

For Paul it was his incarceration that kept him from seeing his spiritual offspring that he cared for greatly.

Do you have any spiritual children to care for and if so, are you caring for them? Are you a cheerful giver to helping all men see what is fellowship of the mystery? You should be.

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.

Being knit together in love: Paul was a tent maker, and here he uses a tent making illustration to connect a believer with the mystery.

If we love the same things God loves, then we will try to knit them together in love as a tent maker knits his fabric together to provide shelter from the storms that life throws their way.

The mystery truth is a shelter from the seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

Again, and again the hidden wisdom that was kept hid in God and remained a mystery throughout the age of law is mentioned by Paul to the people of Colosse.

It is an act of love to want someone to be saved and come unto a knowledge of the truth. Paul accomplished so much for Christ because of his great love for people he has never seen.

Remember who Paul is and was for a second before you disqualify yourself by saying, "I could never be like Paul." Paul just a few years ago despised Gentiles as a Jew.

This is the man who even persecuted Jews to death, and now he says in Romans 9:13 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Paul wants the same thing that God wants for us and that is that we will all as believers come to the full assurance of understanding the mystery, which should produce in us love for others.

To the acknowledgement of the mystery of God: We also ought to be able to acknowledge the mystery of God to others because it is only then that our hearts can be fully comforted and truly enjoy all the spiritual riches that God has intended for us in the age of grace.

In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: They are found no place else but in Christ. The greatest treasures for us today are the mystery teachings that were revealed to the apostle Paul.

4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile 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.

Beguile you with enticing words: The enticing words that Paul mentions here are one word in Greek not two, and the second word is "ology." Which means "the study of."

Watch out for those who explain away a word that is plain in English using the Greek or Hebrew to do it. Some just tear apart the English itself and require you trust their superior intelligence.

1st Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

Your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ: A person who is strong in the mystery can teach someone in an orderly fashion what they know and is not easily carried away from the truth.

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord: They received Christ Jesus the Lord by faith. They were expected by God now to live by faith.

They received from Paul the teachings of Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, and they are expected to walk in that new revelation as well.

7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Rooted and built up in him: If the Pauline epistles represent the fruit for this dispensation of grace that we find ourselves in then what came before it we are to build off of as a foundation. Ephesians 2:19-22.

Stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught: Remembering that Colossians was written near the end of Paul's ministry, the members were admonished to follow what they have already been taught in Paul's earlier epistles and now they are to build on that with this epistle.

The book of Romans was written to stablish believers in many ways. It appears first in the scriptures because of its importance in these very areas:

Romans 16:25 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,

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Beware lest any man spoil you: The word spoil comes from the same root word as the word seduce. Your flesh can be seduced with sins of the flesh, and your mind can be seduced by doctrines of devils.

Through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men: The Greeks were the philosophers and were guilty of trying to mix their philosophy with the word of God.

The legalistic Jews were on the other side trying to add vain rules and regulations to merit one's salvation which was also deceitful.

The Jews were the ones who continued to place the traditions of their elders above the word of God as they continue to do today.

The rudiments of the world: The rudiments mentioned are principles of this world, which is governed by the god of this world, Satan.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: Verse nine will make a cult member fear. The word Godhead is mentioned three times in the new testament, and it is the word I use instead of the more popular word, trinity.

Trinity is used by the world more for convenience's sake than anything else. The word trinity describes how many persons are in the Godhead.

If you want to see God, then look at Christ because that is the only way a person can ever hope to get a glimpse of God. God, who is Spirit, appeared bodily unto man in the person of Jesus Christ.

Ye are complete in him: If we believe in him, we are complete in him and in need of nothing else to save us and give us eternal life.

The head of all principality and power: He is not only the head of the church, but he is and will be head over all things including the powers and principalities that currently reign in high places.

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

The circumcision made without hands: Christ can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He can circumcise our heart, and he has if you have believed in him.

No Rabbi or doctor could ever perform this type of circumcision because it comes from God alone. This circumcision, while spiritual in nature, severs the link between our flesh and our spirit so that they are no more connected.

So that when your flesh sins it is no more you (your spirit) that sin but your flesh alone. It is as if there are two people inside you battling for preeminence.

Putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: We put off the old man by walking in the Spirit.

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Buried with him in baptism: Since the circumcision mentioned in the preceding verse is without hands because it is the circumcision of Christ then the baptism spoken about here is also without hands.

It is the same spiritual baptism mentioned in Romans 6:4 which is without hands or water I might add.

We (the old man) die with Christ when we get saved and are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands. We are to reckon ourselves dead to that old man and live as the new person that we are.

Ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God: Notice also that it is through the faith of the operation of God and not through your faith, nor the operation of the individual.

God does the operating on you, and it is his faith that is mentioned here not our own. That faith raised Christ from the dead, and it can do in your life whatever God has planned for you. Romans 6:1-23.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

All of our trespasses have been forgiven us as believers today, that includes the ones we have committed after our salvation as well as the ones we will commit in the future. Being quickened means to be made alive.

We were walking dead men walking around obeying the lust of the flesh but now we are made alive in Christ, and we are to reckon that old person dead and walk for God.

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us: Christ blotted out the law to us and its penalty which was our enemy in a sense because it condemned us because of our sinful flesh.

It was contrary to us in that it demanded perfection and we were imperfect beings.

Nailing it to the cross: Christ took Satan's case against us and nailed it to the cross; meaning that what took place on the cross paid all the requirements of the law (the handwriting of ordinances) on our behalf.

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Having spoiled principalities and powers: He did this by the wisdom of God which Paul speaks about over and over again in his epistles. That wisdom of God was kept hidden from before the foundation of the world.

It was God's plan to deal with Satan's rebellion which he established before he ever created him as Lucifer.

When Satan crucified Jesus, he helped you and I by offering Christ as our sacrifice for our sins. Had Satan known the consequences of crucifying Christ he would have never crucified the Lord of Glory.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

It is because of what Christ has done on our behalf at the cross that no one can hold anything against us from our past because it has been forgiven us through Christ and his work for us on the cross.

A shadow of things to come: We do not go to the old to straighten out the new. We do not need to use an old picture to correct the real thing.

The old testament sabbath days, holy days and new moons are a shadow of things to come not in the dispensation of grace, but in ages to come.

Such as the time of Jacob's trouble mentioned in Jeremiah 30:7 and in the book of the Revelation, and they are a shadow of things to come in the kingdom to come.

But the body is of Christ: This is speaking about the Church, which is Christ's body. These two verses form a great picture of the three main dispensations mentioned in Ephesians 2:

In times past, but now, and ages to come.

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

When a lost person intrudes into spiritual matters, he cannot help but have perverted doctrine. He will get into all kinds of false and strange doctrines because his mind is affected by pride and pride in a lost man can be more destructive than in a saved man.

19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Those who do not understand the mystery will beguile you because he has not seen nor understood what you have.

He is not a part of the body of Christ as are you because he does not hold the Head (Christ) as the Head, so he does what comes natural to a lost man; he criticizes what he doesn't understand.

Not holding the Head: Notice the word head here is capitalized, because it is talking about Jesus Christ as the Head of the body of Christ, which is the church.

20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

Dead with Christ: All who are saved are dead with Christ (we died with him as he died our death for sins).

The rudiments of the world: The word rudiments is the same word as the words' elements and principles.

We are dead with Christ from these things, so why do we want to bring them into our churches and our lives to govern us contrary to what God wants for us today?

Subject to ordinances: The word ordinances is from the Greek word "Dogmatizo" where we get the words dogmas and dogmatic from. This means a strict set of rules (specifically the law) that do not change. Colossians 2:14. The rules are listed in the next verse.

21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

The very same people would lead someone into the false practices mentioned in verses eighteen and nineteen would also be the ones who would lead people into a long list of do's and don'ts that are not required by God.

23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

A shew of wisdom in will worship: The word shew is the Greek word Logos, meaning "word." You can make long prayers at the "hour of prayer" but, we are not under the system of the Mosaic law, we are under grace.

We don't pray at a prescribed time in a prescribed manner, we pray as we are led to pray. We don't use incense and make a big to do about prayer, we just talk to God when we feel the need.

Neglecting of the body: Going without meat for lent for example. Man will look upon the outward appearance and will judge that if a man is doing certain things that are religious then in their minds, they are good or spiritual.

God says they are man-made exercises to appeal to the fleshly mind and do absolutely nothing to bring someone closer to God; in fact, they have the opposite effect.

Chapter Three

Things which are above

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Risen with Christ: All saved people are risen with Christ, and because we are risen with him, we are to seek the things that are of eternal significance because we are seated with him already in the heavenlies.

We are to die to ourselves, because we were hid with Christ in God at our salvation. We were not hid with Christ in God at our baptism into Christ's body. Christ's death, which he did not deserve, became the death that we deserve for our sins.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Christ, who is our life, shall appear: Christ will appear to us at the catching away (the rapture) when we meet him in the clouds,

Then shall ye also appear with him in glory: Then we will appear with him in heaven before the Father to begin our ministries in the heavenly places.

Christ will also appear at the end of the time of Jacob's trouble just before beginning to rule in the kingdom here on the earth.

Notice how Paul interjects the phrase, "who is our life", in reference to Christ. He ought to be our life because he is our life. We ought to be about his business.

He will exalt his Son in both heaven and in the earth. We are a part of his heavenly plan as members of the body of Christ and Israel is a part of his earthly plan.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: The wrath of God punished all those sins that are mentioned in the person of Christ on the cross.

Christ was delivered (killed) for our sins so we ought to kill (mortify) the very things that Christ died to pay for.

For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: The disobedient are the lost. We as believers today are not appointed unto wrath. 1st Thessalonians 5:9.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye 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:

Ye have put off the old man: Since the old man is dead, we are to quit living like he is alive. Sure, the flesh is very real, but we no longer have to live under its power since there is a new power that is stronger living inside us.

Put on the new man: We have to spend time with the new man and feed him as we used to feed the flesh, but with things that edify the spirit. The new man has a heavenly destiny instead of an earthly one.

Renewed in knowledge: See Ephesians 4 about walking worthy, and 2nd Corinthians 4:16-18.

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Where: In the new man (the church which is his body). Put off the world and put on the Church, the body of Christ.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

Put on therefore: We are to practice being merciful, kind, humble, meek, and longsuffering with the lost as well as with other believers.

The elect of God: Jesus Christ and Israel are exclusively referred to as the elect in all the old testament, but twice the body of Christ is given that title and it is important that we don't mix the two together. We are the elect of God because we are in Christ who is God's elect. Titus 1:1.

Isaiah 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Isaiah 45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. Isaiah 65:9 & 22.

Election has to do with our service. There are only four verses mentioning the word elect in the whole old testament and they all have the word servant found in them.

We as the body of Christ were elected before the foundation of the world to be conformed into his image by the renewing of our mind. Israel on the other hand was elected to become a nation of kings and priests.

We as the body of Christ are to act like Christ our head that we may draw men unto him by displaying mercy and kindness to one another.

We are to be meek and longsuffering not wanting our way over others. We are in the body of Christ, and we are elected to carry out his will for the world today, and that is to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. Ephesians 3:8-9.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Romans 13:14.

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye: This is 180 degrees opposite of what Christ told the little flock of believing Israel while he walked with them preaching the kingdom:

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Put on charity: God has given us peace and has called us to be peace makers, this can only come through the love that Christ alone gives. We are to be charitable to those that have not and tell them that it is Christ in you that provided the charity through you.

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.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom: This cannot happen without you knowing the manifold wisdom of God, which concerns the hidden mysteries only revealed to the apostle Paul. 1st Corinthians 2:1-10.

Admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs: This is not just a call to sing hymns and spiritual songs, but it is also a call to let Christ's words dwell in us richly.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. 18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love 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, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing

God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

Ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: This speaks of those employed in secular work, who treat it as a holy calling and do what they do as to the Lord, not to men.

Those who do will influence others to become a part of Christ's body and they will receive a reward.

Those who give to the Lord's work, the fruit of their secular work will also receive a reward. This has nothing to do with inheriting something that was promised to Israel under the law.

He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: Those who do not will receive wood, hay and stubble which will burn up at the last day.

Chapter Four

The mystery of Christ

Chapter four is actually a continuation from chapter three where Paul was admonishing servants about their relationships to their masters, and now he changes pace and deals with the believing masters and their relationship to their servants.

1 Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

Give unto your servants that which is just and equal: Bosses should treat their employees as they would like to be treated because one day, they will be rewarded by God for how they treated their employees.

Continual prayer

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: 4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

Continue in prayer: This has the same thing as praying without ceasing. No one can pray 24/7 everyday, but Paul is telling all to never get out of the discipline of prayer.

Praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ: The verse doesn't end with the word praying, it goes on to tell believers what Paul desired the Colossians to pray for in regards to him personally.

Paul desired that a door would be opened that was right in front of him in his house arrest, so that he may go farther, and reach more people than he could chained to a Guard.

He wanted to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, and we should want the same for ourselves and others. Titus 1:9 & Ephesians 3:8-12.

For which I am also in bonds: Paul was a prisoner for making the mystery of Christ manifest to the Gentiles.

The mystery of Christ is yet another mention of the mystery that through Christ God was making one new man that would dwell together with God in the heavens.

Paul is praying for more doors to be opened so that he could continue to speak of the mystery of Christ, the very same thing that got him arrested in the first place.

We are to be about reconciling people unto God. 2nd Corinthians 5:18-21.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without: This admonition is not a general one to give us some good advice on daily conversations, but it will work for them as well.

It is however an admonition to the believer about the proper attitude one should use when witnessing to another person (one that is without the body of Christ i.e., church).

The best way one can redeem the time is to spend it either a lost person sharing the gospel with them or else teaching a saved person the revelation of the mystery that God revealed to Paul.

The mystery is the manifold wisdom of God as Paul taught the Corinthians. 1st Corinthians 2:1-8.

That ye may know how ye ought to answer every man: Everyone has different life experiences and different verses will work better than other verses with them.

John 3:16 won't solve their problem today if they are lost, 1st Corinthians 15:1-4. Fear comes when we are not prepared to face our enemy.

7 All my state 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, 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.

Tychicus helps Paul write this epistle along with Onesimus who is the slave that Paul mentions in his epistle to Philemon.

Paul most likely had a vision problem that prohibited him from personally penning his later epistles, which I believe is supported by scripture as the Galatians were willing to pluck out their own eyes and give them to Paul. Galatians 4:15.

Tychicus would inform the saints in Colosse of Paul's state as he suffered for his faith in a Roman Prison, but remember, God had Paul in prison. It was a part of his plan to give him time to write these epistles for the body of Christ.

10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) 11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas: John Mark (Marcus) is mentioned by Paul, the very same person who left the work on one of Paul's early missionary journeys.

Barnabas, after arguing with Paul on John's behalf, ended up taking John Mark (Marcus) with him because he was his uncle.

Who are of the circumcision: When Paul mentions that Justus, Marcus, and Aristarchus were his fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God here he is not saying that he and they were preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

People who understand how to rightly divide the word of truth get confused by this passage because it mentions that they were of the circumcision, and that they labored unto the kingdom of God.

As regarding Paul's statement about the kingdom of God Paul is referring to the kingdom of God in each individual's heart and the work of the church in this age.

With regard to them being of the circumcision, it was John Mark who was with Paul on his first missionary journey as he and Barnabas preached the gospel of the grace of God to the Gentile world.

Justus and Marcus were from the Jerusalem assembly, and they were working alongside Paul, but that does not mean that they were forcing Israel's program on these Gentile hearers.

Paul helped the Jerusalem church often and did not expect them to practice what the Gentile churches were practicing, and the same was the truth even more so the other way around.

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Epaphras was Paul's friend and companion, and he had a lot of himself invested in the people of these places and it was evidenced in his prayer life once he had left their presence.

That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God: We can only stand perfect and complete in him if we both understand and obey all of the will of God for us.

Someone who does not know how to rightly divide the word of God can never stand complete or perfect, so it behooves us to tell people how to rightly divide the word of truth.

14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. 15 Salute 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 ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

Demas: He is the one who departed from the apostle Paul unto Thessalonica having loved this present world as mentioned in 2nd Timothy 4:10 & Philemon 1:24.

The epistle from Laodicea: Here we have an epistle written by Paul that is not found in the scriptures, why not?

Because it was not meant to be in the scriptures because God preserves his word and whatever is meant to be in the scriptures is in it.

17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it: Archippus was to preach the mystery of Christ and make it known to all men.

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 salutation by the hand of me Paul: Paul has Tychicus and Onesimus actually pen the words he has received from God.

Remember my bonds: Paul leaves the people of Colosse with a request that has mostly been overlooked by the body of Christ today. Paul was the prisoner of Jesus Christ for us Gentiles according to Ephesians 3:1 & Philemon 1:9.

The apostle of the Gentiles (our apostle) went to jail for trying to reach us with the gospel, and he wants us to remember that. Thank God for saving people which are willing to suffer so that others may hear the precious truth of God's word. Are you willing?

The End

First Thessalonians

Introduction

While in the city of Troas the apostle Paul received the call in a vision which said:

Acts 16:9 Come over into Macedonia and help us

Macedon was a region that Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea belonged to. Philip II ruled over Macedon, and it was so strategic that it enabled the son of Philip II named Alexander to go out from there and eventually rule over that whole part of the world.

Paul and Silas first established a church at Philippi which was the chief city in that part of Macedonia, where they were shamefully entreated, before going on to Thessalonica which is along the southern coastline of what is modern day Greece, between the cities of Philippi and Berea.

Thessalonica was a very strategic place for the spread of the gospel of the grace of God, and chapter seventeen of the book of Acts records for us the circumstances of Paul's visit there. Take a few moments and read Acts chapter 17 before reading 1st Thessalonians.

Chapter One

The Wrath to Come

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, 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.

Paul: Paul's name always appears as the first word in each of his 13 epistles, Romans through Philemon. These are known as the Pauline epistles. Paul did not write Hebrews. Hebrews 2:3.

Notably missing here, and in second Thessalonians is Paul's usual reference to himself as being an apostle in his opening remarks. He does mention it later in chapter 2:16.

There was no need for Paul to throw his apostolic authority and title around with the Thessalonians because there was no question with them of Paul's apostleship like with some of the other churches.

The church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: There is no safer place to be than in Christ, which happens the moment a person trusts the gospel for their salvation. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

Obviously if the individuals in this local assembly are in Christ, then the church itself is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be unto you, and peace: The usual mention of grace and peace are mentioned as being from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, they do not come from Paul.

Both the Father, and the Son, were rejected by Israel in the past, and because of Israel's rejection of the Son, the Father was ready to pour out his wrath on Israel and the world at that time:

Psalm 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Psalm 110:1-6.

God instead interrupted Israel's prophecy program, and he instituted an un-prophesied dispensation of grace. Ephesians 3:1-10.

Grace is the dispensation that we live in today, which is sparing us for the time being from the wrath of God which he promised to pour out to avenge the rejection of his Son.

God has interrupted the prophecy program and ushered in the mystery program of grace and peace, where he is not imputing our sins unto us today as he was under the Law.

That was welcome news for those expecting Christ to return to make his enemies (unbelieving Israel, and the lost world) his footstool: 2nd Corinthians 5:19 & Psalm 110:1.

We are at peace today with God because he has decided to dispense to us grace. The time is coming when God's mystery program will be over, and the prophetic program for Israel will kick back in.

Then God's wrath will be poured out at that time, not grace and peace, when the time of Jacob's trouble comes upon them. Jeremiah 30:7.

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 labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

We give thanks to God always for you all: They thanked God every time they prayed for having known them and the faithfulness in their mutual suffering that they endured.

Work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope: Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, mentioned the same three gifts that the believers in Thessalonica exhibited towards them and those they ministered to. 1st Corinthians 13:13.

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

Your election of God: The Thessalonians were elect, as are all believers in this age, to have a work of faith, a labour of love along with a patience of hope in Christ Jesus.

Since Christ is the elect of God, and we are in Christ, we become elect in Him. Isaiah 42:1 & Romans 8:1.

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 ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Our gospel: Paul first mentions our gospel instead of the gospel, or my gospel, as he so often does because he is clarifying which gospel he is talking about.

He is talking about the gospel that he preached and the same one the Thessalonians believed and were saved by.

The gospel of the grace of God, as opposed to the gospel of the kingdom that had been preached during Christ's earthly ministry. Acts 20:24 & Matthew 10:17.

The gospel that Paul preached to them was not just good words (news) only, they were words that had the power to save people through the regenerating work of the holy Spirit of God.

They could all attest to the character of those that had accompanied the Apostle Paul as they preached to the people of Thessalonica as men without reproach.

In power, and in the Holy Ghost: There were demonstrations of God's power in the performance of miracles in Thessalonica.

There was a church was established in just a short amount of time there in Thessalonica and some of Paul's men would stay behind to help it be strengthened before returning to their team.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

Followers of us: We are to follow Paul as he followed Christ.

We are also to follow others who are following the Christ according to the revelation of the mystery that Christ gave to us through the apostle Paul. 1st Corinthians 4:1, 11:1, 1st Thessalonians 1:6 & 2nd Thessalonians 3:7-9.

The Thessalonians suffered for their new-found faith, and it endeared them to the apostle Paul who suffered along with them.

This explains why he did not have to explain his apostolic authority in the opening words of his two epistles to them as he does in all of his other epistles.

It is easy to follow someone who has suffered for the faith he is preaching. It was also easier for those around Thessalonica to serve Christ because of the example of how the Thessalonians continued to serve through all their sufferings.

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

Paul's job of spreading the word in that region was easier because of their testimony of suffering and service there in Thessalonica.

Macedonia and Achaia: The regions in Greece where Paul was working at on this part of his missionary journey.

9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

What manner of entering in we had unto you: How their work affected those in the area.

Ye turned to God from idols: This is faith in action. They were turning to God from idols.

To serve the living and true God: This chapter is about the believer (you) and their (your) faithfulness to give the truth to a lost world.

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.

To wait for his Son from heaven: These believers were instructed by Paul to wait for the Lord's return.

Paul elaborates more clearly on that teaching in the following chapters where he describes it as a secret return in the clouds. This is called the blessed hope by Titus:

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

The kingdom saints were told by Jesus that he would return in the same manner in which he went, physically and visibly. That will also happen at the end of the tribulation period.

The rapture was first revealed to us by Paul in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, and that was many years after what Jesus said at his ascension to Israel. The Rapture was still a mystery in Acts 1.

The rapture could not be called a mystery to the Corinthians if Christ had already taught it to his disciples in the book of Acts before his ascension.

Jesus was speaking of his coming back to set up his kingdom in Acts 1, not the rapture.

Christ's revealing is, and was, no secret to the Jews, but the rapture was a mystery before Paul told the body of Christ about it. If it were not a mystery Paul should have never said, behold I show you a mystery. 1st Corinthians 15:51.

When the angels mention Christ's return in Acts 1, there was no mention of a secret catching away of saints, only the visible return of Christ from heaven, because that is concerning Christ's prophesied return to Israel.

Today, as believers in the body of Christ, we are to wait for God's Son to return from heaven to meet us in the air, to be delivered from the wrath to come.

1st Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew 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.

This return seven years prior to his setting up of his kingdom concerns Christ's return for the body of Christ.

This is part of our mystery program that was kept secret from before the foundation of the world Romans 16:25, but now is made manifest.

The wrath to come: This is not hell, for billions are there now. We are delivered from that time of great wrath that shall come upon this earth.

Zephaniah 1:14 The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. 15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

This will occur during the seventieth week of Daniel, known also as the time of Jacob's trouble, and as the tribulation period. Daniel 9:24-27, Jeremiah 30:7, Revelation 1:9 & 2:22.

Chapter Two

The Gospel of God

1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: 2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

Shamefully entreated: Acts 16:12-40. The church at Thessalonica was a model church that all churches should seek to

follow as a pattern for service amidst the suffering of great persecution.

Paul serves the body of Christ as our pattern for all of us who have believed on Christ after him. 1st Timothy 1:15-16.

The gospel of God: Many times Paul calls the gospel of God “my gospel, which I received,” because it was given directly to him from God. Romans 2:16 & 16:25.

It is called “our gospel” one chapter earlier instead of the gospel to show us that it is specific to one group, and different from what another group was receiving. 1st Thessalonians 1:5, 2nd Thessalonians 2:1 4 & 2nd Corinthians 4:3.

He did not receive “his gospel” from the twelve apostles, who were still offering the kingdom to the nation of Israel. Galatians 1:11-12.

Much contention: The much contention was from the Jews in Thessalonica. 1st Thessalonians 2:8-9.

3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

Our exhortation: Their preaching was not deceitful to the Thessalonians concerning Jesus actually being the Son of God. Nor were their statements about what God was now doing through the apostle Paul for the Gentiles.

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 trieth our hearts.

To be put in trust with the gospel: God put in the apostle Paul, a great trust to carry the gospel of the grace of God to the world.

This was not the gospel of the kingdom that the twelve preached, which was to the Jew only and it was followed by signs and wonders because the Jews require a sign. Acts 20:24.

The kingdom of heaven will not be set up on earth if people repent today, but that was what was promised to Israel if they would repent as a nation.

They did not repent however, and God ushered in the dispensation of grace which was given to the apostle Paul to give unto us. Ephesians 3:1-6.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; 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.

There were no speeches given to woo the masses, only the word of God delivered with sincerity, love, and with boldness when necessary.

Sought we glory: Paul could have sought to be recognized by the people as the apostle of the Gentiles, and to have set himself up as a dictator, but that was not Paul’s desire, he wanted the praise of God, not of man.

Burdensome: He could have demanded that they were to cover his expenses, but he did not so as not to hinder his message from some who would criticize him if he took even a shekel.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth 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 ye were dear unto us.

The gospel of God: This is found in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4, not in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John’s gospels.

Paul, and those with him, loved the Thessalonians, and were willing to suffer for them so that they might receive the truth, just like a mother would do for her children.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. 10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

Not be chargeable unto any of you: Paul puts the Thessalonians in remembrance of their sincerity to reach their city for God.

They worked a secular job to provide for their physical needs so that the people would not be able to say they were just in it for the money.

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, 12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Walk worthy: Paul tells them that as he expected them to walk as a Christian should walk, so God expects them to do the same.

Called you unto his kingdom and glory: Paul never mentions the kingdom of heaven in all fourteen of his references to the word kingdom, it is always the kingdom of God.

It is a heavenly kingdom for the church, which is Christ’s body. 2nd Timothy 4:18. The kingdom of heaven comes down to earth in the millennium, and it is a part of Israel’s prophesied kingdom, the kingdom of God.

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

The word of God: The difference between the word of men, and the word of God, is that the word of God does an effectual work in the believer’s life that no human philosophical argument can ever hope to do because it is carnal, and it is after the course of this world.

Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The word is often referred to as seed. When someone listens to the word, the seed finds fertile ground to produce fruit from.

The word of God is spiritual, and it is from the Creator of this world, and it alone has the power to do an effectual work in your life.

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

They did not seek to be persecuted as the churches in Judea were, but they sought to do what God wanted them to do in reaching their community, and that always brings about persecution.

The churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: The statement made by Paul that the Jewish kingdom churches were “in Christ Jesus” has been used by some to confuse people. It shouldn’t.

Kingdom Saints needed to “abide in the vine” (Christ) to remain in Christ (John 15:4-7). We today in the body of Christ are placed “into Christ” by the holy Spirit the moment we believe the gospel. 1st Corinthians 12:13 & 15:1-4.

Saints in both programs are “in Christ,” just not in the same way, nor do they have the same purpose.

16 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 alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Paul was reminding them that they were not alone in their suffering because Paul, and his companions, also suffered harshly at the hands of unbelievers.

Israel was soon to be blinded in part as a nation, rejecting God as a whole, and they will not have another chance to believe nationally until the tribulation period reaches its end. Individually yes.

To fill up their sins alway: It was sin to not believe themselves in Christ, and then to kill him, but it was an entirely different thing to deny others the chance to hear and believe.

The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost: The wrath that is promised to Jacob’s descendants is the wrath that is poured out in the tribulation period, the time of Jacob’s Trouble:

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured 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.

Satan hindered us: Paul and his companions were run out of Thessalonica (taken) by the same Jews he was trying to help, and they were hindered by Satan from returning.

Paul was thankfully able to send Timotheus to see how they were doing in his absence.

This was not because Satan was victorious in this situation over God’s plan, but God wanted to strengthen this church to be able to stand on its own, so that Paul could move on, and minister in other places.

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and joy.

Crown of rejoicing: This is a literal crown that is earned for leading souls to Christ, either directly or indirectly.

We will be glorying in the souls we see in heaven that we have helped to bring to a saving knowledge of Christ. Paul calls the Philippians his joy and crown as well in Philippians 4:1.

Here Paul calls the Thessalonians his glory, and what he means by that is that they are the shining example of what a church should be.

When Paul thinks of them, he glories in them. Christ is the literal glory of God that is mentioned in the familiar soul wining verse in Romans.

Romans 3:23 All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Jesus alone did not fall short because he is perfection personified. He is what we are all measured to, and we all have fallen short of his perfection because we were born in sin, and because we chose to sin.

He was born of a virgin which kept him from inheriting Adams sin nature that we all have, and he never sinned. The scriptures say that we are drawn away of our own lust, and enticed, he had no lust. He is the glory of God. James 1:14.

Chapter Three

Appointed unto Afflictions

1 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; 2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

Forbear: They couldn’t wait any longer.

To establish you: To build them up in the faith.

Because of the fact that Paul was run out of town, he felt as though he needed to return to finish what he had started, which he knew would be a great source of comfort to the believers in Thessalonica.

That was not to be, so he sent his companion back to Thessalonica to help further establish them in the truth.

3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. 4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

That no man should be moved: They are to stand fast/firm in their trials. See verse below:

We are appointed thereunto: All who oppose darkness will be retaliated against by Satan and the world.

2nd Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

The tempter: This is speaking of Satan. Paul needed to know how his children were doing, and he wanted to give them more to help them as they continued on their journey serving God.

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: 7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: 8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

If ye stand fast in the Lord: When you are suffering it helps to know that others you have helped are making it through their struggles.

Paul drew strength from the Thessalonians' stand for the Lord. See verse 3 above about not being moved. This has nothing to do with losing one's salvation in the dispensation of grace, but it is about standing /defending what you believe.

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?

Perfect that which is lacking in your faith: To perfect something means to complete something, to make it a finished product. What were the Thessalonians lacking in their faith?

They obviously didn't understand everything about the rapture as Paul had to educate them further on it in the fifth chapter.

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.

To the end he may stablish your hearts: To stablish someone is to finish establishing them in the truth all believers need.

Most Christians today are not stablished in the mysteries revealed to Paul because there are too few people able to establish them in that truth.

Unblameable in holiness before God: We are only unblameable today if we are in Christ, because he alone is holy and unblameable.

Notice that we appear unblameable before God only after Jesus Christ comes for all his saints and he brings us with him.

At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints: How can the Lord Jesus Christ come with all his saints if they are not with him? He cannot!

He will come for his body and call us to meet him in the clouds one day soon, and we shall return with him to heavenly places and be presented by Christ before God the Father at his throne as holy and unblameable.

Jesus will then return to the earth seven years later when every eye shall see him, and once he has made his enemies his footstool his kingdom shall begin.

Those kingdom saints that were martyred during the time of Jacob's trouble will return with him along with all those held in the Paradise of God. Revelation 2:7.

Chapter Four Caught up Together

1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. 2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

We beseech you: We beg you.

What commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus: God gave Paul commandments as to how we ought to walk/live as a believer to please God.

3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

This is the will of God, even your sanctification: To be set apart fit for the Master's use.

Abstain from fornication: Sexual immorality outside of marriage.

Know how to possess his vessel: Our vessel is our body. We are to learn from God's words (commandments mentioned above) how to control the flesh and its desires.

In sanctification and honour: Set apart from the worldly lusts and honoring to God by not being a bad testimony to others by our actions.

Not in the lust of concupiscence: Our fleshly desires.

6 That no man go beyond 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 hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

No man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: Going beyond the boundaries of what is right.

The Lord is the avenger of all such: He will recompense what was done by one believer to another believer at the judgment seat of Christ by the giving and taking away of rewards.

He therefor that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God: Paul speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit testifies that when we are unclean and disobedient to God's word, we actually are despising him.

Who hath given us his holy Spirit: We should not look upon or do unclean things because he has given us believers his holy Spirit.

9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God

to love one another. 10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

Increase more and more: Keep on doing what you're doing and do more as you mature in your Christian life.

11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; 12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

Study to be quiet: The scriptures will teach you humility, and the honor of an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.

Walk honestly towards them that are without: We are to be a witness with our lives and not just our mouths. Some people, however, are neither a witness with their life nor their mouth.

That ye may have lack of nothing: This is speaking about spiritual things, not worldly possessions.

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

I would not have you to be ignorant brethren: This phrase is used by God through Paul five other times. Romans 1:13, 11:25, 1st Corinthians 10:1, 12:1 & 2nd Corinthians 1:8.

Sadly, the body of Christ, for the most part are still very ignorant of many of these truths.

Them which are asleep: Death is often spoken about in scripture as being asleep. 1st Corinthians 15:6, 18, 53 & 2nd Peter 3:4.

Those who have died in Christ are awaiting the union of their body, soul, and spirit in heaven, when this corruptible will put on incorruption. 1st Corinthians 15:51.

All who are asleep in Jesus are immediately present with the Lord at the moment of their death, but they are not complete until that day when the Lord returns. 2nd Corinthians 5:6-8.

Very soon after the Thessalonians heard the gospel they were taught about the rapture of the church.

This is where Christ as its head would come back to get His body, the church just before the wrath of God would be poured out on the world.

While this was welcomed news to these believers, it would also produce some questions concerning the whereabouts of those who had passed on prior to the rapture.

That was probably because Paul had not told them everything concerning the rapture when he first came because he spent only a few weeks with them.

Remember this letter is being written very soon after Paul had left them on his second missionary journey, sometime after he had arrived in Corinth, most likely around six months after leaving them.

It was Paul that first preached that to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord, not the twelve apostles to the nation of Israel. 2nd Corinthians 5:6-8

They were talking about going to paradise when they died, and about one generation having to endure to the end of the seventieth

week of Daniel (the time of Jacob's Trouble). Daniel 9:24-27 & Jeremiah 30:7.

And then of an earthly kingdom where all the old testament saints would be raised to rule and reign in with the Messiah.

This passage of scripture has also been used by Satan to deceive many over the years by believing false teaching of the doctrine of soul sleep.

The body sleeps, but the soul is what and who we are. It is in one of two places upon death, heaven or hell, paradise, or punishment.

There is no in-between place where the soul is napping. When the rich man breathed his last breath in this life, he lifted up his head being in the torment of hell. Luke 16:20-25.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again: This is the gospel of the grace of God. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 & Acts 20:24.

Them also which sleep in Jesus: The requirement for those who have died (are asleep) to be caught up in the rapture was that they had to believe in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

They didn't have to endure unto the end of the church age to be raptured. Matthew 24:13.

Christ had done everything for them that needed to be done, and by faith in his death and resurrection they received the gift of eternal life and were guaranteed a place in the rapture. In fact, they get a head start.

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 them which are asleep.

We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord: Those believers that are living when Jesus returns in the clouds and the rapture occurs.

Them which are asleep: Paul was told by the Lord himself that he would rapture the dead (them which are asleep) along with the living.

The alive in the body of Christ at the time of the rapture will not prevent the dead (asleep) from participating the blessed hope.

It could be that God told this to Paul in a later revelation, or that Paul just didn't emphasize the dead in Christ when he told them initially about the rapture.

He may have only focused on what would happen to those who were alive when Christ would return. Death did not, and could not separate them from the body of Christ.

Romans 8:38 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.

This was a natural thing for them to ponder about, because when two people were married, they became one body, and at the death of one of them the other was free from the first to marry another.

So, some may have assumed that since they were a part of Christ's body, that death may have separated them from that body, and when Christ came back, he would only be coming for those who were still alive in the body of Christ.

All of the bodies of the saints that have gone on before us since the dispensation of grace began God will raise from the dead.

Then immediately afterwards the believers that are alive during that last generation will be caught up together to be with the Lord in the clouds as well.

God will not leave the body of even one believer behind. God will empty every grave wherever it may be and change those decayed pieces of flesh into glorious bodies.

Every saint from every corner of the world will all be extracted from this world, leaving behind a godless world and a new dispensation where the kingdom will once again be at hand. Matthew 3:2.

How is God able physically able to remove two in one house that are believers, and leave the one unbeliever behind, without making one mistake anywhere? Easy, God is simply receiving back, and what came from him.

His holy Spirit is in each believer, and his Spirit will be returning with us in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

The Spirit will once again minister to believers during the tribulation period in a way that is identical to what it was with the little flock at Pentecost, because the focus will be back on Israel at that time, not the body of Christ.

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:

The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout: What is it that will be shouted by the archangel? A great noise perhaps.

In Joshua 6:5-20 we have the children of Israel outside the walls of Jericho shouting at the sound of trumpets being blown by Israel's priests, but this does not concern Israel.

The voice of the archangel: It is not the Lord that will shout, but the archangel, his identity is unclear. He will not be alone, by his side he will most likely have Gabriel blowing the trump of God.

The trump of God: A trumpet used only for God.

The dead in Christ shall rise first: These are those that are mentioned earlier as they who were asleep. Those who are raptured from this earth (the body of Christ) will escape the wrath that God is going to pour out on this world.

The bodies of the dead will rise so they can be reunited with their spirits in the clouds, and these bodies will be changed as it says in 1st Corinthians 15:51-58.

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.

We which are alive and remain: Those who have believed in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus went up and a cloud received him the first time. He is coming back in a cloud for those who are in Christ at his return.

So shall we ever be with the Lord: This scripture tells us we will spend eternity with the Lord. Not in the air but in heavenly places. 2nd Corinthians 5:8.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

This should excite, comfort, and give hope for the future, and motivate us to reach others so that they too can join us and all other believers in the rapture and miss the tribulation period.

The saints in Thessalonica understood the teaching of the rapture, and Paul just elaborates more on the full extent of it by explaining that those who were waiting for it and died will not miss out on it because they died prior to it.

Chapter Five

The Day of the Lord

The first word of chapter five is the conjunction linking chapter four with chapter five. Chapter four taught us something that had never before been revealed to man because it had been kept secret from before the foundation of the world.

While chapter five's opening verses simply reiterated words of the prophets that had been open knowledge for a very long time to any Jew that knew their scriptures.

The close of the previous chapter concerned the mystery program for the body of Christ, while the beginning of this chapter deals with Israel's prophecy program which will run its course in the tribulation period.

1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

The times and the seasons: The Thessalonians have no need for Paul to write unto them concerning times and seasons because of the mystery program, and the prophecy program.

Us in the mystery program have no signs to look for that need to occur before the Lord returns. He can return at any moment.

Israel, however, seeks after a sign and they will have plenty of signs during the tribulation period, then they are to look up after all of those signs appear for their redemption draweth nigh.

They are a part of the prophecy program. All of the prophecies that were not fulfilled at Christ's first coming will be fulfilled at his second.

All of the things that he said would happen in Matthew 24 will take place after the rapture, during the tribulation period, not prior to then.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

The day of the Lord: This is the return of Christ after the tribulation period to judge the world and set up his kingdom on earth. It is more often referred to as the Lord's day in scripture.

Jews knew the prophecies of the old testament and didn't need Paul writing on those very familiar prophecies.

What they did need however was any new information concerning the mystery program that was revealed to the world through the apostle Paul.

A thief in the night: Christ taught that the day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night to Israel, who has to go through the time of Jacobs trouble (Israel's) before entering into its kingdom.

It is all a part of the prophecy program for the nation of Israel, but the church is a part of the mystery program of which Christ did not speak one word about.

Paul revealed the dispensation of grace to us in his epistles. The twelve were still looking for Christ to set up his kingdom in early Acts.

When Paul tells them that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night he does not say in the twinkling of an eye because that statement deals with a time factor.

The thief in the night illustrations speak about the un-expectancy of the ones being assaulted by a thief. They did not know what hour he was coming.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

They shall say, Peace and safety: Here we see the second group of people mentioned by Paul as “they and them”.

These are those lost people who are alive at Christ's physical return (the day of the Lord) to set up his kingdom.

Travail upon a woman with child: No woman has ever had a child in the twinkling of an eye. They carried their child for nine months, and then for many hours they suffered travail before delivering their child.

There will be sudden destruction when the antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel at the mid-point of the tribulation period and there will be great tribulation. Jeremiah 30:4-9.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

That day: The tribulation period. God uses darkness, and night to represent non-believers as those that are clueless because of the darkness that they are in and the even darker time that is to come upon the earth following the rapture.

The children of the light: God also uses light and the day to represent the saved in this age. Believers today are in the light during the dispensation of grace.

Verse four is addressed to brethren, he is not talking about fellow Jews, and he not writing to his siblings living in Thessalonica, he is writing to the saints (believers) there.

Those of us who are in Christ (the children of the light) will not be overtaken because we have already made our house safe. Our house is Christ, and we are safe in him.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

The children of the light are not to be asleep spiritually speaking in this age of light. We are to be working to bring as many as possible out of the darkness and into the light.

A drunk usually gets that way in the night. They are unable to think properly because their mind has been weakened by an outside source that they have willingly injected into their body.

Those who walk in darkness today are spiritually drunk and are unable to think clearly because of the intoxication that they are under from the devil and from this world. 2nd Corinthians 4:3-4.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

Us, who are of the day: The children of light.

Faith, Love and Hope: We are to have faith in God that he will one day call his ambassadors home before he pours out his wrath and declares war on a world that has rejected his Son.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath: The wrath of the tribulation period, and the wrath of Hell. We have that hope because we are the children of the light. God has not appointed the body of Christ to suffer the wrath of God.

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Whether we wake or sleep: We will be raptured whether we are awake (alive) or asleep (dead). 1st Thessalonians 4:15-17.

We will live together with Christ in heaven, not on earth, if we believe today in the age of grace, but we are to let him live through us today in everything we say or do.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Anyone who believes they are going through the tribulation period cannot obey this scripture to comfort people by telling them they will have to endure the greatest tribulation the world has ever known.

They may be a child of the light as far as salvation goes but they are still walking around in darkness in this area.

We can bring comfort one another who believe with the hope of the rapture of the body of Christ. If you believe you are going through the tribulation period, then you are identifying yourself with Israel under the law.

You are not Israel under the law. Israel is not even under the law today. Today there is no difference between Jew or Gentile today, but one new man. Ephesians 2:15 & Colossians 3:11.

Paul reminds us that we (both Jew and Gentile) are not under the law, but under grace. Gentiles were never under the law.

Millions of Gentile churches today are placing themselves under the law of the old testament and Satan is loving it because they do not know how to rightly divide the word of truth.

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour 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.

To know them which labour among you: This means you are to invest yourselves in them, personally, spiritually, and financially.

If a pastor or husband is submitted properly to God, he will not have to intimidate those placed under him. He is not to have dominion over you, but to be a helper of your joy.

Those that are over you in the Lord are your equals, just as my wife and I are equal, but we each have different roles, just like an employer and an employee are both equal, but one is over the other at their place of employment.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

To be unruly means a believer that simply won't place themselves under the authority of God's word or those who are placed over them to help guide their life.

These are the very same people who constantly use a church vote to get their carnal way in the church.

Remember what happened when the twelve spies went into the promised land to spy it out. The ten carnal ones out voted the two spiritual ones.

The masses will almost always choose to vote for something more acceptable to the world than what God had intended.

Believers are to be patient towards all newer believers and allow them some grace to grow. They do not become a mature saint overnight. They need time and proper discipleship.

16 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

Because someone wronged you does not give you the right to wrong them. To seek justice is another thing all together. Believers are to first practice this in the church with their brothers who may offend them.

If someone gossips about you, you are not to do the same to them. Not in the church, and not anywhere.

16 Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

How do you rejoice evermore? Simply by doing those things that brought you joy before while serving the Lord, which could be as simple as reading your bible again after not having read it in a while.

It is your responsibility to re-establish your joy that you once had in serving Christ by getting back to those things that brought you joy in the Lord. It is not just a song to be sung it is a command to be obeyed, and if so, it will restore your joy.

Pray without ceasing: This means to not give up on prayer. The prayer will get answered one way or another and by your consistent prayer life you are disciplining yourself to be able to handle whatever answer God chooses to give you.

19 Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Quench not the Spirit: Don't give the devil a foothold in your life through sin. We quench the Spirit when we give place to the flesh.

You cannot quench electricity or gravity which are forces by sinning. They are impersonal forces incapable of caring what you do.

The holy Spirit of God is not a force, but rather a member of the Godhead, and God's Spirit can be quenched when we resist his leading to abstain from sin.

Despise not prophesyings: Much can be said about the gift of prophecy that was prevalent when Paul wrote Thessalonians, but that gift ceased according to Paul by the end of his Acts ministry when Israel was blinded in part.

It was Israel that required a sign, but when they were in blindness no sign could help them anymore. If someone did come along with a prophecy, they were first to be proven.

The prophecies were not to be accepted by total strangers that pop in one week and are gone the next. If a prophecy is sure, they were to hold on to it.

Those prophecies that prophesied that there would be great dearth throughout the whole earth in the book of Acts, were real prophets, and it happened just as it was prophesied.

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil. 23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Spirit and soul and body: Most people will say body, soul and spirit which is the opposite way that God's word says it. We are a soul, and we have a body.

We focus so much on the body today, and so little on the spirit that we are physical Samson's, and spiritual Lots. Turn that around by getting on our knees more often, and in your bibles more often.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

There has never been a question as to God's faithfulness. He has called us into the light, and he will preserve our whole spirit, soul, and body blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

25 Brethren, pray for us. 26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

We can no longer pray for the apostle Paul and his co-laborers in the gospel of the grace of God, but we can pray for the messengers today that are proclaiming it.

An holy kiss: Kissing another believer today that is not accustomed to such an action would make many very uncomfortable, but such was not the case in many Middle Eastern countries in Paul's day.

27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

God expects all believers to read every epistle he has written us so that we may not walk in darkness. There are too many children of the light today walking around in darkness because they have failed to read the whole message God has given us.

They will not have to go through the time of God's wrath because of it, but they could operate more effectively in this age if they walked in more light, which can only be found in God's word.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

There are no quotations whatsoever from the old testament in either of Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians. The Thessalonian Jews did not search the scriptures daily to see if the things Paul was proclaiming were true.

They simply rejected them based on their allegiance to their Jewish traditions where the teachings of men took precedence over the word of God.

While these two epistles have no old testament quotes in them that does not mean Paul did not quote the old testament to them. We know that he reasoned with them from those scriptures for three weeks in the beginning. Acts 17:2.

Another very unique thing that we won't find in this epistle is the absence of any words of reproof, or correction for any problems they may be having.

Second Thessalonians

Chapter One

Revealed from Heaven

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, 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.

Paul: This is always the first word you see in an epistle written by the apostle Paul. Hebrews cannot be written by Paul according to Hebrews 2:3.

You will understand what that means when you learn how to rightly divide the word of truth. 2nd Timothy 2:15.

Silvanus: He served with Paul in Greece. 2nd Corinthians 1:19.

Timotheus: Timothy.

Grace: God is dispensing grace to us in this present dispensation, not the law that was dispensed to Israel by Moses at Mt. Sinai.

Peace: God is at peace with us today because of what his Son did for us on the cross. Grace and peace are from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, not Paul.

This is not a greeting to the Philippians, but a statement of what we have in Christ today.

Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

Meet: Fit.

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 ye endure: 5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

The churches of God: Other grace assembly's that Paul had started.

A manifest token: The word manifest means to make known, and a token is a sign. When the righteous suffer persecution, they make known the righteous judgment of God.

The kingdom of God: This is not the kingdom of heaven spoken of in Matthew's gospel. That is the literal, physical, visible earthly kingdom that will come upon the earth immediately following the tribulation period

The kingdom of God is the all-encompassing kingdom of God that the kingdom of heaven is just a small part of.

6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation 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:

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven: We will rest with Paul and the Thessalonian believers, as the world is experiencing God's wrath during the tribulation period.

The context here, however, is at Christ's return from heaven with his mighty angels to set up his kingdom, not at the rapture.

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God: God is at peace with us (the body of Christ today) because of Christ's work for us on the cross.

When this dispensation ends at the rapture however, he will be taking vengeance on them that know not God during the time of Jacob's trouble. Isaiah 63: 4 & Jeremiah 46:10.

Isaiah 61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

And that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: This is speaking about the gospel of the kingdom, which is the same gospel that Jesus and the twelve preached. Matthew 4:17-23.

It will be preached again during the tribulation period. Matthew 24:14. This was not the gospel that Paul preached.

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord: The unbeliever will never be allowed to stand in God's presence again, and their access to God will be eternally destroyed.

We, however, shall enjoy the eternal presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power in heavenly places.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

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.

When he shall come to be gloried in his saints: The long-awaited exiled Saviour will then be recognized by all for what he has done for them.

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:

This calling: Believers are called to suffer for his name's sake. What did the apostles say after their arrest in Jerusalem?

Acts 5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

Fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness: God allows some to suffer, who will do so with the right heart of service and love, and not for any selfish ambitions.

Paul knew this better than anyone since him unto this day. Notice his words to the Philippians:

Philippians 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Any suffering we endure is but a light affliction that serves to help us know Christ better by having a common experience with him.

The work of faith: The work of establishing a church in their area to edify believers and to see the lost saved. 1st Thessalonians 1:3.

12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you: The reason for allowing some of us to go through suffering is so that we will bring glory to God, and bring others to God when they see us go through our trials, still praising God.

Chapter Two The Day of Christ

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

We beseech you: Paul and his fellowlabourers were begging the Thessalonians to not be troubled in any way that the rapture had already occurred.

The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: He descends from heaven into the clouds:

1st Thessalonians 4:17 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.

Our gathering together unto him: Paul speaks about the rapture of the body of Christ when we meet him in the clouds. Then he uses that teaching which was revealed to him to teach about the return of Christ.

Shaken in mind: People just thought they were living in the tribulation period because of their persecution.

By spirit: An angel.

By word: People were saying they were living in the tribulation period.

By letter as from us: People had even forged Paul's name on letters teaching that they were living in the tribulation period at that time.

The day of Christ is at hand: The return of Christ to the earth after the seven-year tribulation period.

This is similar to what John the Baptist began preaching when he began his ministry, and what Jesus preached to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand). Matthew 3:1-2 & 4:17-23.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

By any means: The ways (means) mentioned in verse 2 above.

That day: Is the day of Christ is addressed in verse 2 above concerning his return to set up his kingdom.

A falling away: The word that is translated falling away is the Greek word apostasia, which is where we get our English word apostasy.

This word is found only twice in the Greek; the other occurrence is found in the book of Acts, and it is translated as the English word meaning forsake. It simply means to depart from something in the past. Acts 21:21.

Apostasia is derived from its root word aphisteemi (to depart), a falling away means a falling away, not a catching up.

When the rapture occurs however, there will be a dramatic falling away from the truth of scripture. There already is a large-scale departure from the truth today.

That man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: A term used to identify the antichrist, this is only used of one other person in scripture, Judas Iscariot.

John 17:12 those that Thou gavest Me have I kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Judas is also called a devil by Jesus.

John 6:70 Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

It is for this reason that some think that Satan will re-occupy Judas' body during the tribulation period and become the antichrist. This is pure speculation.

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The anti-Christ will stop Israel's sacrifices, and oblations at the midpoint of the tribulation period and demand them to worship him as God and Christ, thus making the temple of God desolate:

Daniel 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Daniel 11:31 And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

This is speaking about the image of the beast that the anti-Christ demands all to bow down and worship.

Daniel 12:11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up,

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

When I was yet with you: When Paul first came to Thessalonica in Acts 17:1-10 on his second missionary journey.

What withholdeth: Something, or someone, is withholding, or hindering the antichrist (he) from being revealed to the world. I believe it is the holy Spirit residing in the members of the body of Christ.

That he might be revealed in his time: This is speaking about the anti-christ during the tribulation period.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

The mystery of iniquity doth already now work: Is the opposite of the mystery of godliness found in 1st Timothy 3:16.

The mystery of godliness involves the body of Christ, while the mystery of iniquity involves Satan's spirit that Paul says in Ephesians is working now also in the children of disobedience:

Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

It is Satan's mystery of iniquity program that he uses to deceive people into thinking Jesus is not who the bible says he is.

The mystery of iniquity is to deceive the masses of religious people to oppose God's mystery program that he dispensed to the Apostle Paul to dispense to us today.

He who now letteth will let: The word "let" is an old English word meaning to hinder.

The holy Spirit will hinder the man of sin from revealing himself to the world until it is time for that to happen. We cannot know who he is today. Only those alive in the tribulation period will be able to determine who he is.

The one event that will lead up to the tribulation period is the rapture in which God calls all his ambassadors' home with him before declaring war on this Christ rejecting world.

The actual peace treaty that Israel signs will usher in the seven-year tribulation period and the reign of the antichrist, not the rapture.

There is an undetermined amount of time between the rapture and the beginning of the tribulation period. Probably a year, but it could be more or less.

When we (the body of Christ) are out of here, the holy Spirit that resides in every believer will depart with us. The body of Christ must be removed before the anti-Christ can be revealed.

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:

And then shall that Wicked be revealed: The anti-Christ will not be revealed to the lost, but to those that put their trust in the Messiah of Israel during those days.

The unbelievers will willfully believe a lie, and they will be damned for eternity for it. Verse 11 below.

Notice the word Wicked is capitalized in the text denoting a title. 1st John 3:12 & 5:18.

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.

Him, whose coming is after the working of Satan: This is referring to the anti-Christ. Satan's work is to be God's adversary in everything he is doing. That is even one of his titles. 1st Peter 5:8.

The love of the truth: Those who didn't believe (receive) the love of the truth (the gospel) were damned! To reject the truth of Jesus dying for them and rising again is to reject God's love.

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.

If the tribulation saints do not receive the love of the truth, then they will receive strong delusion from God, and they will believe a lie (Satan's lie).

They will have their chance early on and they should take it when it is offered to them, because they will not get another chance after they have taken the mark of the beast.

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you: Paul, here, jumps back to the age of grace (church Age) and talks to the Thessalonians as those who will not experience the strong delusion from God because they did believe God's truth.

God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation: Salvation can mean different things at different times in the scriptures, for example, when Moses said, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD." Exodus 14:13.

He delivered the Israelites from Pharaoh's army, but they didn't get saved on that day.

The Thessalonians did get saved when they believed the truth Paul shared with them concerning the gospel, and that belief of the truth delivered them, or saved them from the wrath to come during the tribulation period.

They will be saved from experiencing God's wrath because they received the love of the truth by belief of the truth (the gospel). See the note on verse 10 above.

1st Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

God has appointed all who believe the gospel to obtain salvation. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He called you by our gospel: This is a reference to the gospel that Paul delivered unto the Thessalonians back then and us today.

How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

To the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ: This is further defined for us in Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians:

2nd Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

16 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught: These were new doctrinal teachings given to the churches when Paul established them.

It was also those things that which were found in his epistles that he had delivered unto them, which were the inspired word of God for the churches to stand fast in.

These were the commandments mentioned in 1st Thessalonians 4:2. All churches today should have a strong tradition of teaching the mystery that was delivered unto the apostle Paul for us.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Everlasting consolation: All that encompasses salvation.

And good hope: Believing in the blessed hope will produce in a believer good hope that can sustain them when they think they cannot go on.

Chapter Three

The word of the Lord

1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course: Not restricted.

Our prayers change things, so we are to pray like the Thessalonians were so that the word of the Lord may have free course to reach individuals that need to hear it. Are you praying for people to see the mystery.

And be glorified: In new believers as it is with the Thessalonians.

2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

Verse one does not end with a period, it ends with a semi-colon connecting it to verse two.

That we may be delivered: Our prayers can also deliver others from unreasonable and wicked men. Who are you praying for?

3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

Stablish you: Stablish and establish are similar words but they have slightly different meanings. To stablish us in grace teachings, just as he stablished his law covenant with the children of Israel.

And keep you from evil: What greater evil can the Lord keep us from than the anti-Christ himself and the tribulation period? The Lord is faithful to keep his word that we are not appointed unto wrath. 1st Thessalonians 5:9.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye 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.

The things which we command you: Our apostle has given us in the body of Christ commands to accomplish his will in this dispensation.

Into the love of God: The Lord through his word and our time in it will direct our hearts towards him.

Into the patient waiting for Christ: The head of the church (Jesus) will return for us, the Church which is his body:

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church:

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

Disorderly: God, commands us to withdraw ourselves from those who do not walk disorderly (not in the traditions which Paul gave to us).

The tradition: The doctrinal things that were given to us from Paul's group we are to do, and they are to become traditions in our service to God. They are not optional.

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Not because we have not power: Paul had the right to expect to be taken care of physically (i.e., food, clothing, housing etc...) by those whom he ministered to spiritually.

Paul wanted these new believers not to think Paul was in it for the money. As they matured Paul told the congregations that they should communicate with his expenses. 1st Corinthians 9:6-14.

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 ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

Busybodies: Meddlesome in others affairs. We are not under the kingdom program; we are to work for our own bread (food) and not to expect handouts.

We are being disorderly in this present dispensation if we expect God, or others to do for us what we should be doing for ourselves.

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.

Note that man, and have no company with him: Paul informs these believers that Christians are expected to work and provide their own bread.

If they do not, then that assembly has a responsibility to admonish that brother to find a job, so that he too can continue in well doing with the rest of the saints.

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 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 Lord of peace: Jesus will institute of millennium of peace in the kingdom, followed by an eternity of peace after that.

The salutation of Paul: It was written with his own hand as a token (proof) in every epistle that he writes, to prove that he wrote that epistle.

The salutation of Paul in his epistle was written by Paul himself in each of his epistles, and it would stand out from the rest of the epistle written by his penman, who wrote his words for him.

Some say the salutation is the word Paul at the beginning of each of his epistles, while others believe it is his closing remarks in each of his epistles.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen: Some say verse 18 is the token that Paul writes in every epistle, but that would also mean that Paul wrote Revelation. Revelation 22:21. John wrote Revelation, not Paul.

Nowhere in this epistle are the Thessalonians told they will have to endure to the end of the tribulation period to be saved. There are no words of instruction to prepare them for such a time because it is understood by them that they will not be here at that time.

The End

First Timothy

Introduction

We are first introduced to Timothy, as Timotheus, in Acts 16 as Paul and Silas return to Asia to deliver the decrees they received in Jerusalem from James and the twelve. He would then travel with Paul into Europe and begin to establish churches there.

He would later see Paul stoned at Lystra, where he was born and raised, but that did not discourage Timothy from going with Paul to the work. He was sent by Paul to edify the saints in Corinth, Philippi, and Ephesus. He was Paul's fellowlabourer until the end.

Chapter One

Paul our Pattern

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;

Paul: Paul is the first word in all of his epistles, and they are all placed back-to-back in the bible. Romans through Philemon. Paul is not the writer of Hebrews according to Hebrews 2:3.

An apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour: The word apostle means a sent one. Paul was commanded to be an apostle by God the Father, and Jesus Christ; he did not have a choice.

See Romans 16:26 where God also gives commandment concerning the mystery the apostle was supposed to preach.

1st Corinthians 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! 17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope: The hope is not the blessed hope (the rapture), it is the one who makes the rapture possible, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

My own son in the faith: Paul led Timothy to the Lord through his preaching the gospel of the grace of God to him. 1st Corinthians 15:1- 4 & Acts 20:24. Timothy's mother, and grandmother were probably saved hearing Paul as well. 2 Timothy 1:5.

Grace, mercy, and peace: Paul alters his usual introduction of grace and peace when he adds the word mercy in between.

This is because he is talking to Timothy personally and he would need the mercy of God when the devil throws his many wiles at him as a Pastor.

Grace and peace are the conditions that mankind is enjoying in this age where God is dispensing grace instead of demanding obedience to the law. God is allowing peace between him and sinful mankind instead of giving us the wrath we deserve.

From God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord: Grace, mercy, and peace, all come from God, and not from Paul, they are a gift from God in this age.

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

Paul writes this epistle to Timothy after his first imprisonment in Rome, where Timothy was assisting Paul for much of the two years that Paul was under house arrest in his own hired house. Acts 28:16-30.

Charge some that they teach no other doctrine: Timothy was to charge grace believers not to preach Israel's old kingdom message to the body of Christ.

Endless genealogies: This refers back to the law, while godly edifying is found in what was dispensed to Paul in this present dispensation of grace.

Godly edifying: The Greek word for edifying her is Oikonomia, which is where we get the words economy, and dispensation from.

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity 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; 7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

From which some have turned aside unto vain jangling: Some had turned from charity, and unfeigned faith that permeates Paul's teachings on the dispensation of grace, and they had turned back to the law.

Desiring to be teachers of the law: This problem is rampant amongst churches today who blend the law of Moses with grace by spiritualizing verses meant for Israel under the Law.

For example, to teach doctrine found in Matthew 1:1 through Acts chapter 8 as doctrine for the body of Christ today is to not understand what they are saying, and to whom it is being spoken to.

8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully: This means that we know the law, so we know what sin is, and we try to refrain from it.

The law is good if we use it lawfully: The law condemns us and allows us to see that we cannot save ourselves, so that we may acknowledge our need for salvation.

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, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

The law is not made for a righteous man: The law is a teacher to point sinners towards the Saviour. No one will look for a Saviour if they think they have no need of one.

And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine: The law is against those that would teach any unsound doctrine.

11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

The glorious gospel of the blessed God, that was committed to my trust: It was not committed to Peter and the eleven's trust, because they already preached the gospel of the kingdom. Paul preached the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:24.

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath 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.

Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me: He equipped Paul for his ministry.

He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry: God forgave Saul, and was willing and able to use him, who was before a blasphemer.

Paul would blaspheme Jesus as the Christ as he persecuted to true believers in the kingdom church, and he would cause them to blaspheme him:

Acts 26:11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief: The Jews that had crucified Jesus were forgiven also because they didn't know what they were doing:

Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

To forgive your chief rival takes grace, and God's grace exceeds whatever amount sinful mankind could ever need. Jesus Christ is the personification of God's grace and love.

Ephesians 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

This is a faithful saying: These very same words are used by the apostle Paul three other times: 1st Timothy 4:9, 2nd Timothy 2:11 & Titus 3:8. The saying that we are about to examine in this verse and the next should be accepted by all, but they are not.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief: The word chief means first, lead, or head. When you go onto a Reservation and see the Chief, you have seen the head of the tribe.

Saul (later called Paul) was the leader of the rebellion of sinners against God at that time because he was persecuting and opposing

the very thing that God was doing at that time with believers in the nation of Israel.

Saul was literally the leader of the rebellion. He was Satan's right-hand man if you will, although he did this ignorantly, and in unbelief as stated above.

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

For this cause, I obtained mercy: Because Saul was the chief (leader) of sinners God wanted to use him to show the world that if Saul could be saved anyone could be.

That in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering: This means something started with Paul. Jesus Christ is now showing the world through Paul's salvation God's longsuffering for sinners.

Paul is the first in this age that God chose to do this with in such a fashion. God could have immediately ushered in the tribulation period and His Wrath upon a Christ rejecting nation and world, but He didn't.

Instead, he chose to be longsuffering, and to show the world how gracious he really was in spite of Israel's fall. God begins to save Gentiles before Israel is risen to its promised position as head of all nations during her prophesied kingdom.

God now institutes something new, the body of Christ, were there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile during this unprophesied time period which was a mystery kept hidden from before the foundation of the world. Romans 16:25.

For a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him: Paul was the first that God saved by grace through faith in this age, and he serves as a pattern for all who should believe hereafter.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. 1st Timothy 6:16.

The King eternal: 1st Timothy 6:16.

Immortal: Cannot decay or die.

Invisible: Cannot be seen.

The only wise God: Jude 25. Because God has chosen to use the apostle Paul in this way as a pattern to all who should believe hereafter.

God will receive the glory and honour throughout all eternity for showing his great longsuffering and love for all humanity in saving His chief enemy.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

This charge: Timothy was to educate all who should believe on Christ from then on of the longsuffering of God.

He showed that to the world in the example of his saving Saul of Tarsus, the chief of sinners, and making him the apostle of the Gentiles.

Timothy had that charge committed unto him by the Apostle Paul, and as he was faithful in his ministry, he in turn would recommit that charge to us to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery.

According to the prophecies which went before on thee: Paul laid hands on Timothy before and prophesied that he would help make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery.

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

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

Which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: There are those who teach from this verse that a person can lose their salvation by neglecting their faith long enough.

People who no longer hold to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith which saved them, can now hold to a works doctrine of justification through the deeds of the law, but it doesn't alter their salvation one bit.

Many people have gotten confused by Satan's seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils after having been saved, and they started to teach things that are contrary to sound doctrine.

That is the equivalent of a ship that is sinking. People who hear their wrong understanding of salvation will not be saved because they will not be trusting solely in Christ for their salvation.

20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Hymenaeus and Alexander: 2nd Timothy.

Their selfish pride led them to turn a blind eye to the significance of Paul's ministry, as many still do today, because of their blind obedience to the traditions of others, and they have made themselves hirelings and not true servants.

Delivered unto Satan: This has to do with administering church discipline on an individual who refuses to repent of his wickedness, and then the whole matter is given over to God for His chastening hand to administer correction as he sees fit.

Paul could not deliver someone over to Satan for the destruction of the body unless they were God's child in the first place.

They were God's children, and they went away from the truth and began to teach contrary to sound doctrine regarding salvation and God disciplines his children and that is what Paul was doing in turning these two over to be disciplined.

They are both mentioned in the fourth chapter of Paul's second epistle to Timothy.

Chapter Two

The two-fold will of God

1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, 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;

Supplications: Petitions.

Intercessions: Prayers for others.

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Who will have all men to be saved: It is God's will that all be saved, but we have a choice to accept or reject salvation.

And to come to the knowledge of the truth: Once a person gets saved it is God's will that they all come unto the knowledge of the truth.

The truth is the revelation of the mystery that has been kept secret since the world began but has now been made known by the apostle Paul to us ward who believe.

The knowledge of the truth has to do with God's plan for this age and our part in it.

We have to be able to divide our mystery program which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world but now has been given to the us, from Israel's prophecy program which has been spoken about since the foundation of the world by Israel's prophets.

Why do not more believers understand the mystery program? We are not praying for them to be saved, nor are we making all men see what the fellowship of the mystery is.

Pray for them to be saved, and then tell them about the mystery revealed to Paul, for this is acceptable in the sight of God.

There are divisions precisely because we "all" have not come unto the knowledge of the truth for this age. We need to pray for "all" men to see what the fellowship of the mystery is.

5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

One mediator: A go between. There is only one way these leaders are ever going to get saved and that is when they realize that God exists and that there is only God, and he has one mediator that stands between Him and them and that is the man Christ Jesus.

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Who gave himself a ransom for all: All of humanity was being held by the captor (Satan) and there was no ransom that we could afford to pay because the price was perfection.

Christ who knew no sin became sin (not a sinner) for us, and tasted death for us, to ransom all who would call upon him. 2nd Corinthians 5:21.

To be testified in due time: This means that this message was not preached before the cross by the twelve, nor by John the Baptist, nor any of the prophets.

It was the unsearchable riches of Christ which were made known unto us by the apostle Paul by the risen Christ only after the cross. 1st Corinthians 15:8.

7 Whereunto 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.

I am ordained a preacher: One who proclaims God's word.

An apostle: Paul was ordained as apostle of the Gentiles to let all of us Gentiles know how to be saved in this dispensation of grace.

A teacher of the Gentiles: Paul taught the body of Christ their role in God's eternal plan for them in heavenly places.

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

Lifting up holy hands: This verse speaks more to the holiness of your hands than it does to the position of your hands in prayer. He would rather your hands be free from sin than at a particular elevation.

Now Paul tells us how we are to pray for all men. We are to pray without wrath towards any or all men who are lost. We are to pray, believing that God will save people, and that he will bring men to a knowledge of the truth.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Women adorn themselves in modest apparel: Paul is saying that it is God's will that women adorn themselves in modesty not worldly excess.

11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 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. *Genesis 2 & 3.*

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection: It was Eve that Satan directed his question to for a reason, and it was Eve who answered for Adam in the garden when Adam was standing right there with her, and he never said a word. Genesis 3:1-6.

God has given us an order for the church, the home, and God has set the man to be the spiritual leader of both. Eve's sin was due to her being deceived, but Eve's sin didn't plunge all mankind into sin, Adam's did.

Romans 5:12 says, Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Adam just flat out rebelled, while Eve was deceived. Adam should have corrected Eve, but he did not.

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

She shall be saved in childbearing: This verse does not mean that a woman can be saved by having children, because that would mean hundreds of other very clear scriptures which teach contrary to that fact are wrong.

No single scripture is of any private interpretation. The woman that recognizes her God given roll as a help meet to her husband, and who adorns herself modestly, and has good works will save her own life, and that of her husband and children from one of despair and destruction.

That is, if she raises them up as a good example to them, teaching them, and not her husband.

Chapter Three

Officers in the Church

1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

The office of a bishop: It is a good office to desire to have according to God's word. There is no better job in the world if you rejoice in taking broken lives and putting them back together again.

The title bishop is synonymous with that of elder and pastor, they are all considered as overseers of the house of God.

Notice it does not say that a person will hear a call from God to be a bishop. We are not a Prophet of Israel under the law. God is operating differently under grace today.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Blameless: A person to qualify for the office must be blameless in the eyes of his congregation, and God as well in the following areas:

He is to be the husband of one wife: A husband is a man, not a woman. Not one wife at a time either. That, along with other comments made by Paul to Timothy concerning women in the church lets you know that a woman is not to be the spiritual leader over men.

Vigilant: One who is not lazy concerning the responsibilities of the office.

Sober: Rational in their thinking and actions.

Of good behaviour: They are to be someone who is known as a good person.

Given to hospitality: Because they will spend much of their time with other people, and they should be as concerned for them as they are for their own families.

Apt to teach: This has nothing to do with a great voice, but a person who can deliver God's truth without compromise.

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

Not given to wine: Paul had to force Timothy to take "a little wine" for his oft infirmities because a minister is not to allow himself to be under the control of these harmful spirits.

Wine deadens a man's ability to make good decisions. Given to wine, means that he does it often, and in excess.

No striker: A bishop must be gentle, not someone who believes that might is right.

Not covetous: He is not to be greedy, always trying to make extra money in excess.

Patient: He must realize that mature Christians don't occur overnight. Babies make mistakes.

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

One that ruleth well his own house: His children are a reflection on how effectively he implements the principles found in the word of God in his own family.

With all gravity: Titus 2:7.

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Not a novice: The biggest problem a young bishop with no experience can fall into is pride, and pride comes before a fall.

Fall into the condemnation of the devil: 1st Timothy 3:7, James 1:2 & 5:12.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

A good report of them which are without: The bishop must have, and maintain a good reputation if he is to be effective.

8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

The deacons: Plural, as contrasted with the bishop (singular) above.

Grave: The deacons must be serious (grave) about the position they hold and not use it as a position of power to get their agenda approved in the church.

Not doubletongued: They ought to speak in unison with the decisions of the church, not saying one thing to one person and another to someone else to gain favor with them.

Not given to much wine: Drinking an excessive amount of wine for the purpose of becoming intoxicated. Deacons should not be sought out from those just interested in power and riches.

Not greedy of filthy lucre: Lucrative schemes to defraud others of their money for your own benefit.

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

The mystery of the faith: This is talking about men serving who know the revelation of the mystery which was given to Paul to give to us in the body of Christ. Ephesians 3:8-9.

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

Let these also first be proved: They should have been serving the church already in another capacity before considering them to this office.

The office of a deacon: There are two officers in the church today, bishop and deacon. Apostles and prophets ceased when the sign gifts for Israel ceased in Acts 28.

11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

Not slanderers: The deacon's wives may hear of a problem in the church that is being dealt with correctly in private, and then tells a bunch of people and can slander an innocent person.

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

The husbands of one wife: They have the same qualification as the bishop of not being divorced.

13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith: They acquire boldness as soul winners, and servants, and can teach those that oppose themselves.

14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

The house of God: God wants us to understand that there are rules that God himself has given to us so that we may know how to behave ourselves in the house of God, the church of the living God.

If you don't have someone qualified to fill one of these positions, then you don't need them yet. Pure and simple.

The pillar and ground of the truth: The church not the truth! The church supports it (the truth) like a pillar supports a building. The word is the truth, and the church has the job to defend it, and to propagate it.

16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Without controversy: The Pauline revelations prove the mystery beyond a shadow of a doubt.

The mystery of godliness: Notice the word godliness has a small "g" because it concerns a mystery concerning us in the body of Christ being godly. See the doctrine according to godliness in 1st Timothy 6:3.

It is about how we can do that today in the dispensation of grace, which was revealed through Paul by revelation.

The mystery of godliness deals with us being Christ like, as Christ is in us believers today, he manifests himself through us as we put on Christ as the one new man. Ephesians 2:15.

That fact that the Christ that is spoken about throughout all of the old testament is Immanuel, God with us, in human form (God became a man) is not a mystery in the scriptures. Psalm 110:1 & Isaiah 7:14.

Jesus is now being preached unto the Gentiles ever since Israel's fall that he died for their sins, was buried, and rose again from the dead the third day according to the scriptures.

Chapter Four

Doctrines of devils

1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

The Spirit speaketh expressly: Very descriptively. 1st Samuel 20:21 & Ezekiel 1:3.

The latter times: Paul is not speaking about the last days of Israel's prophecy program, but the latter times of the dispensation

of grace leading up to the blessed hope, also known as the rapture by believers today.

The last days of Israel's prophecy program ended with their blinding as a nation in the early Acts period as the dispensation of grace was ushered in with Paul and his epistles for the body of Christ.

Those last days will resume only after the church is taken away in the rapture, and the time of Jacob's trouble begins.

Some shall depart from the faith: Their faith has not left them, but they are now preaching something that will not save the hearers of their new message.

This does not mean they lose their salvation, but rather they now are preaching a doctrine that has departed from what is correct for this age and in that sense, they have left "the faith".

Seducing spirits and doctrines of devils: People would leave sound doctrine when enticed by seducing spirits working through people who bewitched them with their doctrines of devils.

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 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. Acts 10:15.

Speaking lies in hypocrisy: The identifying characteristics of these false teachers is their doctrines that forbid marriage and their commanding of God's people to abstain from meats which God had created to be received with thanksgiving.

Conscience seared with a hot iron: To render their conscience unsensitive. Priests are forbidden to marry today in some groups which is totally contrary to the scriptures as even Peter himself had a wife, and a mother-in-law.

Priests rarely question this teaching because their conscience has been seared by their seducing spirits that give them their doctrines of devils.

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

A good minister of Jesus Christ: We are to warn our people as pastors about the fallacies of these people who have been deceived in order to be considered in God's eyes as a good minister of Jesus Christ.

Good doctrine: We are to nourish the church up in the words of faith and the good doctrine that Timothy received from Paul. 2nd Timothy 1:13-14 & Acts 20:25-31.

7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Spiritual exercise is the studying of God's word concerning doctrine as well as how we ought to behave and the refusing of

false teachings and profane old wives' fables that are constantly passed down from generation to generation.

We have too many people today who are spiritual wimps because they do not exercise their faith in defending it and they let the devils spread their doctrines without so much as a challenge.

9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. 11 These things command and teach.

The Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe: Whether the lost receive Christ as their Saviour or not, it does not change the fact that that is Jesus is the Saviour of men.

He is more of a Saviour to those of us who have believed and received the salvation that he has wrought for us than he can be to someone who has rejected it.

12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Timothy was not to let those who would claim he was too young to know any better, to despise his youth as long as he was a living example of what a bishop/pastor ought to be.

He was put in that position by God and unless he was immature and irresponsible those who were his senior were to respect the office he held and follow their leader.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

Bishops should be avid readers of the scriptures. Should we read other men's writings? Yes, of course! But the amount of scripture being read should far outweigh the amount of man's writings we read.

Commentaries can be good, but never come to the place in your ministry that you skim through the scriptures in a commentary to get to what man has written.

Ask God what his word means and do searches throughout the scriptures on different subjects. No nugget of truth is more precious than the one you dug out yourself.

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

The gift that was given thee: 2nd Timothy 1:6.

The laying on of the hands of the presbytery: These gifts were not being given to the body of Christ after Israel's blindness was set in only before.

This gift was needed by the church there and God gave the presbytery the knowledge that they were to bestow it on a younger Timothy.

15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

Do you meditate on what God's word means? Do you give yourself wholly unto them? If you do not it will show, and it will appear obvious to all that hear you.

It is a profitable thing to give the word of God its proper place in your studies and in your ministry. You will profit, and your people will profit because of it.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee: They could save them and their people a lot of trouble if they would take heed to these things. Salvation is not in consideration here.

Chapter Five

Denying the faith

1 Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; 2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

An elder: An older person.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. 5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. 6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

Honour widows that are widows indeed: Pastors should teach their congregation to take care of their family members, and to seek assistance if needed.

They are to honour them with financial assistance if they are widows indeed (those who meet the qualifications listed below).

Let them learn first to shew piety at home: Children were to shew respect to their widowed mother or aunt to take care of their needs (to requite them) as they once did them.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. 8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

He hath denied the faith: He hath denied what God has said he should do in this area, and he is treating his own family worse than the lost (infidels) treat their widows.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore 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, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Taken into the number: Taken into the number of widows that the church has to help, because there is no family who can do it.

Three score years old: 60 years old.

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

To wax wanton against Christ: They begin to adopt sensual ways to attract men instead of being a godly example.

12 Having damnation, 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.

Having damnation because they have cast off their first faith: They cast off (turned aside after Satan) their biblical teachings to get their needs met by becoming worldly.

This is not speaking about one losing their salvation in the dispensation of grace. We are sealed unto the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30.

Give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully: The adversary is ultimately the devil.

It can also mean the infidels who would use this to criticize believers in Christ who will not take care of their own family.

16. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

Let not the church be charged: They should not let the church take care of their family when they can.

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

Let the elders that rule well: This is speak of a bishop who is an elder. Most elders are not bishops.

A bishop/elder who does his job well should receive double that of what it would take to support a widow indeed, because he has more responsibilities to take care of such as a wife and children.

Paul is definitely speaking to those with a leadership position in the church because he makes it clear that they are those who "rule well", it can also imply here that the pastor is someone with a few years on them.

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.
Deuteronomy 17:6 & Matthew 18:16.

21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

Paul charges believers before three witnesses in verse twenty-one to observe these commandments.

The elect angels: These were the angels that chose not the rebel against God and follow Lucifer in his rebellion, so God chose them bear witness to what Paul was telling us.

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

Lay hands suddenly on no man: Don't rush to give a new person a position of responsibility in the church, but rather wait a while to see if their spirituality matches up with their zeal.

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

Drink no longer water: This command was for Timothy, and it was purely for medicinal purposes.

Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake: A little wine was good for his stomach because the water was not filtered in those days. This is in contrast to Paul's commands for a Bishop not to be given to "much wine".

24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. 25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

Again, Paul warns Timothy to watch out for those who just show up and want to help immediately, that he should not put them into positions of authority until some time has passed by and they have proven themselves.

It is the long-term health of the church that we are to be more concerned with rather than some perceived quick gain we might receive from someone who has just showed up.

Chapter Six

Lay hold on Eternal life

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

Servants: Slaves.

Under the yoke: Under bondage.

Count their masters worthy of all honour, that the word of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed: If they refuse to honour their masters, they are blaspheming the name of God, and the doctrine of God will not be believed by that servant who is not following it.

Do them service: They were to honor them as they served them.

Partakers of the benefit: They are partakers of the good deed done.

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 about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

The doctrine according to godliness: See the mystery of godliness in 1st Timothy 3:16 about Christ living out his word in us and through us.

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. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, 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 thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Paul is describing a hireling which doesn't care about the Church, but about themselves, their stomach, and their comfort. An elder that is over a congregation should be like Christ and be willing to give himself for his church instead of looking for what he can get out of them.

They have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows: This is speaking about erring from the truth in regards to monetary gain.

They no longer teach sound doctrine in this area, and they are producing much sorrow in those who keep trying to follow their false teachings in this area who end up destitute.

Man of God: A term given by others to God's servants such as Timothy, not self-imposed on us for our exaltation. 2nd Timothy 3:17.

Lay hold on eternal life: A person today lays hold on eternal life the moment he believes the gospel, he then begins to fight the good fight of faith, because he now possesses faith. Verse 19.

Whereunto thou art also called: All who have believed the gospel of the grace of God are called to fight the good fight of faith and to have eternal life.

13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; 14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings,

and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Who quickeneth all things: He makes alive.

Which in his times he shall shew: When he returns to set up his kingdom.

The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: While Christ is the head of the body of Christ, he is also going to be seen as the only Potentate, King, and Lord of all on the earth as well.

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Willing to communicate: This is in reference to supporting the work of God, as Paul said of the Philippians who alone communicated unto him (financially). Philippians 4:15.

That they may lay hold on eternal life: Verse twelve.

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

Keep that which is committed to thy trust: Paul committed to Timothy the gospel of the grace of God and the fellowship of the mystery. (Ephesians 3:8 & 9).

Oppositions of science falsely so called: Things which are called science, when there is no science to back them up, like evolution. Theories are just that, theories, they are not science.

Evolution is a religion based only on blind faith. These people have erred concerning the faith of God, and are now teaching theories of men.

The End

Second Timothy

Chapter One

God's Eternal Purpose

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God: An apostle is a sent one. Paul became the apostle of the Gentiles, not by choice, or by the will of man, but by the will of God, and he was sent to the Gentiles by Christ.

Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

The promise of life: This is the promise of eternal life that God who cannot lie promised to himself before the world began.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Paul was an apostle according to that promise as the one who would be God's pattern of his grace to all who should believe on Christ after him.

1st Timothy 1:15 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 for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Paul no longer was able to stay in his own hired house in Rome under house arrest but was now in the infamous Mamertine prison awaiting his last day when he would be beheaded for his faith.

2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Timothy was saved under Paul's ministry as he mentioned in his first epistle, and over the years he has become his dearly beloved son in the faith, because of all that they had gone through together.

Grace, mercy, and peace: Paul adds the word mercy in all three of his pastoral epistles because Timothy and Titus needed to hear about God's mercy as they had suffered along with Paul for the defense of the gospel.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

I thank God: Paul said he thanked God nine times in six different epistles. You should look up each occurrence sometime to see why Paul thanked God. Romans 1:8, 7:25, 1st Corinthians 1:4, 14, 14:18, Philippians 1:3, 1st Thessalonians 2:13 & Philemon 1:4.

Paul tells Timothy that he continually prayed for him every day. That is the effect that working with someone on such a great cause can have with one another.

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; 5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee,

which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

Being mindful of thy tears: When Paul had last seen Timothy, it was with much tears because they knew that it could be the last time that they would ever see one another.

Paul was in prison, and Timothy had his failing health, and the ever-present danger of persecution around every corner.

The unfeigned faith that is in thee: Timothy's faith was sincere. It lasted through all the trials and tribulations that he experienced ministering with the apostle Paul.

Sadly, there is no mention of any men in Timothy's family possessing faith. Paul was the strong male role-model that Timothy needed in his life since his father and grandfather were not sadly.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. 7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Stir up the gift of God: The gift of God is not speaking about the gift of salvation, which is also mentioned in scripture, because no one can impart salvation to another by the laying on of an apostle's hands.

Salvation is a gift of God given by grace through faith. Ephesians 2:8-9. We do not have apostles today to give us these gifts as they are no longer necessary, because we have all the scripture we need for this age.

We have all the hidden wisdom of God's mystery program because it was given to Paul to give to us.

1st Corinthians 7:7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

This gift had to do with an inner boldness that he possessed when times get tough. Timothy needed to be able to minister, not out of fear, but with of a sound mind that trusted in God's will.

The putting on of my hands: Paul, as an apostle, had put his hands on Timothy in the early days, and he had imparted unto him a supernatural gift that Timothy would need to accomplish the job that God had called him to do.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

Be not thou therefor ashamed: Paul knew that Timothy was fearful because of all the battles that had been raging with Paul concerning Nero's persecutions.

Because all of the churches of Asia had turned their backs on Paul doctrinally because of the new revelations he had received from Christ. People were teaching other things, and refuting things that Paul had taught them previously.

Paul and Timothy were preaching to the Gentiles, and proclaiming the blinding of Israel, which you can understand would not be very popular with the Jews.

The afflictions of the gospel: The main reason that dispensationalism hasn't grown as much as it should today, is because many of us are not willing to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.

According to the power of God: The power of God is defined for us in verse seven as "the spirit of power" that is within each believer at the moment they believe the gospel which reminds us not to fear circumstances, but trust in God's will.

9 Who hath 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,

An holy calling: According to God's own purpose he called before the world began, all who were going to be saved with an holy calling to fulfill his will making all men see what the fellowship of the mystery is, he did not predestine anyone to be saved.

Ephesians 3:8 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 hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

1st Timothy 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

In Christ Jesus before the world began: When we are saved, we are placed into Jesus Christ. He is the head, and we are his body.

His eternal purpose was eternally in Christ before we were born or before the world began because it was his eternal purpose, it was just not revealed until Christ revealed it to the apostle Paul.

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

But is now made manifest: The grace that was given before the world began is now being made manifest because of the cross, and what happened three days later on our behalf.

Paul had to remind Timothy that Christ has abolished death and given eternal life to all who believe the gospel that was given to Paul. Romans 16:25-26.

By the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ: This refers to Jesus' appearing to him on the road to Damascus.

And at later times when he made manifest to him the mystery which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world, but now was made manifest. Ephesians 3:1-10.

Who hath abolished death: Jesus died our death for us. Death had no hold over Jesus because he was not guilty of any sins.

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

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

Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not the gospel of the kingdom that was preach solely to Israel by the John the Baptist, Jesus and the twelve apostles to the nation of Israel.

Romans 6:23 but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus died that we might have eternal life if we believe the gospel of the grace of God that is found in Paul's epistles alone:

1st Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye 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:

This gospel Paul calls "my gospel" in numerous places:

Romans 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Romans 16:25 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,

2nd Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

This gospel was committed unto Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles:

Galatians 2:7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

1st Timothy 1:11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

I am appointed: Paul was appointed to be all the above things so that he could fulfill God's will for us today, which was determined before the world began, to preach the gospel to all the world so that God's creation can have communion with him for eternity.

If you are a preacher today, you did not have a Damascus road experience like Paul did. You volunteered. People are not appointed today by a vision, but by a desire to reach people with the gospel.

1st Timothy 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

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.

For the which cause I suffer these things: The cause for which Paul was suffering was the will of God for this dispensation.

That which I have committed unto him: Paul had committed his life to preaching the message that God gave to him until his death.

13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ

Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me: The sound doctrine of Pauline truths concerning the mystery program that Jesus Christ revealed unto the apostle of the Gentiles.

That good thing which was committed unto thee: Paul put into Timothy's trust the mystery program of God that had been revealed unto him, and he now had the responsibility to keep it alive by sharing it with others.

Keep by the Holy Ghost: The only way he could do that was by the power of the Holy Ghost because Satan was around every corner trying to discourage Timothy to quit or to trim his message.

Be a person of prayer, so you will have the strength to stand against doctrinal compromise.

15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

All they which be in Asia be turned away from me: The church started to reject Paul's unique message concerning the mystery because of the Judaizers trying to bring them into the bondage of the law.

Paul's message was quickly finding little room in the churches because it called people to action regardless of the danger, and to confront those bringing in other doctrines, instead of welcoming them.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft 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, thou knowest very well.

That he might find mercy in that day: Paul is telling Timothy to pray for Onesiphorus that he would be strong in that day, which is when Onesiphorus would face the executioner's axe.

It is very possible that they were both killed at the same time.

Chapter Two

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

The things that thou hast heard of me: The things are the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24), which is found in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

The same commit thou to faithful men: One of the biggest mistakes we can make in the ministry is that of not training others to do what we have been trained to do. Notice the plural form "men" instead of "a man" chosen by Paul.

Paul literally trained lots of men in his twenty-five-year ministry and he taught them to do the same thing. He wasn't trying to keep everyone in one spot to build a big church, he had a global vision.

We are to follow Paul as our pattern for planting churches. 1st Timothy 1:15-16, 1st Corinthians 4:16, 11:1, Philippians 3:17 & 1st Thessalonians 1:6.

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ: Here Paul encouraged Timothy like a good soldier that endures the hardness of long costly battles and who keeps on fighting.

Paul didn't want Timothy to be entangled with the affairs of this life so that he could be engaged in the spiritual battle that was in front of him. You do not win battles without getting into the fight in the first place.

Who hath chosen him to be a soldier of Jesus Christ: All believers have been chosen to be a good soldier before the world began. This is not speaking of only a select group of people that are Pastors who God alone has chosen to be soldiers.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

If a man also strive for masteries: Paul chose a metaphor of an athlete that wants to master his sport, and to be crowned for doing it without taking any short cuts.

Pursue understanding God's word today like an athlete trying to win an Olympic medal with no doctrinal compromises along the way.

A soldier must learn how to fight the enemy and master his skill. We fight the enemy today, not with carnal weapons, but with the word of God rightly divided, which is what is meant by striving lawfully.

6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

The husbandman that laboureth: Paul wants Timothy and us to know that just as a farmer is the first to eat part of his own crop so the minister that labours in the word should be taken care of first out of the offerings of God's people.

Why did Paul have to teach this to Timothy? Sadly, many churches give their pastor a meager salary, or none at all.

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

Consider what I say: If this verse were to be followed today, we wouldn't have all these denominations each saying something else because they would all be listening to the same voice.

The Lord give thee understanding in all things: Paul says that if you will consider what he says, (the message that God gave him to give to us for today) that the Lord will give you understanding in "all" things.

All things that a local church needs to know is found in the epistles of Paul, who is the apostle of the Gentiles in this dispensation of grace.

Paul received an abundance of revelations that was kept hidden in God from before the foundation of the world, but now has been

made manifest, and people are ignorant of most it. Romans 16:25-26 & Ephesians 3:8-9.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my (Paul's) gospel: Not according to the gospel of the kingdom that the twelve were preaching to Israel.

Peter when preaching on the day of Pentecost and afterwards mentions the cross and Christ's resurrection, but not as the good news that his hearers must trust in to receive the forgiveness of their sins.

When Peter preaches of Jesus crucifixion, he condemns his countrymen as the killers of their Messiah and tells them they should repent of their wickedness.

Peter tells his hearers that their King is in exile now until his enemies be made his footstool, whereas Paul's gospel declares the cross as good news to the world and that Christ is now the head of the church, which is his body.

Peter declared God's wrath against Israel and his enemies in Acts 2 and 3, whereas Paul is preaching that God is dispensing grace to his hearers and forgiveness.

These are two different gospels to two distinct groups of people. One was Israel with the gospel of the circumcision, and the other was to the whole world with the gospel of the uncircumcision.

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

Paul was suffering imprisonment (bonds) because he was proclaiming the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24) that many Jews would have nothing to do with it and fought Paul reaching out to the Gentiles at every turn.

Jail may have bound Paul physically, but the word of God was still going forth. Paul was still able to get his epistles out to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

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.

I endure all things for the elect's sakes: Paul instructed Timothy to keep on serving the Lord even if it meant he would end up in the prison as Paul was, and even if it meant his life.

Paul told Timothy that he endured all things so that others could be saved if they would only believe what he was teaching them. Romans 8:33.

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 abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

It is a faithful saying: Paul, then says four things that are true, or faithful in this dispensation of grace.

If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: Paul is talking about believing his gospel in verse eleven in that if we by faith trust in his death, burial, and resurrection then we died with Christ (Romans 6:3), and we now live with him that was raised from the dead.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: In verse twelve Paul is talking about receiving a reward for our suffering.

We are not persecuted because we do not take the same stands for Christ anymore when confronted with darkness (the lies of the devil).

If we deny him, he also will deny us: This is speaking of those who have not believed the gospel in the first place.

If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself: God is faithful, and the truth is still the truth, and he will never deny himself even if we personally quit believing in Christ.

He is faithful when we are not, if you get saved and later become angry about some injustice, and you begin to doubt his existence, he is still faithful in keeping you saved because you are in him, and he cannot deny himself.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

Of these things put them in remembrance: These were the doctrinal teachings concerning the mystery program that were delivered unto the apostle Paul.

Strive not about words to no profit: We are to charge them not to strive with others in the church about things that will take us off the course that God wants us on of rightly dividing the word of truth.

It will be of no profit except for the devil as the hearers of that striving will be subverted in their faith instead of built up.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God: Paul uses the metaphor here of a workman that must study long and hard to learn his craft so that he may build something that his employer would approve of.

Rightly dividing the word of truth: The craftsman must learn what tools and building material will be necessary to do the job.

We cannot build the Church on Israel's kingdom program and expect it to be approved by God, but that is what everyone is doing who does not rightly divide 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 doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Shun profane and vain babblings: Paul gives Timothy an example of two people who didn't study enough of what Paul had told them.

They came up with the wrong conclusion that the resurrection was already past, and it had disastrous effects.

Hymenaeus: He was one of two that Paul delivered over to Satan to learn not to blaspheme. This was a reference to turning him over to God who would allow Satan to destroy him. 1st Timothy 1:20.

Their word will eat as doth a canker: Canker is the Greek word "gaggraina" where we get the word Gangrene from.

Their doctrines turn into a cancer like plague in every church they spew their messages, having no clue as Paul once did, that they are actually working against God and not on his behalf. Zeal without knowledge is dangerous.

The resurrection is already past: The Resurrection for a believer in the dispensation of grace is the rapture for those who have died already.

The dead in Christ shall rise first from the dead, and we which are alive and remain will simply be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and our bodies will be changed at that time without dying. 1st Thessalonians 4:16-17.

And overthrow the faith of some: What would a person was taught the rapture came after they trusted Jesus Christ? They would think that they must not be saved, and they would become discouraged.

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: If a person knows how to rightly divide the word of truth, he will not fall prey to Satan's false teachers. Satan thrives on ignorance.

The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: The foundation of God is the gospel of the grace of God.

The Lord knoweth them that are his: Even when we don't feel like we are saved, he can see his seal upon us. We cannot.

2nd Corinthians 1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity: If we want to build ourselves and others up in Christ, we should depart from iniquity which will only tear down what Christ wants to build.

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 honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Prepared unto every good work: Here Paul uses the metaphor of a vessel in someone's home. Our sin will dishonor the vessel of our body and make it useless in the battle.

We should look to be used in every good work, which is everything that God is doing today in the dispensation of grace, we cannot be used as effectively if we have not purged the dishonorable things from our lives.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, 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 strifes.

Foolish and unlearned questions avoid: Preach and teach sound doctrine, and if someone challenges you to try to get you to go in a different direction, respond to them and their challenge briefly, but get back on track with God's message.

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; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves: The attitude of a Pastor is to be one of not striving with people over things in a way that will cause people to fear you.

Some of those people can be turned around with a little work studying on our part. Do the same for others as Paul is admonishing Timothy to do. This is sorely missing by many grace believers on the internet.

If God peradventure give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth: The knowledge of the truth is the hidden wisdom that was revealed to the apostle Paul that had been kept secret since the world began, but now has been made manifest. Titus 1:1-3.

1st Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

There are two things mentioned in this verse, not one. Salvation, and a coming to a knowledge of the truth. The knowledge of the truth is not a place where many ever get to, because they never learn to rightly divide the word of truth.

2nd Timothy 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

You can learn more Bible verses, but never learn to rightly divide the word of truth and never come to the knowledge of the truth by understanding the difference in Israel's program and ours today.

Titus 1:1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, 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 hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will: If have not come unto the knowledge of the truth then you have been taken captive by the devil. You got caught in his snare that says you are "spiritual Israel."

Chapter Three

The Last Days

1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

In the last days: Paul warns Timothy that at the end of the age of grace that perilous times shall come all over the world and not just

in the church. This is how the world will be behaving as the rapture of the church gets closer.

There are the last days of Israel's prophecy program which will occur in the tribulation period, known as the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), and there are the last days of the dispensation of grace. Paul is speaking to us here, not Israel.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

It is almost as if God let Paul take a look into the future unto the day that we are living in right now.

We live in a very selfish society where each looks out for their own self instead of the needs of others. They curse God without any fear of anyone saying anything to them concerning it.

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

Without natural affection: This is that which between a man and a woman. Women who kill their own children in abortion clinics, and then call those who oppose what they are doing as intolerant.

Satan is the prince of the power of the air, and he unleashed his army of politically correct fallen angels to demonize anyone who would dare to say there was anything that is contrary to his plan to degrade humanity.

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Parents today teach this generation that you work hard so that you can travel the world, party, and buy lots of toys, and who cares about going to church and learning about God and his plan for us.

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth: You may think that these are nice people, but they are leading people away from scriptural Christianity and should be avoided at all cost.

They despise dispensationalist, and dispensationalism because it is contrary to their tradition that they have been taught and can't swallow their pride when they are faced with the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. 9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

So do also these resist the truth: Moses stood toe to toe with Jannes and Jambres there with Pharaoh and they opposed the truth that was right before their eyes.

When Moses' snake devoured the magician's, they did not repent. When they could not match all of Moses's plagues with

their little parlor tricks, they still did not repent but actually fought against God.

They will give an account for all they have misled, and for all the money they have swindled from little old ladies who truly want the gospel to go out who have been led captive by these charlatans who reject God's word rightly divided.

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, 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.

But thou hast fully know my doctrine: The world should fully know Paul's doctrine (the mystery program for the church), and his manner of life, his purpose (to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery) as Timothy did.

Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra: Paul suffered greatly so that we might have the wisdom of God to guide our lives by. Acts 13 & 14.

Timothy was most likely there when Paul was stoned and left for dead outside the city (Acts 14) and if anyone knew Timothy knew that God gave Paul the strength to get back up and to do it all over again.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

If you live godly, those who promote anti-Christian positions will attack you and call you narrow minded bigots.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Churches keep going farther and farther away from the truth, and the world keeps getting worse day by day.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

The things which thou hast learned: These were revealed to Paul almost 2000 years ago by Christ and they still work.

Unfortunately, the devil has been very successful at keeping the mystery program for the body of Christ a mystery.

Of whom thou hast learned them: Timothy knew that the things he learned from Paul were the words of God for this age, and in them we have the mind of God, and the tools necessary to do battle against the forces of hell.

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation: Timothy knew the scriptures, and when he heard about Christ, he recognized that God had fulfilled his promises and gave to the earth their Saviour and the world rejected him and he was saved.

Through faith which is in Christ Jesus: This is speaking about a person's faith, not the faith of Jesus Christ which is found in Galatians 2:16.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God: The word inspiration means to be God breathed. Doctrine is God's word about what we are to believe in this current dispensation. Reproof is similar to correction, but it is a bit harsher correction.

The man of God: 1st Timothy 6:11.

Perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works: The word "perfect" means a finished product, a fully mature believer, one who understands the manifold wisdom of God. The good works are those things that Paul did to establish believers and churches.

Chapter Four

Follow Paul

1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

The quick and the dead: The quick is a reference to the ones who have been made alive in Christ. The dead of course are the dead in Christ. We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account one day.

Romans 8:11 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 your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Acts 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

1st Peter 4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

At his appearing and his kingdom: At his appearing in the clouds to meet us, and his kingdom which is mentioned in more detail below, and it is not what some would think naturally, it is speaking about us in the body of Christ.

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Preach the word: Paul charges Timothy to stick with it as long as he lives, regardless of how long he may suffer, whether it is popular or unpopular, preach whatever needs to be preached to whoever listens.

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.

The time will come: Paul is speaking about a time in the dispensation of grace when the people would not endure sound doctrine. That day had begun already in Asia with the churches Paul had started many years earlier.

After their own lusts: The apostle James says that each man is drawn away of his own lust and enticed, and that is true in any dispensation.

Something in our flesh is attracted to something being offered up by the devil and people are enticed (drawn away) to people who will say what they want to hear. James 1:14, 2nd Peter 3:3 & Jude 1:16.

The sign gifts for the nation of Israel ceased near the end of the first century and they will not return until this age ends at the rapture.

So, these teachers play on people's desire (lusts) to be healed when it is not for today (it is a fable), and that spreads false hope, and leads to great discouragement.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Do the work of an evangelist: Today many Evangelists know little or nothing of Paul's ministry because they are too busy ensnared by the love of money.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I am now ready to be offered: Paul was ready to die for his faith and that is exactly what happened not long after this epistle was written, but that could not shut the mouths of all the faithful men that Paul had poured himself into over the years sharing the fellowship of the mystery with.

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.

I have finished my course: Paul filled full the scriptures that God dispensed to him to dispense to us. He trained men to follow his example in starting churches and equipping them and he made it to Rome to appear before Caesar.

Unto all them also that love his appearing: People justify their actions all in the name of Christ because they say they love his appearing. Well, I am not so sure they are going to enjoy that day when they give an account for how much truth verses error they have distributed.

9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: 10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Do thy diligence to come unto me shortly: This was said because the time of Paul's departure was at hand. Paul wanted to see Timothy again before he died but that most likely never happened.

Paul grew lonely as he got closer to his execution date. People tend to leave when they don't want to have the same fate as you.

Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world: Demas departed from Christ by departing from Paul, because it got too rough for him, and he wanted to go back to the world he once knew of greater ease. Whether Crescens and Titus

left for good reasons or not, we do not know, but Paul was all alone now.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. 12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

Only Luke is with me: There was no large entourage following Paul now because it was now up to the churches that they established to carry on the work he had started.

Why was Luke with Paul at this time? He was there for his trial before Nero, because both Luke and the book of Acts are legal treatises written as a defense for Paul before Caesar. Acts 1 & Luke 1. They are both written to the most excellent Theopolis, a Roman official. No one could stand before Caesar without his case being laid out in advance.

God is so amazing that he uses Rome's money and machine to get the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts published throughout Rome and who knows where else.

Take Mark, and bring him with thee: Mark was a kingdom saint, and Paul was a grace age saint, and he had the authority to tell Timothy to bring Mark with him.

The kingdom program was now set aside for the nation of Israel and the gospel of the grace of God was all that God was offering as hope to the whole world.

13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee: It is very cold in Mamertine Prison, I know I have been there. Paul knew how to be abased and how to abound, this was not one of those abounding times.

Paul had very little of his own as he was on death row and many of his supporting churches were now ashamed of him. All of Asia had turned their back on Paul.

Especially the parchments: Scrolls of the word of God.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

Alexander the coppersmith: He is mentioned in Paul's first epistle as one of the two that Paul had delivered unto Satan so that they would learn not to blaspheme.

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 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. 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.

At my first answer not man stood with me: This is a reference of the first time Paul stood before the Emperor when no one but the Lord himself stood with him.

Some could not be there because of the great distance, or they were away on a mission, but there were some who could have been there and were not.

I am reminded of the forgiving words of Christ as he was breathing his last breaths and he cried out to his Father to forgive them (Israel) for they know not what they do.

I am also reminded of Stephen and how Paul was an eyewitness of his death and a participant in it as Stephen begged God to not lay his murder to their charge.

Paul must have been as moved by Stephen's act of forgiveness as Stephen was of Christ's that it compelled him to act in the same manner.

By me the preaching might be fully known: Paul mentions that by him the preaching of the mystery might be fully known which implies that it was to be proclaimed clearly and fully by the apostle of grace, and so that all the Gentiles would hear the good news.

What better place to get the gospel out than at Rome and in the palace where there would be all kinds of people from all over the empire there watching, listening reporting on the things that were going on there.

Preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: Paul's salvation was secured in Christ, because he was in Christ and there is no safer place to be for anyone today. Are you in Christ today, by trusting in the gospel that Paul preached, or are you still in Adam?

If you are still in Adam, you will spend eternity in hell separated from God because you did not accept the free gift of God which is eternal life. You don't have to my friend.

Trust the finished work of Christ on your behalf as the complete payment for your sins. Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day.

The earthly kingdom is where Israel under the law was promised to spend eternity with Christ, whereas the heavenly kingdom is the destiny for the church, which is Christ's body who are saved by grace through faith today.

19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

Prisca and Aquila: Acts 18:2, 18, 16, Romans 16:3 & 1st Corinthians 16:19.

Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick: Why at the end of Paul's last epistle do we find Paul leaving his companion in his condition? Because he could no longer heal anyone.

Now the world could see through a glass clearly instead of darkly because all of the scriptures that were needed to bring the body of Christ to maturity were written.

That which was perfect had come (the word of God was complete), so that which was in part was done away. 1st Corinthians 13.

Paul could no longer send handkerchiefs out to people that could heal them because Israel had entered into her blindness. The sign gifts that were necessary to provoke the Jews to jealousy were no longer going to be given to a nation that would not repent.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. 22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

Do thy diligence to come before winter: Paul knew he could be executed at any moment, so he wanted to see his beloved Timothy one last time to personally encourage him.

For Timothy to wait too long would mean he would have to wait until after winter had come and gone. Paul, even in his last days,

was busy doing whatever he could do to make more people see what is the fellowship of the mystery.

Let us pattern our life after the pattern God gave to the body of Christ.

The End

Titus

Introduction

Titus first appears in scripture in Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians where Paul said he had no rest in his spirit when he came to Troas because he could not find Titus. 2nd Corinthians 2:12-13.

Paul is later comforted at the coming of Titus in Macedonia beginning in 2nd Corinthians 7:6 where he was Paul's partner and fellow helper with the Corinthians.

He was responsible for gathering the offering there and delivering it to the saints in Jerusalem. 2nd Corinthians 7-8.

Titus was a Greek who Paul took with him to the Jerusalem Council along with Barnabas who was not compelled to be circumcised which is mentioned in Galatians 2:1-3.

It was after Titus ministered in Corinth for a time that Paul reassigned him to the Island of Crete because of his strengths and the Island's notorious weaknesses. See Paul's testimony concerning the Cretians in Titus 1:12.

The last mention of Titus is just before Paul's martyrdom in Rome where he is mentioned by Paul as having had left Paul in Rome to go to Dalmatia previously, which would mean that he spent many years helping Paul as a messenger to the churches. 2nd Timothy 4:10.

Chapter One

The due time testifier

1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

According to the faith of God's elect: Jesus Christ is God's elect. It is the faith of Jesus Christ being spoken of here (not faith in Jesus Christ), it is the faith that came to the world as a result of Jesus Christ dying on the Cross.

This was a different faith than what was prior to the cross because Israel was still under the law of Moses then. That faith would be according to Paul's gospel. Romans 2:16 & Galatians 3:21-26.

We put our faith, which can fluctuate from day to day, in the faith of Jesus Christ (God's elect), which never waivers, and it is the faith of Christ which that saves us.

Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles was to preach concerning the faith of Jesus Christ (God's elect), which was given only after the law was fulfilled.

Isaiah 42:1 says, Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

God's elect is Jesus Christ. The elect is not a reference to you. The faith of God's elect is the faith of Jesus Christ. We are elect in the sense that we are members of Christ's body. We are literally in the elect. 1st Thessalonians 1:4.

And the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness: The truth is the word of truth that we are commanded to rightly divide in 2nd Timothy 2:15.

We cannot be godly if we do not acknowledge those things which come from God. To not rightly divide the word of truth, the truth for this age that we now live in.

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

In hope of eternal life: God has promised eternal life for both Jew and Gentile alike by the faith of Jesus Christ (God's elect) before the world began.

He promised it to himself, and to the other members of the Godhead. God, that cannot lie: God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 1st John 1:5. If God could lie, he would not be God.

Before the world began: This promise was kept hid in God until it was made manifest unto the apostle of the Gentiles after the resurrection of Jesus, because had Satan known of this, he would never have crucified the Lord of glory according to 1st Corinthians 2:7-8.

2nd Timothy 1:9 Who hath 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,

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

In due times: This is a reference to the time period which began with the calling of Saul of Tarsus as the apostle of the Gentiles.

Why was it due time then? Because Israel had now rejected the offer of the kingdom at the preaching of Stephen, and they fell at this time.

1st Timothy 1:15 says, This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Paul was the first in whom God would show forth all longsuffering to the world by bestowing mercy on the chief (leader) of sinners who was leading the persecution against the kingdom church.

Paul is the pattern for all who believe on Christ after him. That means that God started something new with the Apostle of the Gentiles which is mentioned over and over again in Paul's writings.

Which was committed unto me: God's word for the body of Christ today was manifested through preaching that was committed unto the apostle Paul, and not to anyone else, according to the commandment of God.

Grace came after the law, and it was revealed to the body of Christ, by the apostle of the Gentiles, not to Israel by the twelve apostles to Israel.

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.

The common faith: Paul had led Titus to the Lord, and he disciplined him in the same faith he had. He was not a kingdom

believer saved with the gospel of the kingdom; he was a member of the body of Christ.

Paul led Titus to the Lord with his gospel that was committed unto him, and then took him on into perfection by the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery.

Romans 16:25 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..

Grace, mercy, and peace: Grace is the dispensation that we live in today, Mercy is explained in Titus 3:5, and peace is what we enjoy in this present dispensation because of what Christ did for us at the cross.

This was not just some common greeting of the day that Paul was sharing with them as those who don't understand what he was saying teach.

From God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace are not from Paul, nor the holy Spirit.

Romans 5:1 says, 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, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

Set in order the things that are wanting: Titus was to help the church in Crete to fully understand all that God had delivered unto the apostle Paul so they too could have a fully functioning church.

Ordain elders in every city: Titus was appointed by the apostle Paul to ordain elders in every city where new believers were. They were to lead the new congregations in those cities. The qualifications are mentioned in the following verses:

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

If any be blameless: Titus was to discern the qualifications of those considered for ordination to the position of an elder (pastor) by seeing if they met God's criteria to be considered blameless.

The husband of one wife: This doesn't mean that a person whose spouse has died cannot be considered for ordination as an elder/pastor if they have been remarried, nor is it speaking of having one wife at a time.

It is speaking about an adulterer who gets divorced from their first wife who then remarries and wants to be considered as an elder.

Having faithful children: They were to be good examples in the area of the family. Their children were to be examples as well. Children often reflect on the ability of the parents to parent properly, which transfers over to leading the congregation.

1st Timothy 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Holding fast the faithful word: Someone who does not understand the mystery program, who cannot rightly divide that from Israel's prophecy program is not qualified to be an elder in the body of Christ today. They obviously cannot fulfill the rest of verse nine.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

They of the circumcision: The elders were to shut up the circumcision who were trying to impose Jewish fables, and men's commandments on the body of Christ, because turn people from the actual truth given to us by our apostle.

This is happening in many churches today as Pastors search for more sermon material and things to entertain their people who are flocking to the Hebrew Roots Movement, which eventually leads to works salvation.

Whose mouths must be stopped: These groups are both opposed an inerrant Bible and to rightly dividing the word of truth. 2nd Timothy 2:15.

12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. 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.

Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men: The Hebrew Roots movement love to teach Jewish fables to get around mystery doctrine and claim if you know what they are teaching you will understand the deeper things of God.

That turn from the truth: They are deceiving and being deceived and need to be rebuked sharply.

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.

Unto every good work reprobate: It is their works that deny God, but some, possibly many, were saved, and just rebellious to the truth that had come to them from Paul.

Their works were abominable to God because they deliberately were disobedient to the truth, which made their works (teachings) reprehensible to God.

A person that is right with God will receive the truth with gladness and will check out anything that seems contrary to the word of God. A person can become defiled with the fables, and traditions of men, and refuse to see truth.

Chapter Two

Things which become sound doctrine

1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: These are found in verses two through the end of this epistle. See 1:13.

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Not give to much wine: Let everything be done in moderation.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. 7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, 8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. 9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; 10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things: Your testimony is like a coat that you put on (adorn) that the whole world sees.

It could be one that attracts people to your Saviour. It will be the latter, if you adorn yourself in all things commanded us by our apostle, not just the ones that come easy to you.

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men: Paul was not saying that at the time that the book of Titus was written that every single person in the remote corners of the world had heard the gospel of grace preached.

He was saying that God had now sent Paul (and now us) to go to all the world with the message of reconciliation (2nd Corinthians 5:19 through 21) to every man regardless of whether they were a Jew or a Gentile.

The twelve were limited in their outreach ministry to the circumcision with one exception Cornelius' family (Acts 10). Matthew 10:5-7.

Because God has been so gracious to us in saving us by his grace, we are to exhibit that grace towards others, and live before them a life that would exalt Christ and draw others to him.

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

That blessed hope: We in the body of Christ are looking for the rapture of the body (the church) when we will all see Christ as he appears to us in the clouds in all his glory just before he takes us to begin our new roles in heavenly places.

The blessed hope is not the revealing of Christ to Israel when every eye shall see him. It is the mystery that God revealed to Paul concerning the church which is his body. 1st Thessalonians 4:14-17.

The blessed hope is the glorious appearing of our great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. 1st Timothy 6:14 & 2nd Timothy 1:10. It was not known in Matthew 24 or Paul could not have called it a mystery in 1st Corinthians 15:51.

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

It was our sin that originally separated us from our Creator, and it is the death of the Son of God who lived a perfect life on our behalf, that redeemed us back from our father the devil.

A peculiar people: We were purified by Christ's work on our behalf in redeeming us that we should be peculiar to this world when we zealously follow the things that he has dispensed to us in the body of Christ through Paul's epistles.

The children of Israel were told that they would be a peculiar treasure unto God above all the people if they kept his covenant in Exodus 19:5-6 & Deuteronomy 14:2.

We are not Israel under the law, we are the Church, the body of Christ. Colossians 1:18 through 24 which is under grace. Romans 6:14 & 15.

Zealous of good works: Are you zealous about following the pattern the apostle Paul set for the body of Christ to establish believers and new churches? If not, why not?

15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Rebuke with all authority: As believers today, we are not to be afraid to rebuke with all authority, we should welcome rebuke when it is necessary for our own good, so that we may become more profitable unto God and others.

Chapter Three

Profitable versus Unprofitable

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, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

Be subject to principalities and powers: God has ordained government, and he opposes lawlessness. We are to be involved in politics, and government, and we are to support what is right, and to change what is wrong in peaceful ways.

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, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

According to his mercy he saved us: Titus 1:3. We were saved not by our works, but by a merciful God when he sent his Son to die for us as our payment for our sin.

The washing of regeneration: This speaks of his cleansing us by the shedding his blood, not by water baptism. Romans 5:9 & Ephesians 1:7.

Renewing of the holy Ghost: We are made into something new (the one new man Ephesians 2:15) when we believe the gospel and we are placed into the body of Christ by his Spirit. 1st Corinthians 12:13.

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Which he shed on us abundantly: The Holy Ghost which renewed us at our salvation.

Justified by his grace: Romans 3:24.

Heirs according to the hope of eternal life: I am a joint heir with Christ and there was nothing I did to deserve it.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

This is a faithful saying: This is now the final time Paul uses these words together to impress upon his readers the importance of what he is about to say. The other three times are also in the other pastoral epistles. 1st Timothy 1:15-16, 4:9 & 2nd Timothy 2:11.

Maintain good works: The good works are defined by Paul's epistles as the following of the pattern of good works that he laid out for us in this dispensation to follow, which edify the body of Christ and help establish new churches.

There is no hint of Paul ever saying someone today should maintain good works as a means to maintaining their salvation in any of his epistles ever.

These things are good and profitable unto men: Good works produce fruit in the body of Christ, and that is what we are to be doing today.

If we are not doing what Paul did and instructed us to do, why is that? You are not profiting yourself, or anyone else for that matter.

9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies: What group of people focused on their genealogies? The Jews. These were probably the kingdom saints trying to Judaize grace believers amongst the Gentiles.

Strivings about the law: Some sought to infiltrate the body of Christ which some thought were just another sect of Judaism, and to bring it into submission to the Law. Paul knew they had to be challenged with the word of God.

What possible benefit could there be of tracing someone's bloodline back after the cross? What did it matter? What spiritual gain was there? None!

But yet there were those who would come along claiming descent from this tribe, or that, as if that gave them the corner on the truth somehow, silly people would give heed to them.

10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; 11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject: Paul wanted Titus to try to reason with those that would try to draw away people from the faith to follow their own ideas.

These were to be rejected and not allowed any place in the church to teach their lies. Once a person was rejected because of their false teachings they were to be marked as someone that is preaching another gospel and avoided.

Knowing that he that is such is subverted: His faith has been overthrown and he is trying to do the same to others.

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. 13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

Come unto me to Nicopolis: Paul is not writing from Nicopolis, he plans on going there for the winter. The word Nico means to rule over, like the Nicolaitans, and "polis" which simply mean a City. Revelation 2:6.

Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently: Paul is about to go before Nero for the last time, which is why he wants Zenas (the lawyer) there.

Paul had an assignment for Apollos once he arrived in Nicopolis, because Paul had to return to Rome. He also wants Titus to come and give a report on his ordaining and teaching the elders of Crete how they can better serve God.

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 thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses: We see the importance of the body of Christ doing the works Paul told us to do, because they produce fruit.

If churches die, it is because they did not maintain good works. Paul was probably ministering to a congregation as this epistle was being written before his final imprisonment and ultimate death.

The book of Titus was written after I Timothy, and before II Timothy, as you can tell from the verse below that shows Titus departed from Paul:

2nd Timothy 4:10 For Demas hath 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 thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

The End

Philemon

Introduction

The epistle of Philemon is Paul's smallest epistle, and it is one of his most interesting, as we find no doctrine being taught in its pages.

This epistle is actually an epistle encouraging Philemon to do exactly what the dispensation of grace is all about. God wants Philemon to show the same grace to Onesimus, that God showed to Philemon when he saved him, by forgiving Onesimus.

I believe that this epistle, which appears in the bible as the last of the Pauline epistles is placed last because it is also a picture of the catching away of the body of Christ (the Church) a.k.a. the rapture.

We are like Onesimus in this epistle, unprofitable to our Master, until we trust the gospel of the grace of God found in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4, and we then experience the forgiveness of our sins, and it changes us.

We become a part of the body of Christ the moment we believe, and immediately after the last member of the body of Christ is added to the body, God will then take us home to be with the head of the body.

That is why God has the epistle placed at the end of the epistles of Paul, because it is in the Pauline epistles alone that the body of Christ finds our marching orders for the dispensation of grace.

This dispensation was a mystery hid in God from before the foundation of the world and were not made known unto us until God raised up the apostle of the Gentiles and gave him all the mysteries found only in his epistles.

1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,

Paul: The first word in all of Paul's Epistles is his name. He was originally introduced to us in the seventh chapter of the book of Acts as Saul, as he was persecuting the Church.

Acts 7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

1st Timothy 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 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 acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

In the first verse of nine of Paul's epistles he tells his readers that he is an apostle, but in this one he is talking to a friend who knows that he is the apostle of the Gentiles, but he may not have heard that Paul was a prisoner yet.

A prisoner of Jesus: God wanted Paul to witness to the world's leaders, and the best way he could do that at times was to have him arrested.

2nd Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

Ephesians 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

Philippians 1:12 says, But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out 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 said that his bonds were manifest in all the palace, and in all other places, because God called him to reach the Gentiles in all places. Even in Caesar's household many had come to Christ. Philippians 4:22.

Christ: The anointed one. It is the same word translated as the Messiah in the old testament. Oil was poured on priests to anoint them when they began their ministry at thirty. Acts 10:38

Jesus was anointed by God at his baptism when the Holy Spirit descended upon him. and Jesus was Israel's High Priest and King. Kings were also anointed.

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Timothy: Timotheus. Paul mentions that Timothy was with him. He was visiting Paul while he was in jail, not as a cellmate.

Philemon: He was a wealthy man with many servants that had helped Paul during his earlier days.

Dearly beloved: A term that is used only of one other person in the bible, Timothy. Philemon had the same spirit as Timothy did.

Fellowlabourer: He was one in a small group that Paul had called his fellow-laborers, which included Timothy, Luke, Priscilla, Aquilla, Aphroditus, and Titus.

2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:

Apphia was Philemon's wife, and Archippus was his son. Archippus and Epaphroditus are the only two people mentioned as fellow soldiers with Paul.

Philippians 2:25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

The church in thy house: Philemon was probably not the pastor of the church that met in his house, Archippus most likely was, based on a comment made in Colossians concerning him:

Colossians 4:17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

3 Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prior to the dispensation of grace being ushered in with the saving of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, lost mankind had two things to dread for their rejection of Christ, and they were wrath and destruction. Psalm 2:1-7 and Psalm 110:1-6.

But Paul tells us in the Body of Christ, "Grace and Peace?" Why? Paul uses this at the beginning of each of his epistles as a statement that is never used by anyone before him, or after him in scripture.

What about Peter, and John, don't they say grace and peace? Yes, twice each, but nothing like Paul:

1st Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2nd Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2nd John 1:3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Revelation 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

God the Father is not mentioned here in Revelation 1:4. Notice they never end with the same ending: From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace to you, and peace: The two primary things that we have received from God in this present dispensation. They are not given to us by Paul, but by God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace is the way by which we receive salvation today, and peace means the cessation of hostilities from God toward us. God is no longer at war with us because our sin has been atoned for by his Son on the cross.

Ephesians 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

Colossians 1:20 says, And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. Ephesians 2:14.

There is coming a day when grace and peace will no longer be the case, but judgment and war will be the message to the world during the tribulation period.

From God the Father: Grace and peace come from God the Father.

And the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace come also from the Lord Jesus Christ. The title of Lord placed before Jesus' name signifies what he is to us. Lord means master, and he is the one who is to have dominion over us.

He has been invested with the authority to judge those who reject his Lordship; and one day he will judge the world. Paul is speaking here:

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

I thank my God: This is a saying that is used five times in scripture, and all five are used by the apostle Paul,

Romans 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

1 Corinthians 1:4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;

1 Corinthians 14:18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

Philippians 1:3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

Paul is also the only person to say, I thank God 3 times.

Romans 7:25 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.

1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

2 Timothy 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

Since Philemon had love towards all saints, he should also love his fellow servant Onesimus who was with Paul in prison. Onesimus told Paul of Philemon's faith after Paul led him to the Lord.

Philemon then should also love Onesimus and welcome him back, forgiving him. To truly love the Lord Jesus, we must love God's people. Love is an action, not a feeling.

6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

The communication of thy faith: Philemon's testimony would be less effective if he held back some good thing that he should have done which would testify of Christ's love in him to others, namely forgiving Onesimus.

If Philemon were to forgive his servant Onesimus, that act would open up areas of ministry to many people in Philemon's life. That's the doctrine of grace in action.

May become effectual: The communication of Philemon's faith would become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which was in him.

It would have a more powerful effect on others if he showed grace in this area with Onesimus. The lost would recognize that Philemon's forgiveness was from God, and he would be more effectual in reaching them with the gospel.

Every good thing: The acknowledging of every good thing would be Philemon taking advantage of everything Christ has done for him, and that Paul had taught him.

Philemon had been forgiven by God, but if he were holding a grudge against Onesimus it would make him less effectual in every good thing.

In Christ Jesus: We are placed into Christ the moment we trust the gospel of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for us. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

We have great joy and consolation in thy love: Paul and Timothy couldn't be there, but knowing Philemon was there he knew the saints were being refreshed by Philemon.

The bowels of the saints: The word bowels can mean a person's inner parts, as in Judas' bowels gushing out, or it can refer to a person's inner most being, as it is meant here.

Paul uses this in three separate verses in this book. Philemon refreshed the saints with the word of God, with his finances, but more importantly with his spiritual gifts as a fellowlabourer with Paul, and Timothy in the gospel.

8 Wherefore, though I might be much more bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, 9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

To enjoin thee: To command him.

Beseech thee: Paul shows grace by pleading with Philemon, rather than boldly ordering him to do this as the apostle of the Gentiles. He uses the perfect example of grace, which should motivate all who know Christ.

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

I have begotten in my bonds: Paul led Onesimus to the Lord in prison.

It is not clear whether Onesimus was a prisoner as well, or whether he came to see Paul, the friend of his former employer in prison. Notice that the relationship between the two of them was of that of a Father and a son.

11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me:

Onesimus was obviously not profitable to Philemon when he ran away. We were once unprofitable to God when we were running from him, but he loved us anyway.

Romans 5:8 says, But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

Receive him: Paul doesn't ask, he expected Philemon to receive Onesimus back as though he were receiving Paul himself, or as Paul's son.

Paul was in a position of authority over Philemon because of his position as the apostle of the Gentiles, but we see him begging Philemon at the same time for Philemon's sake, more than for his, or even Onesimus' sake.

Mine own bowels: This is a reference to Paul having begotten Onesimus in the faith when he shared the gospel with him.

Roman law said that you had to return a runaway slave, but the law of Moses said that you were not to return a runaway slave. Why did Paul send Onesimus, a runaway servant, back to Philemon, his Master? Does God (or did God) condone slavery?

Indebted servitude in Israel was vastly different from slavery. The scripture clearly denounces the stealing of men (kidnapping) for the purpose of enslaving them.

It did condone indebted servitude of another Jew who could no longer pay his debts. Strict requirements were also enforced by God in the law of Moses. The indebted servitude that God ordained was a method used for regaining a lost inheritance for a Jew.

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

In thy stead he might have ministered unto me: Philemon couldn't be there to serve God with Paul, but Paul would not keep Onesimus there with him unless Philemon gave his approval.

Philemon would be happy to know that Paul now thought so much of Onesimus that he would have allowed him to be his personal helper. Something that Philemon once assisted Paul with, in the past.

In the bonds of the gospel: Because the gospel was diametrically opposed to the world's system, the world would seek to arrest the gospel, by apprehending the preachers of it. Philippians 3:12.

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

Without thy mind: Paul wanted Philemon to willingly give his servant to him knowing that his gift would be rewarded at the judgment seat. Paul is referring to the benefit of everything that Philemon would receive by loaning Onesimus to Paul.

Necessity, but willingly: Paul wanted Philemon to forgive Onesimus and willingly loan him to Paul for the ministry, not because Paul ordered it.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

How does Philemon get to receive Onesimus forever? By his Salvation! Onesimus ran away from Philemon, but Paul led him to the Lord. Was that just another coincidence?

Perhaps Paul and Onesimus were put into the same cell together because they spoke the same language, or because they were from the same region. I believe it was God's plan.

Paul could very likely have known Onesimus since Paul and Onesimus' master had served the Lord together. After Onesimus was saved he wanted to do what was right. Paul advised him to return to Philemon in order to repay his debt.

16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

How could Philemon receive Onesimus back as if nothing had ever happened? It is only by the peace of God which passeth all understanding that Philemon could show that kind of forgiveness to someone who had done him wrong. Philippians 4:7.

A Brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord: Onesimus was mostly likely related to Philemon, probably a brother.

This would explain why he was a servant to Philemon who was trying to pay off debts, that Philemon would have taken to redeem his brother as his kinsman redeemer. Ruth 2-4.

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

Onesimus was Paul's partner, just as Paul was Philemon's partner once, and fellowlabourer, in the ministry.

That endeared Paul to Philemon greatly. Paul appeals to that friendship, and he asks his friend to accept his runaway servant in the same way that he accepts Paul as a partner.

Imagine the peace that would permeate Philemon's house as he and Onesimus served the Lord together.

We were once at war with God, but we have been made nigh to God by the blood of Christ. We now have peace through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul appealed to Philemon on these grounds.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;

We today have wronged God and he put that on Christ's account, and the debt was paid in full. Onesimus is a picture of us, indebted to God with a debt we could never repay.

We were slaves to sin, but he purchased us. He put our debt on his account because we were bankrupt and unable to pay. Romans 5:8.

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Ought: The word means anything.

19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

Paul mentions that he wrote this part of the epistle himself, and he says to Philemon that he could mention to Philemon that he owed Paul.

This is probably a reference to the debt Philemon owed Paul for leading him to Christ. He brings this up, so that Philemon will fulfill his request for the right reasons. It would be far better for Philemon to honor Paul's request as a service to God.

Could Philemon's forgiveness of a limited earthly debt even come close to the unlimited eternal debt that Philemon owed to God, or Paul for telling him how to be saved? Of course not!

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

Refresh my bowels in the Lord: How could Philemon refresh Paul's heart (bowels)?

By forgiving Onesimus, by receiving him as a brother in the Lord, and by sending him back to minister to Paul while he remained in prison.

Paul was not telling Philemon to be gracious to Onesimus, he was beseeching him to.

21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

As believers under grace, we should be accustomed to doing more than what was required under the law.

Paul just expects Philemon to do the right thing and to go above and beyond what is expected. Isn't that how we show God's love to this lost and dying world?

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

Paul believed that through the prayers of the saints he would be delivered from his arrest in Rome. Acts 28. He was released for almost two years. This is just a practical illustration of the doctrine of grace that Paul revealed.

Notice that of all the places that Paul could have chosen to go once he was released, he chose the household of his dear friend Philemon, who lived in the area of Colosse.

23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; 24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

Salute thee Epaphras: Say hi to Epaphras. Colossians 1:7.

Epaphras was a shortened version of the name Epaphroditus, which is the name for the Greek goddess of love Aphrodite, it literally means a slave of Aphrodite.

Epaphras means love. Epaphroditus' name glorified a pagan goddess, so he later shortened it to Epaphras.

My fellowprisoner: Epaphras was in jailed briefly for preaching the gospel.

Marcus: This is John Mark, who departed from Paul in Acts 13, but as we can see here, he is now profitable to Paul, and to God. Lucas is Luke, the author of the gospel of Luke, and the book of Acts.

Aristarchus: He was from Thessalonica. Acts 19:29.

Demas: He is mentioned here, but it is not long before he forsakes Paul, and God, for the love of the world.

2 Timothy 4:10 says, For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Lucas: This is Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, and the gospel of Luke. Remember it is only a few short years between the writing of the prison epistles, and Paul's pastoral epistles to Timothy and Titus.

25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: This exact phrase, or one almost exactly the same is found at the end of all of Paul's epistle, which all start out with grace as well.

The theme of the letter to Philemon is about showing grace to those we have taught it to so that we might be more effective in our ministry.

The End

Philemon is the last epistle of Paul in the bible, which ends the special revelations dispensed to Paul from the risen Christ that are specifically for the body of Christ today (A.K.A. The Church).

The interruption of Israel's prophecy program is over, and the time of Jacob's trouble can soon begin. See Jeremiah 30:7.

